



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

Policy on Fees and Charging for Requested Information

1 Introduction

This policy sets out the University's approach to charging for information requested under the [Freedom of Information Act 2000 \(FOIA\)](#). It has been devised in accordance with Sections 9, 12 and 13 of the FOIA and the related [Fees Regulations](#). The principal aim of the policy is to establish a rigorous and fair approach to the charging for information requested under the FOIA.

2 Charges

There are two kinds of charge that might apply: disbursements and a charge for retrieving the information.

2.1 Disbursements

Disbursements are the costs of (a) informing applicants whether the information is held; and (b) communicating the information. This includes the cost of putting the information in the applicant's preferred format, so far as is reasonably practicable, reproducing any document containing the information (such as photocopying or printing), and postage and other forms of communicating the information.

The University does not charge for disbursements costing less than ten pounds. Disbursements costing ten pounds or over are charged for at cost.

2.2 Charge for retrieving the information

Normally the University does not charge for retrieving the information. If however the cost to the University of retrieving the information exceeds £450 (the Appropriate Limit set by Government), then the University may refuse the request, or may offer the applicant the opportunity either to reduce the scale of the request or to pay the amount by which the cost of finding the information exceeds £450. In all cases, the University reserves the right to refuse to respond to a request that exceeds the Appropriate Limit.

When determining whether the Appropriate Limit has been exceeded, the University takes into account the staff time, charged at a rate of £25 per hour, involved in the following activities:

- determining whether the information is held;
- locating and retrieving the information or a document that may contain the information; and
- extracting the information from a document, including editing or redacting.

The University does not take into account the following activities:

- the time taken to check that a request for information meets the requirements of the FOIA;
- consideration of whether the information requested falls within an exemption category, including any costs incurred through seeking legal advice;
- consideration of whether a request is vexatious or a repeated request;
- obtaining authorisation to send out the information; or
- the time taken to calculate any fee to be charged.

The University does not charge for retrieving information that subsequently falls into an exemption category. In cases where the University does not hold the requested information, time taken to determine whether or not the University is holding it may be charged for if the Appropriate Limit is exceeded.

3 Aggregated requests

If the University receives two or more related requests within a period of 60 consecutive working days from an individual or different individuals who appear to be acting together or as part of a campaign, the costs of complying with the individual requests are aggregated. If the total is found to be in excess of the Appropriate Limit, the University treats the set of requests as a single request that exceeds the Appropriate Limit.

4 The Fees Notice

Where a charge is applicable, the University will provide in writing to the applicant a Fees Notice, which sets out details of the proposed fee and the relevant calculations relating to that fee. The University is not obliged to respond to a request unless the fee is paid within three months of the Fees Notice being sent to the applicant.

5 Complaints about charging

Any applicant who believes they are subject to an unfair charge may wish either to follow the University College's internal freedom of information [complaints procedure](#), or to contact the Information Commissioner.

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