

Request Reference: 3630

FOI Request dated 07/04/2026 -

1. *Does your University have a person who is responsible for working to secure protection for, and for promoting, free speech and academic freedom, so as to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements relating to free speech? For convenience, in this request, we will refer to this person as the "Free Speech Officer" or "FSO". Where there is more than one such person, please treat the lead person as the FSO for the purposes of this request.*
2. *If your University does not have an FSO, is it currently planning or otherwise taking steps to appoint one? Please give details if so.*
3. *Please supply the job description of the FSO, the person specification, and any other University document describing their role, its purpose, and its responsibilities.*
4. *In relation to the FSO, please disclose:*
 - a. *Their name, their job title and when they were appointed to this role.*
 - b. *To the extent not disclosed in the job description, the specific nature of their duties, for example, whether their duties extend solely to ensuring that the University complies with the law and regulatory requirements, or more generally to furthering freedom of speech and developing a culture of tolerance.*
 - c. *The function or department in which the FSO works.*
 - d. *Who they report to, or who is immediately above them in the University's organisational hierarchy.*
 - e. *Their seniority within the University organisational hierarchy.*
 - f. *If there is a chart of the University's organisational structure which illustrates where the FSO sits in the University's organisational structure, please supply it.*
 - g. *How long their job, or a job with equivalent duties and responsibilities, has existed.*
 - h. *What formal authorities and powers the FSO has in connection with their free speech functions.*
 - i. *If the FSO has responsibilities relating to matters other than free speech and academic freedom (not including general responsibilities, held by all staff), please disclose what those responsibilities and those matters are.*
5. *In relation to the University's equality, diversity and inclusion ("EDI") function (or/equivalent), please disclose:*
 - a. *Whether the FSO is part of the EDI function.*
 - b. *If the FSO is part of the EDI function, whether there exists any policy which describes how the FSO will manage conflicts of interest between free speech concerns and EDI desires and agendas (providing a copy of such policy).*
6. *If there is a free speech protection function or department, please disclose:*
 - a. *The number of people actively involved in it (excluding purely administrative staff).*
 - b. *The position of each person in the function or department.*
 - c. *Briefly, the responsibilities of each of those positions.*

- d. *Where the function/department can be found in the University's organisational structure: for instance, to whom the function/department reports.*
- e. *Further, if there is a chart of the University's organisational structure which illustrates where the function/department sits in the University's organisational structure, please supply it.*

Response

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at Section 1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at Section 1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held. Where exemptions are relied upon Section 17 of FOIA requires that we provide the applicant with a notice which: a) states that fact b) specifies the exemption(s) in question and c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

It has been determined that this information is exempt on the basis that s21 of the Act applies – Information Reasonably Accessible by Other Means. As this exemption is absolute there is no requirement for me to conduct a public interest test, however in order to provide assistance I provide the following link - [Freedom of Speech Policy and Code of Practice on Events \[v1-01\]](#)