

Data Protection - Introduction

The Data Protection Act 1998 sets out rules for processing personal information, and it applies to some paper records as well as those held on computer. The Act gives individuals certain rights, and also imposes obligations on those who record and use personal information to be open about how information is used and to follow eight data protection principles.

Personal data must be processed following these principles so that data are:

1. processed fairly and lawfully and only if certain conditions are met
2. obtained for specified and lawful purposes
3. adequate, relevant and not excessive
4. accurate and where necessary kept up-to-date
5. not kept for longer than necessary
6. processed in accordance with individual's rights
7. kept secure
8. not transferred abroad without adequate protection

Your rights

You are entitled to have access to information held about you, where you are the main focus of the document, where it affects your privacy and it is held in a relevant filing system, except where releasing that information would breach another person's privacy. You also have rights to prevent data processing likely to cause substantial and unwarranted damage or distress, to prevent processing for the purpose of direct marketing.

Your responsibilities

Any personal data must be collected, processed and held according to the eight data protection principles, whether this is on your own behalf or as part of your research or studies. The University and Colleges are responsible for the data collected for their own proper purposes, and if you have access to this information you must follow relevant policy and procedure. If you process data on your own behalf, you are responsible for compliance with the law. Please note that the Colleges are separate legal entities, as such they have separate Data Protection notifications. If you require access to data held by a College you must apply to them for that data.

How your data is used by the University and Colleges

Personal information is shared between the University and Colleges, and is used for a full range of services including education (including internal and external quality assurance), research, support services, statutory returns, alumni relations, accounts, public relations, security and crime prevention. Full details on the University and Colleges' notifications with the Information Commissioner are available at: <https://ico.org.uk/>

In particular, the University may make examination results publicly available, and may confirm details of examination results and degrees awarded to enquirers, unless the Student concerned can provide evidence of serious unwarranted distress as a result of publication (please see separate Education Committee procedure through your Senior Tutor). Class lists including names and results may be posted on the Senate House notice boards, published in the Reporter and distributed to departments and Colleges. The University is obliged by law to send data on individual students to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Teacher Training Agency and the agency that has been contracted to carry out the National Students Survey. Full details are available at http://www.hesa.ac.uk/dataprot/collnotices_middle.htm.

It will also make information available to professional regulatory bodies, e.g. the General Medical Council.

Additionally student details may be available internally through the on-line directory of staff and students. In this case you will have the opportunity to opt out. If you choose, your email address can also be published externally in the on-line directory at: <http://jackdaw.cam.ac.uk/mailsearch/>.

After you graduate information is archived so details of your academical record can be confirmed and for historical research. Information is also shared with the Development Office.

If you have any queries about how your data are used, or the application of the Data Protection Act, please refer to the University's Data Protection web site <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/dpa/> in the first instance. If you need further assistance please contact your College or the University Data Protection Officer on extension 64142. Alternatively you may e-mail to the following address data.protection@admin.cam.ac.uk.