

## Requests for internal reviews to the Office for Students (OfS)

### How do I appeal?

#### Freedom of Information Act 2000

Once you receive our response to your request for information, should you wish to appeal it you must do this within 40 working days. We may refuse to accept your appeal if you send it after this date.

You should explain why you are not satisfied with our response, for example: we may have refused to give you some, or all, of the requested information, or you may think we took too long to respond (more than 20 working days under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations).

Your request for an internal review must be made to us in writing; you can send it by post or email. The address is:

FOIA Appeals  
Office for Students  
Westward House  
Lime Kiln Close  
Stoke Gifford  
BS34 8SR

Email: [foi@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:foi@officeforstudents.org.uk)

#### UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018

Once you receive our response to a request to exercise the rights afforded to individuals under data protection legislation, should you wish to appeal it you must do this within two months. After this time, we may consider your request closed.

You should explain why you are not satisfied with our response, for example: we may have refused to give you some, or all, of your personal data, or you may otherwise disagree with the outcome of your request.

Your request for an internal review can be made to us in writing or verbally. You can call our enquiries line on 0117 931 7317, or send it to us by post or email. The address is:

Data Protection Officer  
Westward House  
Lime Kiln Close  
Stoke Gifford  
BS34 8SR

Email: [dp@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:dp@officeforstudents.org.uk)

Please note this inbox is monitored by other members of the data protection team, so please mark messages for the attention of the Data Protection Officer.

There are two possible stages to the appeals process:

- An internal review conducted by the OfS
- Secondly, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, an appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

### Stage one: Internal review

A member of the OfS will conduct the internal review, including to the extent relevant:

- reviewing the original request
- determining which legislation applies
- considering all the details of the original request and decision, including the application of any exemptions
- considering the grounds given for appealing against it.

As part of the review process, the person conducting the review may talk to the staff who dealt with the original request, obtain advice from other sources, including legal advice, and applicable areas of the business and/or contact the requester directly for further details or clarification.

After the review is conducted, decisions on the outcome of the review and approach and content of the response letter will normally be taken by an OfS director, who was not involved in the original decision. In cases where a director is not available to take part in a review, it is envisaged that a member of staff who has the delegated authority authorised by their director, will take those decisions.

### What are the potential outcomes of my internal review?

Following the internal review process, we will send you a response letter telling you the outcome of the internal review. There are three potential outcomes:

- **The original decision is reversed.** We will advise you of the result, and what we will do and when; for example, in the case of a FOIA request when we will supply the information or in relation to data protection requests when we will fulfil your request.
- **The original decision is amended.** Again, we will inform you about what we plan to do and when.

- **The original decision is upheld.** In that case, we will give you details of a possible second stage appeal to the relevant external body, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

### **When can I expect a response to my request for an internal review?**

For appeals made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we aim to deal with internal reviews within 20 working days. For more complex internal reviews, we may need longer to consider the issues. For example, we may take more time if the review requires consultation with third parties, or where the relevant information is of high volume. We aim to deal with complex reviews within 40 working days.

For appeals made under data protection legislation, we aim to deal with internal reviews within one calendar month.

In the event a clarification of an internal review request is required from you, the response period will not begin until it is received. If we are unable to respond within these timescales, we will write to you explaining why there is a delay and advising when we expect to be able to respond.

### **Stage two: Appeal to an external body**

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) oversees the work we do in connection with information rights legislation. Complaints that cannot be resolved by a public sector body's internal complaints procedure may be taken to the ICO. The ICO is unlikely to consider your request unless you have first been through our appeals process.

Appeals to the ICO should be in writing, setting out why you are not satisfied with our response and the outcome of the internal review.

For details of how to appeal to the ICO, see: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

The ICO can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

Last review date: December 2023

Review date: December 2026