1. **Introduction**

1.1 The Government stance on charging has consistently been that the majority of the costs in meeting FOI requests will be met by public authorities, rather than the individual making the request. However the Act does allow the University to charge in certain circumstances.

2. **The Appropriate Limit**

2.1 Section 12 of the Act states that a Public Body can refuse a request where the cost of providing the information requested would exceed the Appropriate Limit.

2.2 For universities the Fees Regulations stipulate the appropriate limit at £450. This is based on an average staff cost of £25 per hour, and equates to 18 hours of staff time i.e. approximately 2.5 staff days.

2.3 Not all of the time undertaken in handling a request can be added into the calculation, for example time taken determining if exemptions apply, and time taken to redact information, cannot be taken into consideration when determining whether the request will exceed 18 hours.

2.4 Whilst Section 12 technically allows the University to refuse a request, good practice would be to adopt one of the following:

   a) to work with the requestor to adapt their request so that it would fall under the Appropriate Limit.

   b) To charge the full cost of fulfilling the request

   c) to meet the request without charge.

It is likely that each case will need to be considered individually.

3. **Disbursements**

   The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 SI No. 3244 state that public authorities are allowed to make a charge to cover disbursements i.e. photocopying, postage etc. As such the University reserves the right to make a charge to cover disbursements; specific details of the charges are available from Information Assurance Services.
Failure to comply with University Policy may lead to disciplinary action.

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