PURPLE GRIFFON
The IT Service Management Training & Consultancy Specialists

Course Title: BCS Practitioner in Freedom of Information	**Course Duration**: 5.0 Days
Exam: Included	**Exam Type**: Proctored Exam
Qualification: BCS Practitioner Certificate in Freedom of Information	

Course Syllabus

1. The legislation, codes of practice and ethics within public authorities

1.1. State the different public authorities that are covered by the Freedom of Information Act.

1.2. Describe the need for governance in a public authority.

1.3. State codes of practice and legislations relevant to data in a public authority.

1.4. Describe the difference between ethics and legislation.

2. The scope and principles of the Freedom of Information Act

2.1. Explain the purpose of the Freedom Of Information Act legislation.

2.2. Describe the principles the FOIA legislation is based on.

2.3. Explain the purpose of Schedule 1, showing how it is amended and applied.

2.4. Explain the relationship between the Freedom of Information Act and the private sector.

2.5. Explain who and what is covered by the Freedom of Information Act.

3. Obligations and responsibilities

3.1. Explain good practice in relation to record management.

3.2. Explain the use of publication schemes.

3.3. Apply knowledge of access rights including FOIA and codes of practice 2018 in handling and analysing a request and responding.

3.4. Describe fees, regulations and costs associated with a request for information.

3.5. Apply the time deadlines to the request for information.

4. Disclosure, non-disclosure and exemptions

4.1. Apply exemptions from disclosure.

5. Environmental information and personal data

5.1. Explain the Environmental Information Regulations and the relevance and differences to the FOIA.

5.2. Explain the principles and lawful decisions in regards to the Data Protection Act.

6. The enforcement and appeals process

6.1. Describe enforcement powers.

6.2. Describe offences in relation to the disclosure of information.

6.3. Describe the appeals process.

Course Overview

The BCS Practitioner Certificate in Freedom of Information equips individuals with a solid understanding of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and related legislation. It provides practitioners with the skills and knowledge required to effectively manage and handle requests for information in compliance with the FOIA. This certification is aimed at those responsible for ensuring that their organisation complies with public sector transparency requirements, including public bodies and private companies working on behalf of the government.

The course covers key areas, including the legal framework, exemptions, best practices for responding to requests, and the process of managing information in line with regulatory standards. It also focuses on practical scenarios that professionals may encounter when dealing with FOI requests, helping them to interpret the Act correctly and apply it in real-world situations.

Freedom of Information (FOI) promotes transparency and accountability. For the public, it offers the right to access information held by public authorities, fostering a more informed and engaged society. By allowing people to request and receive data, FOI empowers citizens to hold organisations and the government accountable for their decisions and actions.

For organisations, understanding and adhering to FOI legislation is crucial for maintaining public trust. Ensuring compliance not only helps avoid penalties and legal repercussions but also demonstrates a commitment to openness. In an era where public scrutiny and the demand for transparency are increasing, organisations that handle information requests effectively can enhance their reputation.

Having a good grasp of FOI ensures that sensitive information is protected appropriately through the proper application of exemptions, reducing the risk of accidental disclosures that could damage an organisation’s reputation or legal standing.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the BCS Practitioner in Freedom of Information certificate, candidates will be able to demonstrate:

- An understanding of legislation, codes of practice and ethics within public authorities.
- An understanding of the scope and principles of the freedom of information act.
- A practical understanding of the obligations and responsibilities of an FOI officer.
- A practical understanding of disclosure, non-disclosure and exemptions in relation to FOI requests.
- A practical understanding of key legislation including Environmental Information Regulation and Data Protection.
- An understanding of the enforcement and appeals process.

Audience

This qualification has been designed for:

- Information Managers
- FOI practitioners

- Information governance leads
- Data Protection Officers
- Solicitors advising on information law issues
- Press Officers
- and all those who have responsibility for managing and responding to requests for information from the public.

Entry-Level Requirements

There are no mandatory requirements for candidates to be able to undertake this certificate qualification, although it will be advantageous for candidates to have some prior understanding of freedom of information law, legal training, or experience of, or an aptitude for, applying the law.

Recommended Reading

We recommend reading articles on the freedom of information and reading the laws around the The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

What's Included

Course Materials

Exam Voucher

Exam Information

The BCS Practitioner in Freedom of Information examination is an online proctored, multiple choice, close book exam.

Duration: 90 minutes

Passmark: 39/60 (65%)

What's Next

Depending on your job role we recommend the following courses:

ITIL Foundation

EU GDPR Courses

Additional Information

Freedom of Information (FOI) Definition
Freedom of Information (FOI) refers to the public's right to access information held by government bodies and public authorities. This right ensures transparency, accountability, and openness, allowing individuals to request data or documents from these entities, subject to certain legal exemptions (e.g., for national security or personal privacy). FOI laws are designed to empower citizens,

promoting trust in public institutions by giving them the ability to scrutinize government actions and decisions.

A Brief History of Freedom of Information

The concept of Freedom of Information has roots going back to the Enlightenment, as thinkers advocated for government transparency. The first country to formalise this concept into law was Sweden in 1766, with its "Freedom of the Press Act," which granted access to official documents. Over time, other nations recognised the value of transparency. In the mid-20th century, the United States followed suit, passing its Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in 1966, which became a model for other countries. Many countries have since adopted similar legislation, reinforcing the global shift towards more open governance.

Why Certification in FOI is Important for Organisations

For organisations, particularly public bodies and those interacting with them, achieving certification in Freedom of Information practices is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Legal Compliance**: Many countries have stringent FOI regulations that organisations must follow. Certification ensures compliance with these laws, minimising the risk of legal repercussions.
2. **Transparency and Trust**: A certification demonstrates a commitment to openness, fostering trust with stakeholders, including customers, employees, and the public.
3. **Operational Efficiency**: Certification often comes with a structured framework for managing information requests. This makes it easier for organisations to respond efficiently and accurately, avoiding delays or errors that could damage their reputation.
4. **Risk Management**: Mishandling FOI requests can lead to costly legal challenges or penalties. Certification provides assurance that processes are in place to mitigate these risks.
5. **Competitive Advantage**: In sectors where transparency and accountability are valued, certification can differentiate an organisation from competitors, showcasing it as a responsible and reliable entity.