
Official Information Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington (the University) complies with its obligations under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA).

Note: New Zealand universities are defined as Crown entities under [section 7 of the Crown Entities Act 2004](#) and are bound by the OIA like most public service agencies and organisations in New Zealand.

2. Application of Policy

This Policy applies to Staff Members.

Policy Content

3. Principles

3.1 To fulfil its obligations under the OIA, the University will –

- (a) Manage requests for Official Information, carefully, conscientiously, and in accordance with both the spirit and the requirements of the OIA;
- (b) Make Official Information available (unless it is necessary to withhold it on any grounds defined in the OIA);
- (c) Have standardised processes and internal systems to handle Official Information requests promptly and efficiently within statutory timeframes;
- (d) Ensure its processes reflect the kāwanatanga principle of good governance, as stated in the University's Te Tiriti o Waitangi Statute; and
- (e) Maintain a record of all requests for Official Information and associated responses for accountability and future reference.

Note: Requests for Official Information and associated responses must be retained in accordance with the [New Zealand Universities Disposal Schedule](#).

3.2 The University makes its best efforts to promote openness and transparency by supporting the proactive release of information to the public.

4. General Requirements

4.1 Managers, including Te Hiwa members, are responsible for promoting compliance with this Policy.

4.2 Staff Members who receive a request for information must immediately refer the request to the OIA Officer for assessment.

Note: A request does not need to be in writing, and it does not need to reference the OIA in order to be considered under the OIA.

4.3 The OIA Officer has the delegated authority to request and obtain any information they consider necessary from any part of the University in order to respond to an Official Information request.

4.4 Staff Members must seek guidance on the scope of the request as early as possible and provide any information requested by the OIA Officer for assessment in line with specified time frames.

4.5 The OIA Officer is responsible for –

- (a) Providing expert advice and training to support the University's compliance with the OIA;
- (b) Drafting responses to Official Information requests in consultation with stakeholders (including third parties where necessary) and using approved templates;
- (c) Providing reasonable assistance to requestors in clarifying their requests (where necessary) or directing them to a source where the information could be obtained;
- (d) Communicating to requestors any decisions regarding their requests; and
- (e) Coordinating and responding to any investigation by the Office of the Ombudsman into a decision made by the University under the OIA.

Note: The New Zealand Ombudsman's [best practice guidance](#) provides more information on key timeframes.

- 4.6 Final responses to Official Information requests must be reviewed and approved by the Te Hiwa sponsor before they are released to the public. The Te Hiwa sponsor is the ultimate decision-maker on the content of the release.
- 4.7 If the Te Hiwa sponsor is unavailable, the OIA Officer has the delegated authority to release the final response after consultation with Director, Communications.

5. Definitions

In this Policy, unless the context otherwise requires:

OIA Officer means the General Counsel (or nominee).

Official Information means any information as defined by section 2 of the OIA, including but not limited to:

- Reports, memos, letters, notes, advice, chats on Teams or other messaging services, text messages and emails;
- Materials like tape recordings, videos or computer records;
- Internal policies or guidelines for decision-making; and
- Information that may be known by a Staff Member but has not been documented.

Library or museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes are not considered official information.

Note: Requests by an individual natural person (or that person's authorised agent) for personal information about themselves are dealt with in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020.

Staff Member means an employee of the University.

Related Documents and Information

6. Related Documents

[Crown Entities Act 2004](#)
[Education and Training Act 2020](#)
[Official Information Act 1982](#)
[Ombudsman Act 1975](#)

[Privacy Act 2020](#)[Public Records Act 2005](#)[Victoria University of Wellington Act 1961](#)[Delegations Statute](#)[Information and Records Management Policy](#)[Staff Conduct Policy](#)[Privacy Policy](#)[Te Tiriti o Waitangi Statute](#)

7. Document Management and Control

Essential Record

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Policy Sponsor	Toi Ōhanga – Chief Operating Officer
Policy Owner	General Counsel
Policy Contact	Senior Adviser, Official Information and Privacy

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