

Board of Management Audit and Assurance Committee

Date of Meeting	20 March 2023
Paper No.	AAC3-D
Agenda Item	5.2
Subject of Paper	Freedom of Information Report 2021-22
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Drew McGowan College Secretary
Date of production	9 March 2023
Action	For Discussion and Decision

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Committee is invited to review and discuss the Freedom of Information report for AY 2021-22 and approve it for tabling for noting at the next meeting of the Board.

2. Purpose

2.1 To provide an annual update on requests submitted to, and handled by, the College under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

3. Consultations

3.1 Shared with the Committee for review and discussion before being tabled at the Board.

4. Key Insights

4.1 The College is committed to openness and transparency. As a public authority, under the terms of the aforementioned legislation and regulation, the College has a duty to respond to requests for information that we hold from members of the public promptly and efficiently, subject to certain exemptions. The College is also required to adopt and maintain a [Model Publication Scheme](#).

4.2 From 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022, the College received 24 requests under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. This is a decrease of 33% (-12) compared to the previous academic year. 92% of requests in 2021-22 were responded to within the statutory timescales, with 2 responses being issued after 20 working days. No requests were treated under the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Requests	97	42	26	36	24
On-Time Responses	89 (92%)	41 (98%)	25 (96%)	35 (97%)	22 (92%)
Late Responses	5 (5%)	1 (2%)	1 (4%)	1 (3%)	2 (8%)
Closed Requests	3 (3%)	--	--	--	--

4.3 In 2021-22, 38% of requests were submitted directly to the College by private individuals or organisations and 29% were submitted through the platform WhatDoTheyKnow. 25% of requests were made by trade unions with the remaining 8% being students or researchers.

4.4 In 2021-22, 46% of requests were for information from HR & Organisational Development, followed by 21% for Finance and 8% for IT.

4.5 No applicants submitted appeals to the Scottish Information Commissioner in the 2021-22 academic year. The Commissioner did, however, investigate a request that was made to the College in 2020-21 and issued [Decision 059/2022](#) in June 2022 in favour of the applicant. In this case, the College refused the request on the grounds that it was a repeat of a previous request. The Commissioner did not agree that it was a repeat request. As a consequence of the College providing a revised response during the appeal, the Commissioner did not require any further action to be taken.

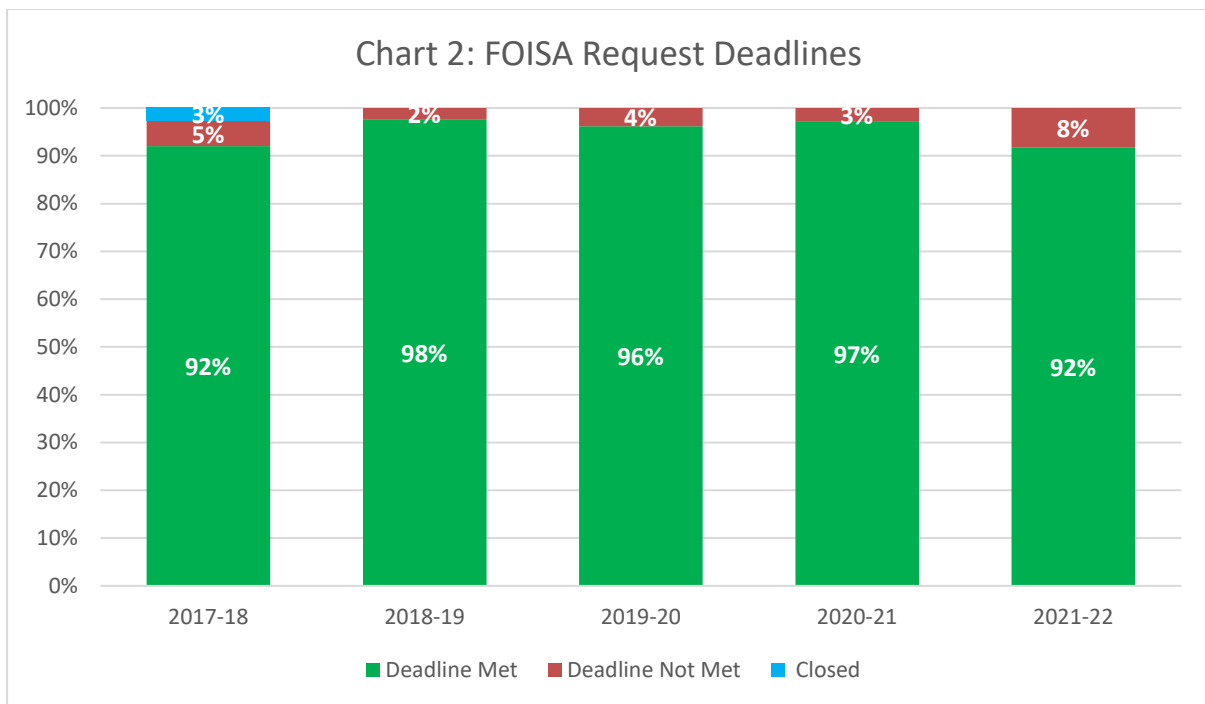
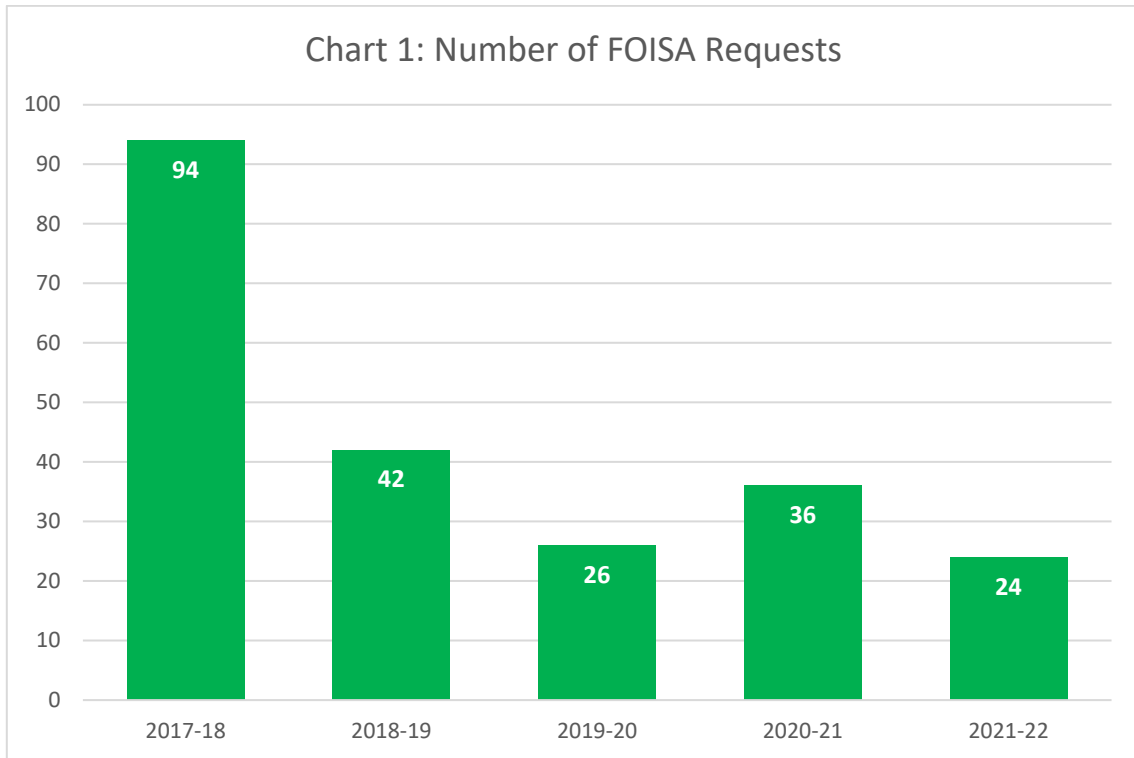
5. Impact and Implications

5.1 The College has processes and practices in place to meet our obligations under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and uphold openness and transparency. Failure to meet these obligations would damage public trust and confidence in the College.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Freedom of Information Requests Charts - 2017-18 to 2021-22

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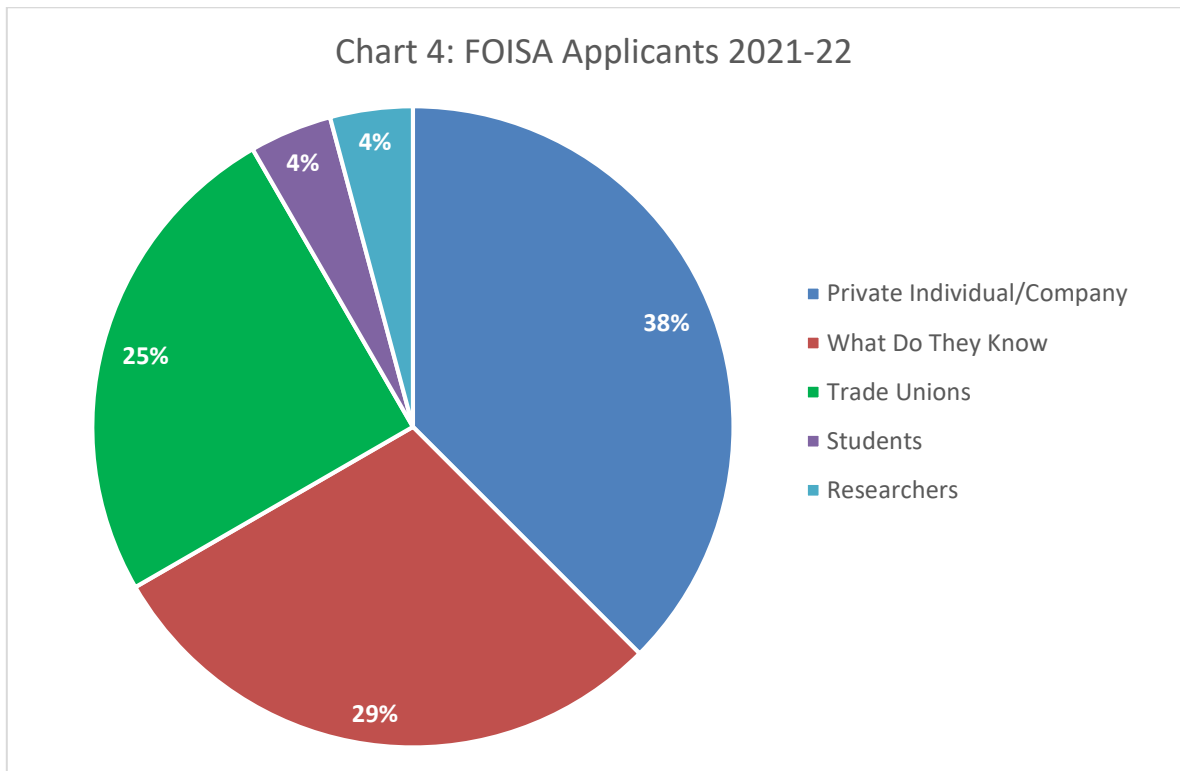
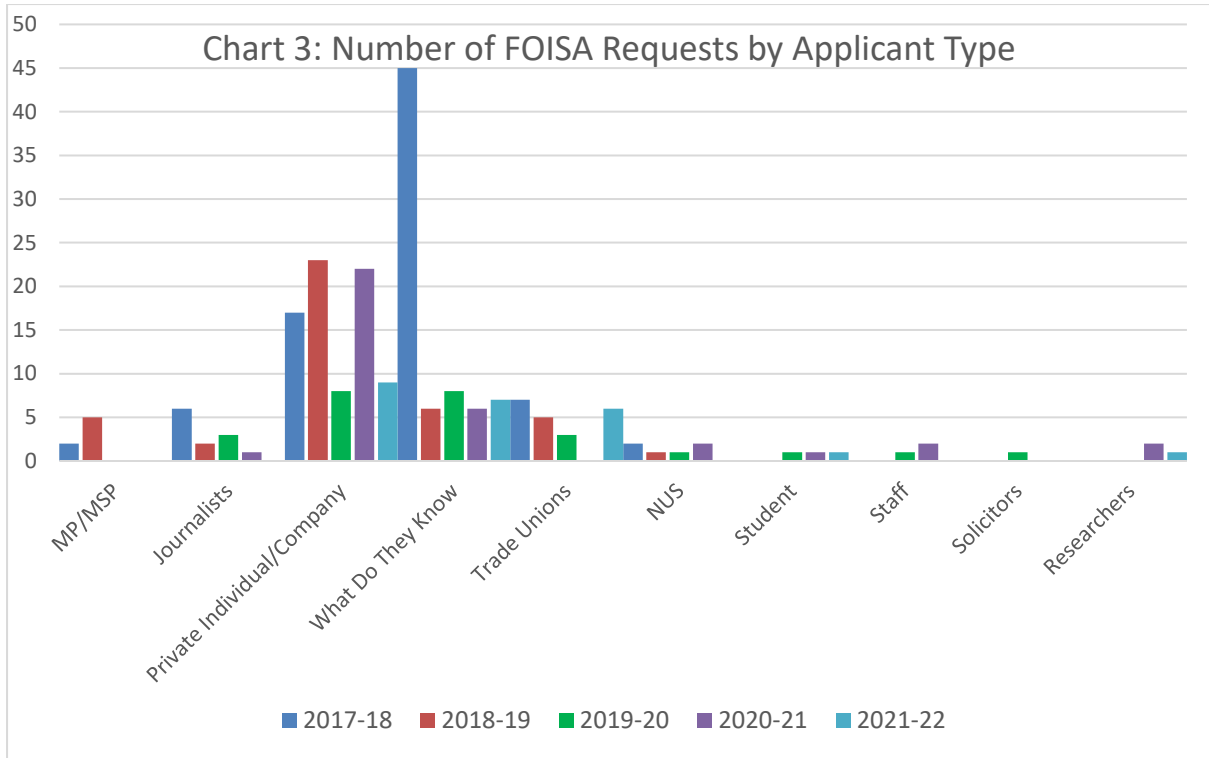


Chart 5: Number of FOISA Requests by Subject

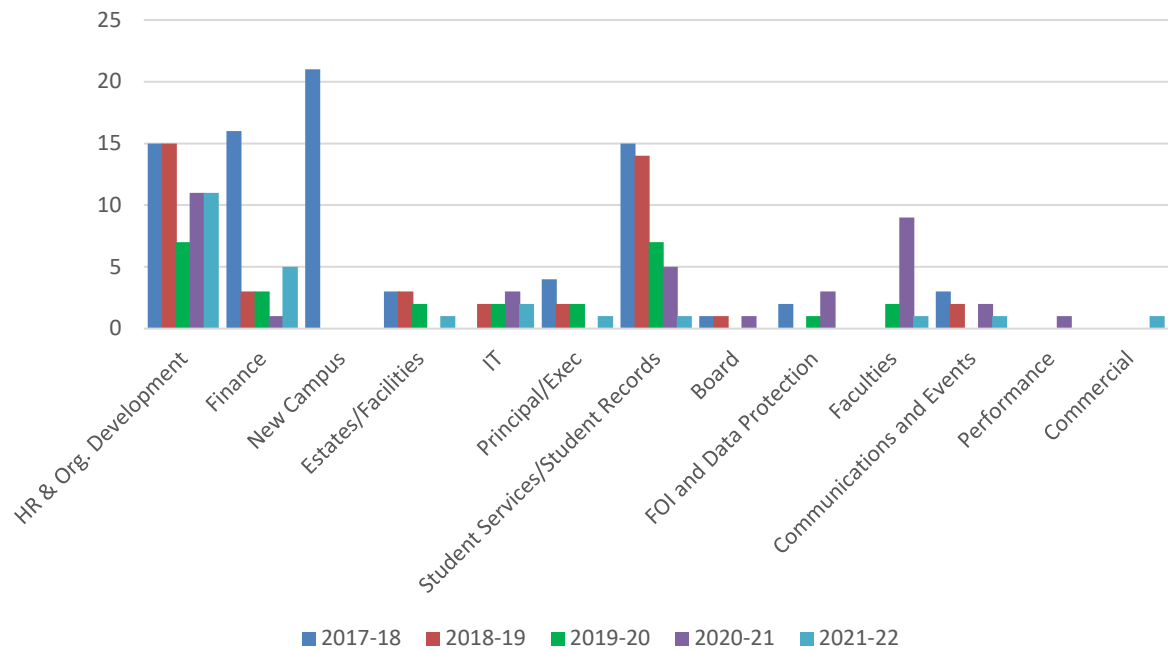


Chart 6: FOISA Requests by Subject 2021-22

