

[Home](#) / [Administration and support services](#) / [Central Secretariat](#) / [Information Governance](#) / [Data protection](#) / [Our policy](#)

# Our policy

Download our Data Protection Policy  
[[PDF]]



## Data Protection Policy

Doc. Ref. : Data Protection Policy  
Version : 3.2  
Status : Approved  
Date : 31/01/2021  
Approved by : The Information Governance Steering Group  
Review by : 31/01/2022

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Imperial College needs to collect, store and process personal data in order to carry out its functions and activities. The College is a Controller for most of the personal data it processes and is committed to full compliance with the applicable data protection legislation including Data Protection Act 2018, which came into effect May 2018, and the EU or UK-specific version (as applicable) of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data (referred to as the “**GDPR**”) as well as the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003.

1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the College’s Information Security Policy and related Codes of Practice. These provide more detailed guidance on the correct handling of personal data and together with this policy are an integral part of the overall information governance framework of the College.

The codes of practice linked to the policy are:

Reference	Title
DP_C01	Handling of Personal Data
DP_C02	Handling of Patient Data
DP_C03	Access to Personal Data by Subjects
DP_C04	CCTV
DP_C05	Information Asset Register
DP_C06	Internal Data Sharing and Integration
DP_C07	Data Protection Impact Assessment

1.3 The College's Data Protection Officer is responsible for informing and advising the College and its staff on its data protection obligations, and for monitoring compliance with those obligations and with the College's policies. If you have any questions or comments about the content of this policy or if you need further information, you should contact the Data Protection Officer via email at [dpo@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:dpo@imperial.ac.uk).

## 2. SCOPE

2.1 All College staff, students and other authorised third parties (including temporary and agency workers, contractors, casual workers, interns and volunteers) who have access to any personal data held by or on behalf of the College, must adhere to this policy and associated Codes of Practice.

2.2 Personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (referred to as a 'data subject'); an identifiable person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that person.

2.3 The information covered by the policy includes all written, spoken and electronic personal data held, used or transmitted by or on behalf of the College, in whatever media. This includes personal data held on computer systems, hand-held devices, phones, paper records, and personal data transmitted orally.

2.4 The College will review and update this policy in accordance with our data protection obligations. The College may amend, update or supplement it from time to time and will issue an appropriate notification of that at the relevant time.

### 3. data protection principles

3.1 The College will comply with the following data protection principles when processing personal data:

3.1.1 we will process personal data lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner;

3.1.2 we will collect personal data for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes only, and will not process it in a way that is incompatible with those legitimate purposes;

3.1.3 we will only process the personal data that is adequate, relevant and necessary for the relevant purposes;

3.1.4 we will keep accurate and up to date personal data, and take reasonable steps to ensure that inaccurate personal data are deleted or corrected without delay;

3.1.5 we will keep personal data in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the data are processed; and

3.1.6 we will take appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure that personal data are kept secure and protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing, and against accidental loss, destruction or damage.

3.2 The College is also responsible for demonstrating compliance with the above data protection principles.

#### 4. Basis for Processing personal data

4.1 In relation to any processing activity that involves personal data we will, before the processing starts for the first time, and then regularly while it continues:

4.1.1 review the purposes of the particular processing activity, and select the most appropriate lawful basis for that processing, i.e.:

- (a) that the data subject has consented to the processing;
- (b) that the processing is necessary for the performance of a contract to which the data subject is party or in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract;
- (c) that the processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which the College is subject;
- (d) that the processing is necessary for the protection of the vital interests of the data subject or another natural person;
- (e) that the processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or exercise of official authority by the College; or
- (f) where the College is not carrying out tasks as a public authority, that the processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests of the College or a third party, except where those interests are overridden by the interests of fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject.

4.1.2 except where the processing is based on consent, satisfy ourselves that the processing is necessary for the purpose of the relevant lawful basis (i.e. that there is no other reasonable way to achieve that purpose);

4.1.3 document our decision as to which lawful basis applies, to help demonstrate our compliance with the data protection principles;

4.1.4 include information about both the purposes of the processing and the lawful basis for it in our relevant privacy notices; and

4.1.5 where sensitive personal data is processed, also identify a lawful special condition for processing that information (see paragraph 5 below), and document it.

## **5. SENSITIVE PERSONAL DATA**

5.1 Sensitive personal data (sometimes referred to as 'special categories of personal data') are personal data, revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade-union membership; data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation; genetic data or biometric data.

5.2 The College may from time to time need to process sensitive personal data. We will only process sensitive personal data if:

5.2.1 we have a lawful basis for doing so as set out in paragraph 4.1 above; and

5.2.2 one of the special conditions for processing sensitive personal data applies, e.g.:

- (a) the data subject has given explicit consent;
- (b) the processing is necessary for the purposes of exercising the employment law rights or obligations of the College or of the data subject;
- (c) the processing is necessary to protect the data subject's vital interests, and the data subject is physically incapable of giving consent;
- (d) the processing relates to personal data which are manifestly made public by the data subject;
- (e) the processing is necessary for the establishment, exercise or defence of legal claims; or
- (f) the processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.

5.3 The College's data protection privacy notices set out the types of sensitive personal data that the College processes, what it is used for and the lawful basis for the processing.

## **6. INFORMATION ASSET REGISTER (IAR) AND Data PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (DPIA)**

The College maintains an Information Asset Register (IAR) that contains the details of information assets used in College. It is the responsibility of Heads of Departments and Divisions to assign Information Asset Owners for every information asset kept by their departments and record these in the IAR as described in Code of Practice “DP\_C04 Information Asset Register Code of Practice”.

Where processing is likely to result in a high risk to an individual’s data protection rights (e.g. where the College is planning to use a new form of technology), those responsible in College should, before commencing the processing, carry out a DPIA. It is the responsibility of the Heads of Departments and Divisions to confirm Information Asset Owners review their Information Assets recorded in the Information Asset Register annually as described in Code of Practice “DP\_C07 Data Privacy Impact Assessment”:

- 6.1 whether the processing is necessary and proportionate in relation to its purpose;
- 6.2 the risks to individuals; and
- 6.3 what measures can be put in place to address those risks and protect personal / sensitive data.

### **7. Documentation and records**

7.1 Those responsible will keep written records of their processing activities. This will be done primarily in the College’s Information Asset Register. Each information asset (which will include personal data) will have an identified Information Asset Owner who will be responsible for the information and for logging a description of the processing on the register. Further details of the Information Asset Register are set out in Code of Practice 5.

7.2 The College will conduct regular reviews of the personal data we process and update our documentation accordingly. This may include:

- 7.2.1 carrying out information audits to find out what personal data the College holds;
- 7.2.2 distributing questionnaires and talking to staff across the College to get a more complete picture of our processing activities; and

7.2.3 reviewing our policies, procedures, contracts and agreements to address areas such as retention, security and data sharing.

## **8. PRIVACY NOTICES**

8.1 The College will issue privacy notices informing the people from whom we collect information about the personal data that we collect and hold relating to them, how they can expect their personal data to be used and for what purposes.

8.2 The College will take appropriate measures to provide information in privacy notices in a concise, transparent, intelligible and easily accessible form, using clear and plain language.

## **9. INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS**

9.1 Data subjects have the following rights in relation to their personal data:

9.1.1 to be informed about how, why and on what basis that data is processed (at the College, we customarily do that via privacy notices);

9.1.2 to obtain confirmation that their data is being processed and to obtain access to it and certain other information, by making a subject access request — see Code of Practice 3 about the College's subject access procedures;

9.1.3 to have data corrected if it is inaccurate or incomplete;

9.1.4 to have data erased if it is no longer necessary for the purpose for which it was originally collected/processed, or if there are no overriding legitimate grounds for the processing (this is sometimes known as 'the right to be forgotten');

9.1.5 to restrict the processing of personal data where the accuracy of the information is contested, or the processing is unlawful (but the data subject does not want the data to be erased), or where the College no longer needs the personal data but the data subject requires the data to establish, exercise or defend a legal claim; and

9.1.6 to restrict the processing of personal data temporarily where the data subject does not think it is accurate (and the College is verifying whether it is accurate), or where the data subject has objected to the processing (and the College is considering whether the College's legitimate grounds override the data subject's interests).

9.2 Each of the College's privacy notices provides details of how these individual rights can be exercised. In most cases, individuals are advised to contact the College's Data Protection Officer.

## **10. INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATIONS**

10.1 Individuals are responsible for helping the College keep their personal data up to date. Individuals should let the College know if the information they have provided to the College changes, e.g. if one moves house or changes details of the bank or building society account to which they are paid.

10.2 Members of staff may have access to the personal data of other members of staff, students and other clients and suppliers of the College in the course of their employment or engagement. If so, the College expects such members of staff to help meet the College's data protection obligations to those individuals.

10.3 If a College member has access to College personal data, they must:

10.3.1 only access the personal data that they have authority to access, and only for authorised purposes;

10.3.2 only allow others to access personal data if they have appropriate authorisation to do so;

10.3.3 keep personal data secure (e.g. by complying with rules on access to premises, computer access, password protection and secure file storage and destruction and other precautions set out in the College's Information Security Policy and related Codes of Practice);

10.3.4 not remove personal data, or devices containing personal data (or which can be used to access it), from the College's premises unless appropriate security measures are in place (such as pseudonymisation, encryption or password protection) to secure the information and the device; and

10.3.5 not store personal data on local drives or on personal devices that are used for work purposes.

10.4 The College's Data Protection Officer should be contacted if a member of staff is concerned or suspects that one of the following has taken place (or is taking place or likely to take place):



- 10.4.1 processing of personal data without a lawful basis for its processing or, in the case of sensitive personal data, without also one of the conditions in paragraph 5.2.2 above being met;
- 10.4.2 access to personal data without the proper authorisation;
- 10.4.3 personal data not kept or deleted securely;
- 10.4.4 removal of personal data, or devices containing personal data (or which can be used to access it), from the College's premises without appropriate security measures being in place;
- 10.4.5 any other breach of this policy or of any of the data protection principles set out in paragraph 3 above.

## **11. INFORMATION SECURITY**

11.1 The College will use appropriate technical and organisational measures in accordance with the College's Information Security Policy and related Codes of Practice to keep personal data secure, and in particular to protect against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage. These may include:

- 11.1.1 making sure that, where possible, anonymised data is used, or personal data is pseudonymised or encrypted;
- 11.1.2 ensuring the ongoing confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of processing systems and services;
- 11.1.3 ensuring that, in the event of a physical or technical incident, availability and access to personal data can be restored in a timely manner; and
- 11.1.4 a process for regularly testing, assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of technical and organisational measures for ensuring the security of the processing.

11.2 Where the College uses authorised third parties to process personal data on its behalf, additional security arrangements need to be implemented in contracts with those parties to safeguard the security of personal data. In particular, contracts with third parties must provide that:

- 11.2.1 the third part may act only on the written instructions of the College;
- 11.2.2 those processing the data are subject to a duty of confidence;

- 11.2.3 appropriate measures are taken to ensure the security of processing;
  - 11.2.4 sub-contractors are only engaged with the prior consent of the College and under a written contract;
  - 11.2.5 the third party will assist the College in providing subject access and allowing individuals to exercise their rights in relation to data protection;
  - 11.2.6 the third party will assist the College in meeting its obligations in relation to the security of processing, the notification of data breaches and data protection impact assessments;
  - 11.2.7 the third party will delete or return all personal data to the College as requested at the end of the contract; and
  - 11.2.8 the third party will provide the College with whatever information it reasonably needs to ensure that they are both meeting their data protection obligations.
- 11.3 Guidance is available to staff during the creation or amendment of agreements where personal data will be shared with authorised parties. This can be obtained via the College DPO, College lawyers or relevant contracts team e.g. JRCO and Procurement.

## **12. STORAGE AND RETENTION OF PERSONAL DATA**

- 12.1 Personal data (and sensitive personal data) will be kept securely in accordance with the College's Information Security Policy.
- 12.2 Personal data (and sensitive personal data) should not be retained for any longer than necessary. The length of time over which data should be retained will depend upon the circumstances, including the reasons why the personal data was obtained. The College's Retention Schedule (which is maintained by the College's Archives and Corporate Records Unit) sets out the relevant retention period, or the criteria that should be used to determine the retention period – the Retention Schedule is available at:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/records-and-archives/public/RetentionSchedule.pdf>

12.3 Where there is any uncertainty with respect to data retention, staff should consult either the Archives and Corporate Records Unit or the College's Data Protection Officer.

12.4 Personal data (and sensitive personal data) that is no longer required will be deleted permanently from our information systems and any hard copies will be destroyed securely.

### **13. DATA BREACHES**

13.1 A data breach may take many different forms, for example:

13.1.1 loss or theft of data or equipment on which personal data is stored;

13.1.2 unauthorised access to or use of personal data either by a member of staff or third party;

13.1.3 loss of data resulting from an equipment or systems (including hardware and software) failure;

13.1.4 human error, such as accidental deletion or alteration of data;

13.1.5 unforeseen circumstances, such as a fire or flood;

13.1.6 deliberate attacks on IT systems, such as hacking, viruses or phishing scams; and

13.1.7 'blagging' offences, where information is obtained by deceiving the organisation which holds it.

13.2 If anyone believes personal data held by the College has been compromised in some way they MUST report this immediately by completing a [notification of data security breach form](#) and sending it to:

[365-dataprotectionoffice@groups.imperial.ac.uk](mailto:365-dataprotectionoffice@groups.imperial.ac.uk)

13.3 The College will:

13.3.1 investigate any reported actual or suspected data security breach;

13.3.2 where applicable, make the required report of a data breach to the Information Commissioner's Office without undue delay and, where possible within 72 hours of becoming aware of it, if it is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals; and

13.3.3 notify the affected individuals if a data breach is likely to result in a high risk to their rights and freedoms and notification is required by law.

## **14. INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS**

14.1 The College may transfer personal data outside the European Economic Area (EEA) (which comprises the countries in the European Union and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) to other countries on the basis that such countries are designated as having an adequate level of protection or that the organisation receiving the information has provided adequate safeguards (e.g. by way of binding corporate rules or standard data protection clauses) or where we obtain the relevant data subjects' explicit consent to such transfers.

14.2 We will inform data subjects of any envisaged international transfers in the relevant privacy notice.

## **15. TRAINING**

Staff need to be adequately trained regarding their data protection responsibilities. Individuals whose roles require regular access to personal data, or who are responsible for implementing this policy or responding to subject access requests under this policy, will receive additional training to help them understand their duties and how to comply with them.

16. Consequences of failing to comply

16.1 The College takes compliance with this policy very seriously. Failure to comply with the policy:

16.1.1 puts at risk the individuals whose personal data is being processed;

16.1.2 carries the risk of significant civil and criminal sanctions for the individual and the College; and

16.1.3 may, in some circumstances, amount to a criminal offence by the individual.

16.2 Because of the importance of this policy, an employee's failure to comply with any requirement of it may lead to disciplinary action under the College's procedures, and this action may result in dismissal for gross misconduct. If a non-employee breaches this policy, they may have their contract terminated with immediate effect.

If you have any questions or concerns about anything in this policy, do not hesitate to contact the College's Data Protection Officer at [dpo@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:dpo@imperial.ac.uk), tel. 020 759 43502.

---

Imperial  
College  
London  
South  
Kensington  
Campus  
London  
SW7  
2AZ,  
UK  
tel:  
+44  
(0)20  
7589  
5111