

Freedom of Information (FOI) Survey Results 2005

Results from the JISC/UUK/SCOP

FOI Survey based on 76 returns received by 14th November 2005



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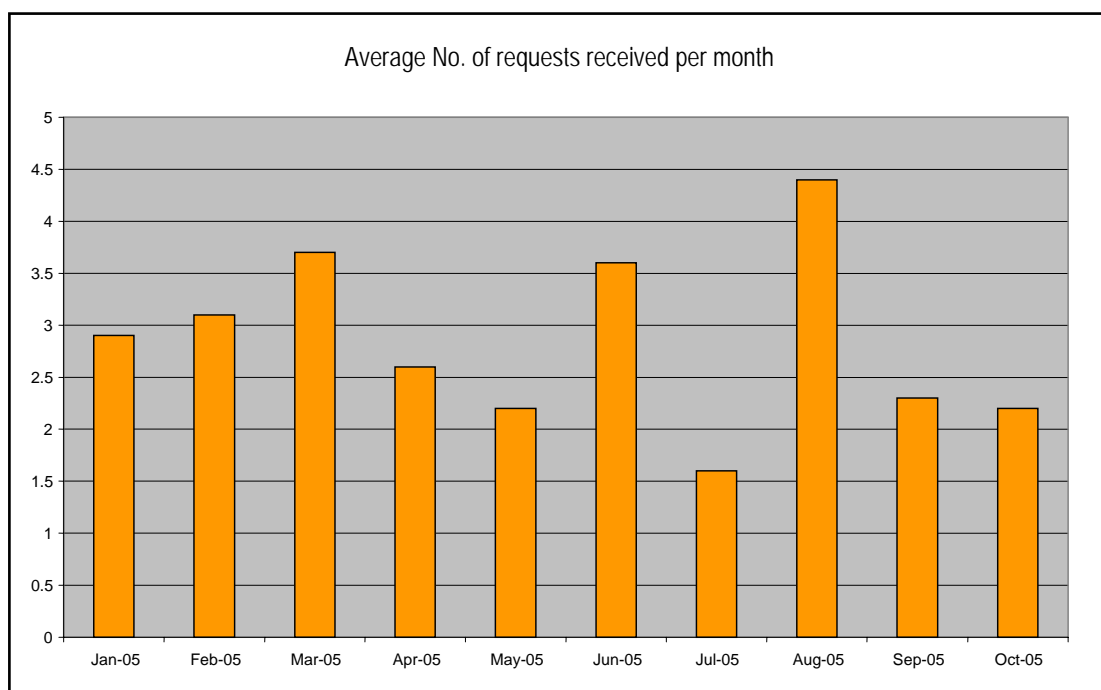
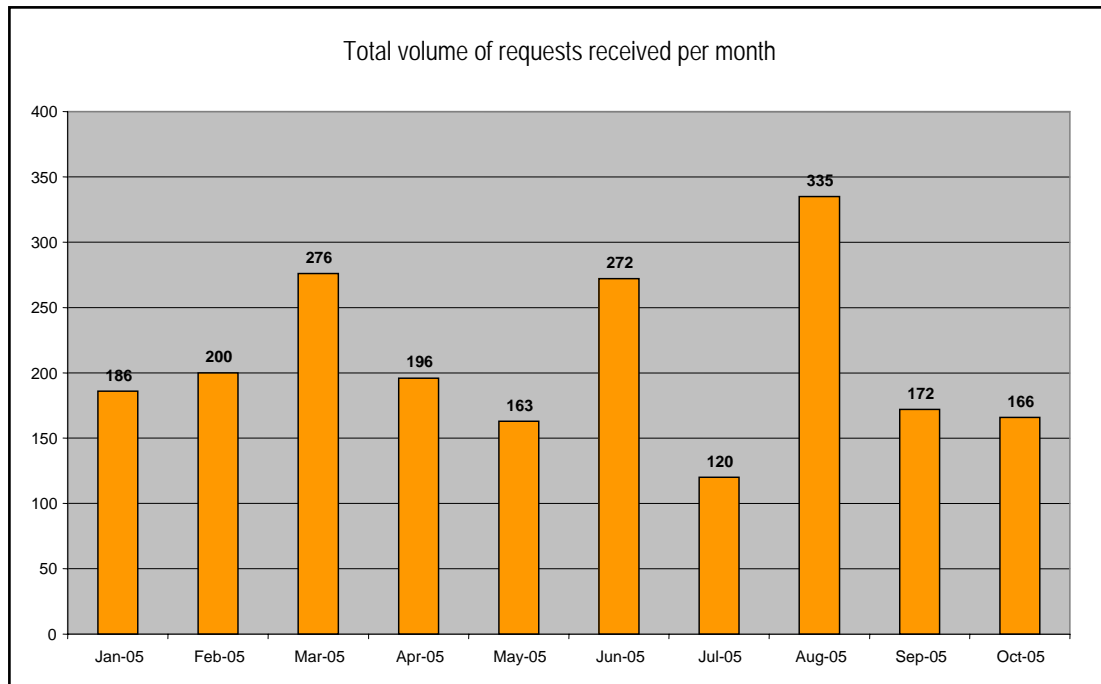


Q.1. How does your institution define an FOI request (i.e. on what basis do you decide whether or not to record a request received)?

There was too much variety in the form of response to provide an accurate statistical analysis. That said four broad approaches to defining an FOI request could be identified:

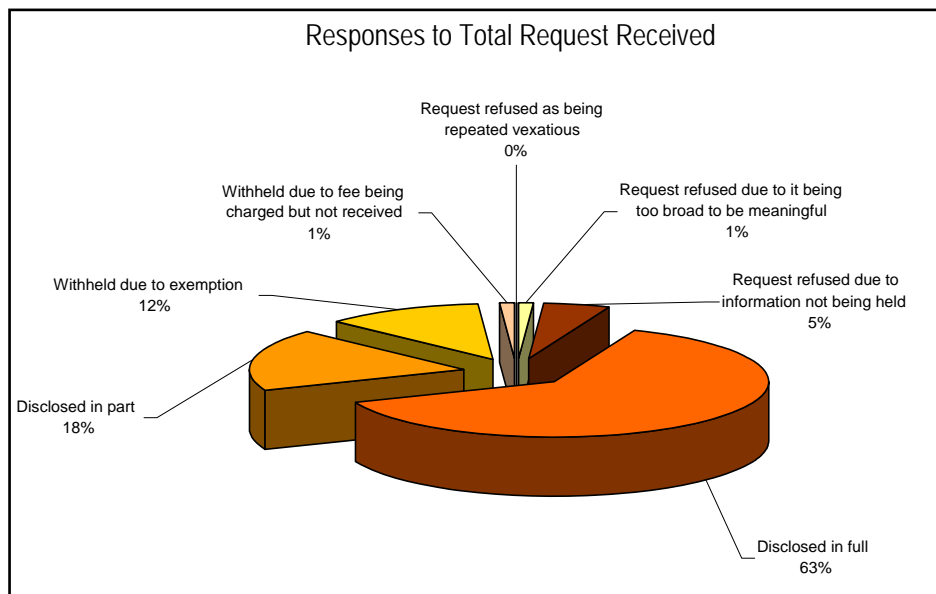
- Requests for information not included in our Publication Scheme (approx. 4%).
- Any request for recorded information received in written form (approx. 4%).
- The request must specifically mention that it is an FOI request (approx. 11%).
- Requests for information that are considered non-standard or non-routine (approx. 81%).

Q.2. According to the above definition, how many requests have you received during the months January to October 2005



Q.3. Of the total number of requests received how many have resulted in the following responses:

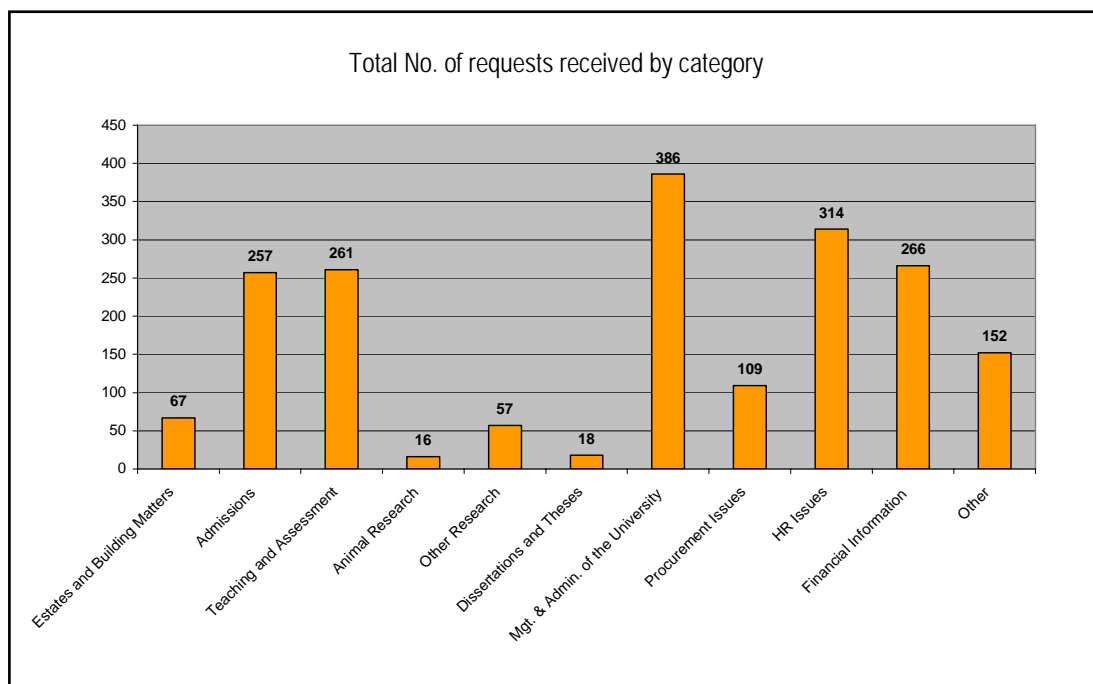
Please note that not all institutions routinely record this information. The chart below is based on the results of the 73 institutions which do.



Q.4. How many of the requests you have received have cited specific legislation?

1207 requests out of a total of 2086 requests received have cited specific legislation (57.7%).

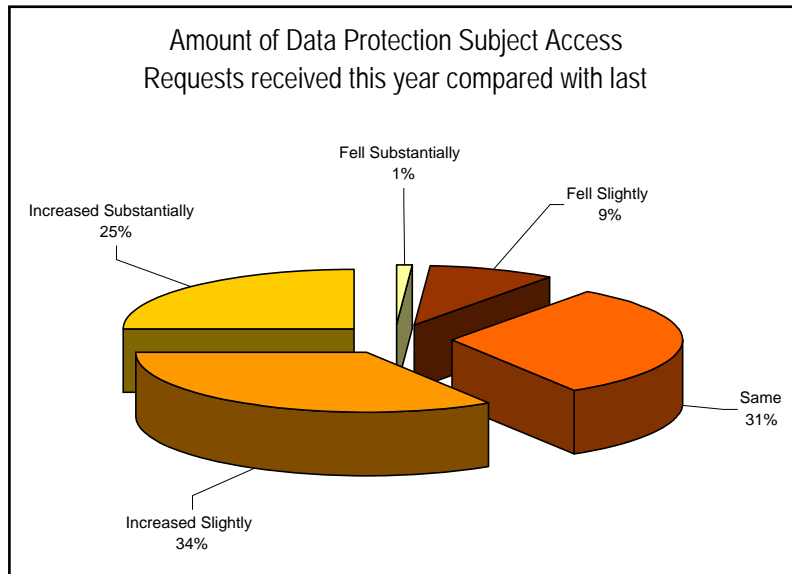
Q.5. Of the total number of requests received that you have dealt with under FOI how many have related to the following subject areas? (If a request covers more than one of the areas outlined below please record it under the principal subject area.)



Q.6. How many Data Protection Act Subject Access Requests have you received since January 2005?

435 Data Protection Act Subject Access Requests have been received.

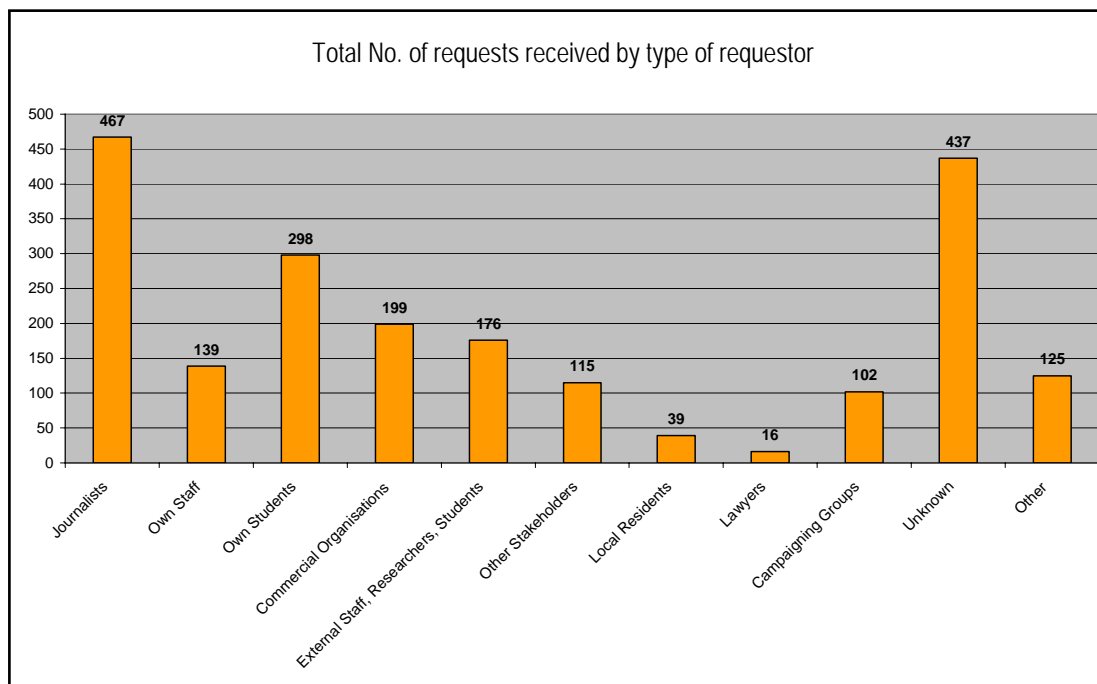
Q.7. In relation to the previous year would you say the number of SAR's you have received since January 2005 have:



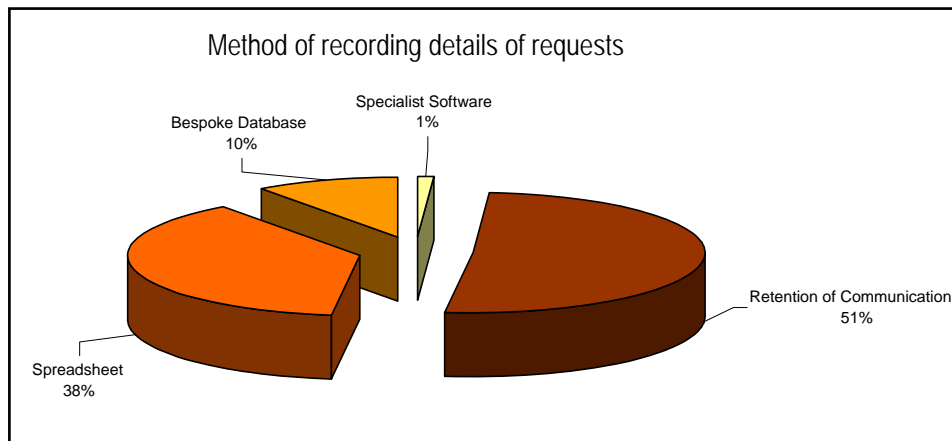
Q.8. How many requests have you received since January 2005 which you have responded to under the Environmental Information Regulations?

19 requests under the EIR have been received.

Q.9. Of the FOI requests you have received since January 2005 how many have been from each of the following categories of requestor?

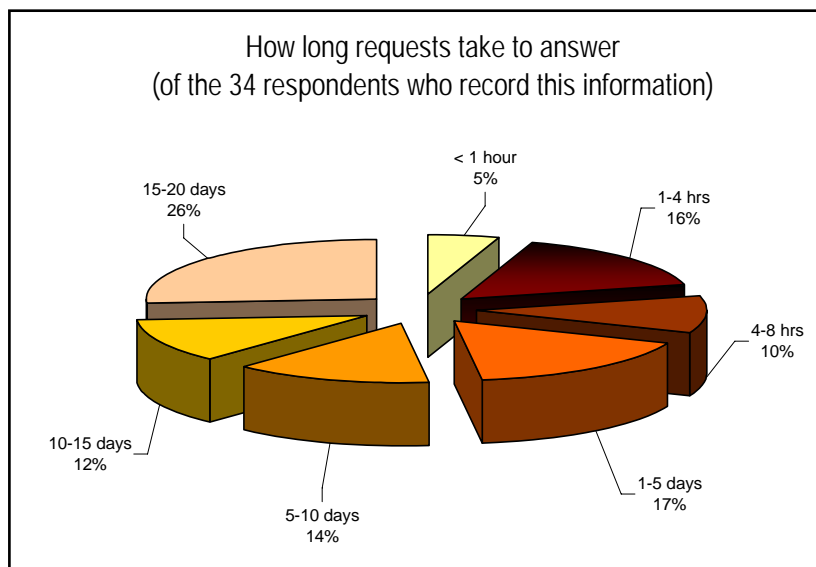


Q.10. How do you record the details of the requests you receive and the responses you give? (You can select more than one option)



Q.11. If you routinely record the amount of time it takes to answer a request please indicate how many requests have taken the following periods of time to complete. (Including forwarding / logging of request, identifying and locating relevant information, considering exemptions, redacting / preparing information for release, internal approval process for release.)

It should be noted that the spread of time periods indicated below may in part be due to differing interpretations of the question, with some respondents measuring actual time spent working on the request and others measuring total elapsed time taken (i.e. including periods spent waiting or responses).



Q.12. How many requests have you received which you have not completed within 20 working days?

84 requests out of a total of 2086 (4%) received were not completed within 20 working days.

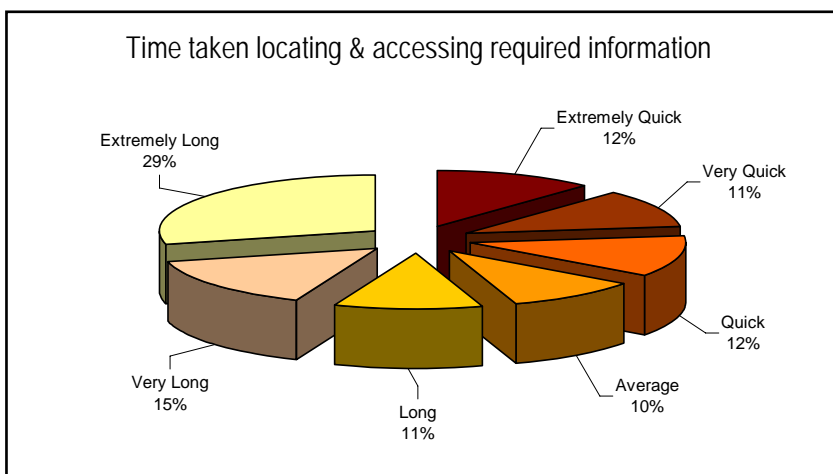
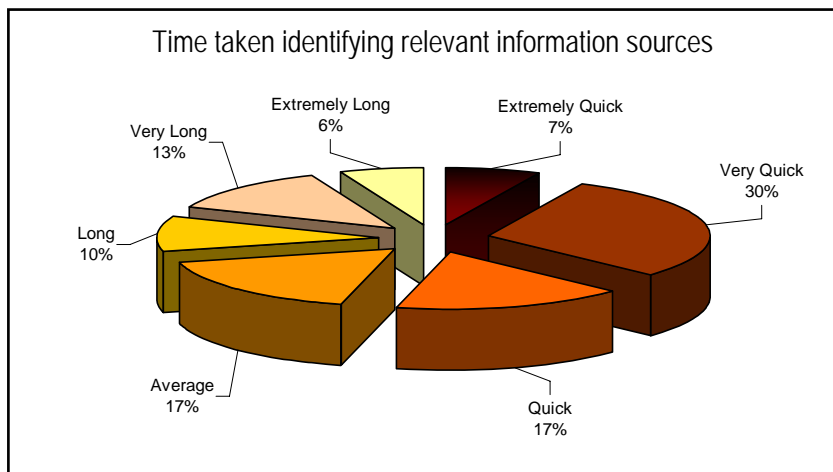
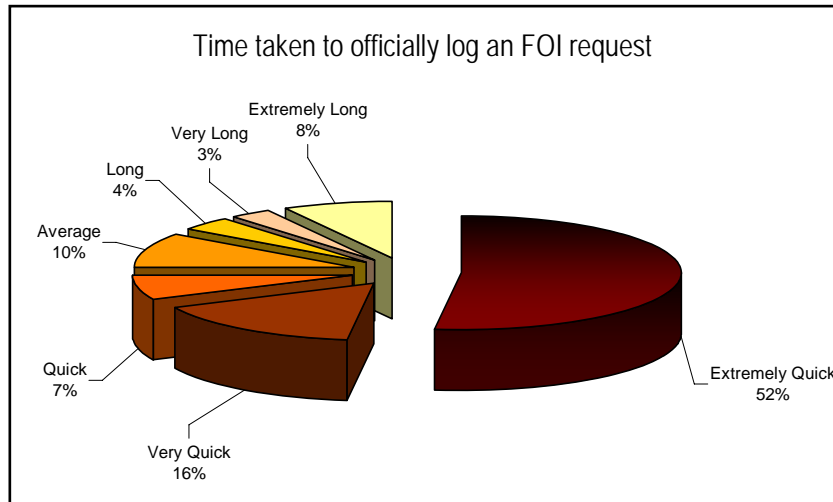
Q.13. If appropriate, how many of those requests noted in your answer to Question 12 were caused by extensions to the deadline to allow for consideration of the public interest test?

Of those 84, 10 (representing 0.5% of the 2086) were caused by extensions to the deadline to allow for consideration of the public interest test.

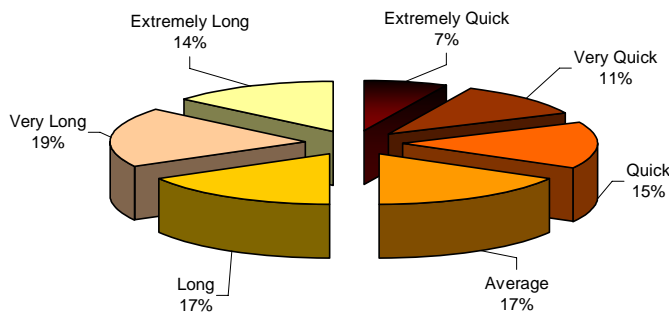
Q.14. What is the longest amount of time it has taken to complete a request? (in minutes)

Responses to this request were not captured in a format which enabled the results to be analysed successfully.

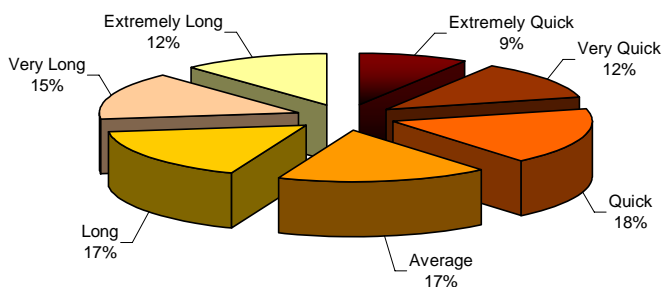
Q.15. Please rank the steps below in order of the amount of time they usually take when completing a request (ranging from 1 = longest time to complete to 7 = shortest time to complete)



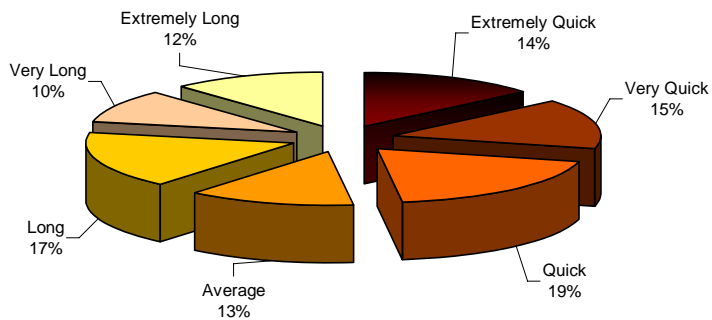
Time taken reviewing the information



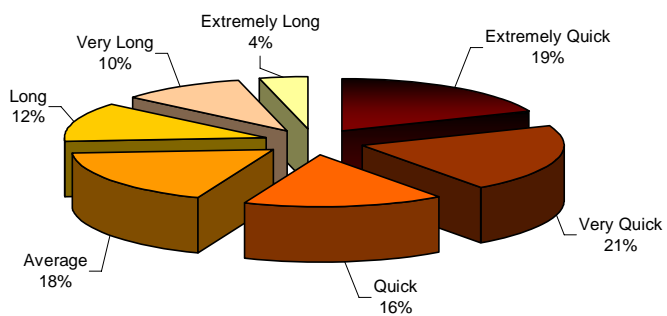
Time taken considering exemptions

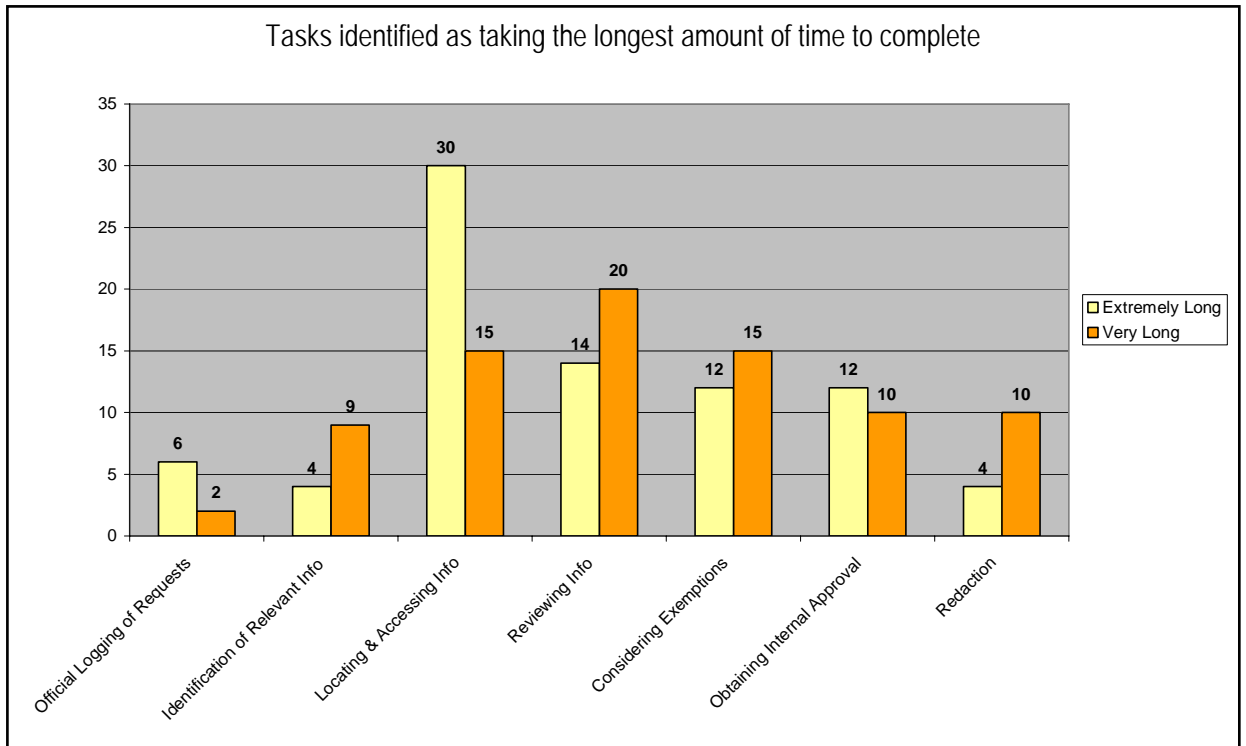


Time taken obtaining internal approval for decision taken



Time taken redacting information

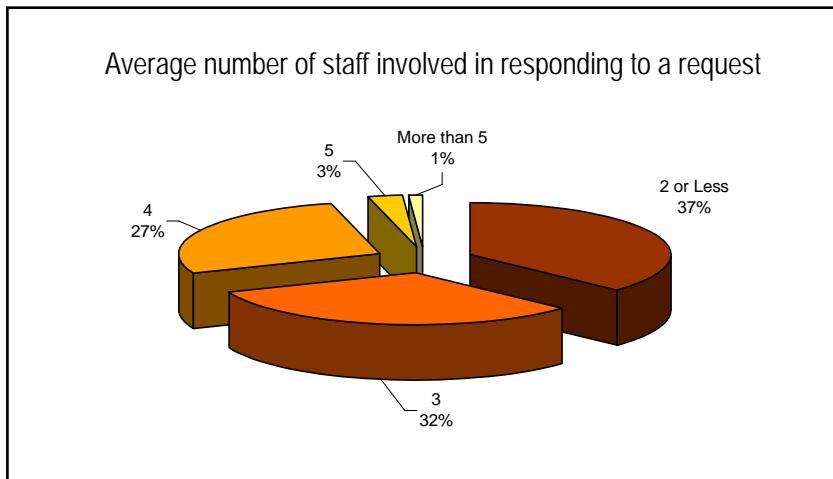




Q.16. Were you able to cope adequately with the requests you received during the summer vacation?

69 out of 76 respondents (91%) were able to cope during the summer vacation. However, some felt this could be a problem in the future. Also worth noting that some suggested they had only been able to cope as this was a quiet time for requests although the survey shows August to be the busiest month of all.

Q.17. On average, how many members of staff are actively involved in responding to an FOI request?



Q.18. How many requests have you received for which you have charged a fee?

10 requests out of 1532 answerable requests (0.6%) which were either answered partially or in full resulted in a fee being charged.

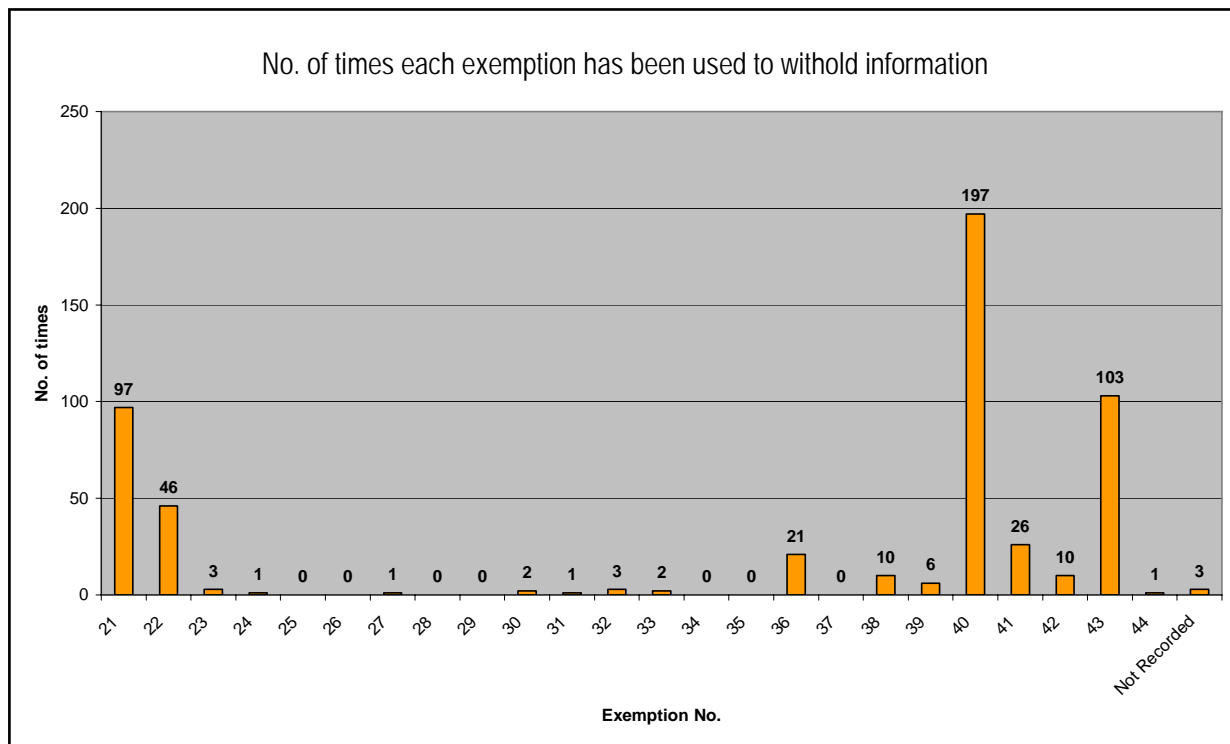
Q.19. How many requests have you received for which you have charged for disbursements?

6 requests out of 1532 answerable requests (0.4%) which were either answered partially or in full resulted in disbursements being charged.

Q.20. Do you publish the requests you have received and the answers / information you have given (e.g. in the form of a *disclosure log*)?

4 out of 76 respondents (5.3%) publish requests and answers given.

Q.21. Since January 2005 how many times have you relied on the following exemptions to withhold information requested?



Key to exemption numbers

- 21. Information accessible to applicant by other means.
- 22. Information intended for future publication.
- 23. Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters.
- 24. National security.
- 25. Certificates under ss. 23 and 24: supplementary provisions.
- 26. Defence.
- 27. International relations.
- 28. Relations within the United Kingdom.
- 29. The economy.
- 30. Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities.
- 31. Law enforcement.
- 32. Court records, etc.
- 33. Audit functions.
- 34. Parliamentary privilege.
- 35. Formulation of government policy, etc.
- 36. Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs.
- 37. Communications with Her Majesty, etc. and honours.
- 38. Health and safety.
- 39. Environmental information.
- 40. Personal information.
- 41. Information provided in confidence.
- 42. Legal professional privilege.
- 43. Commercial interests.
- 44. Prohibitions on disclosure.

Q.22. How many requests for information which have been either partially or completely refused by the institution have subsequently been subject to an internal appeal?

54 decisions to withhold information have been subject to an internal appeal (3.5%).

Q.23. How many of these decisions to refuse a request, either partially or completely, were:

37 Upheld by the internal appeal (2.4%).
17 Overruled by the internal appeal (1.1%).
3 Decision still pending (0.2%).

Q.24. How many requests have been the subject of external appeal (i.e. involving the Office of the Information Commissioner or the Information Tribunal)?

11 decisions to withhold information have been the subject of external appeal (0.72%).

Q.25. How many of these decisions to refuse a request, either partially or completely, were:

2 Upheld completely by the external appeal.
2 Upheld in part by the external appeal.
0 Overruled by the external appeal.
7 Decision still pending.

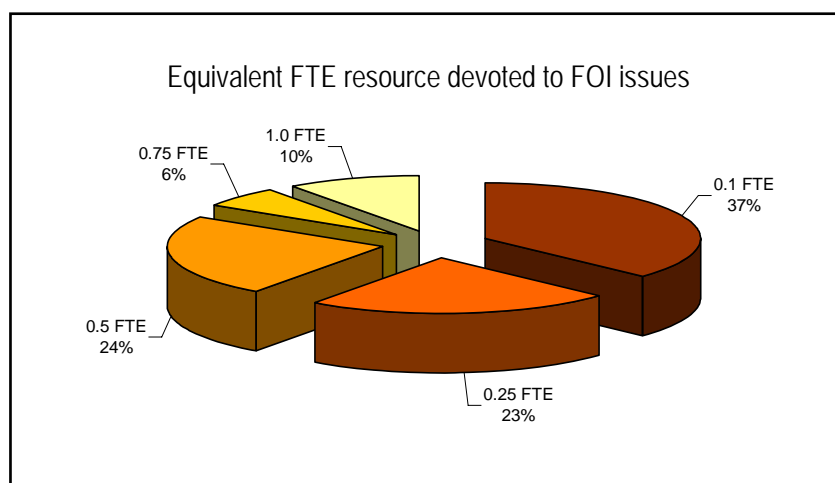
Q.26. How many times have you sought formal legal advice when responding to a request or appeal?

Legal advice has been sought on 71 occasions.

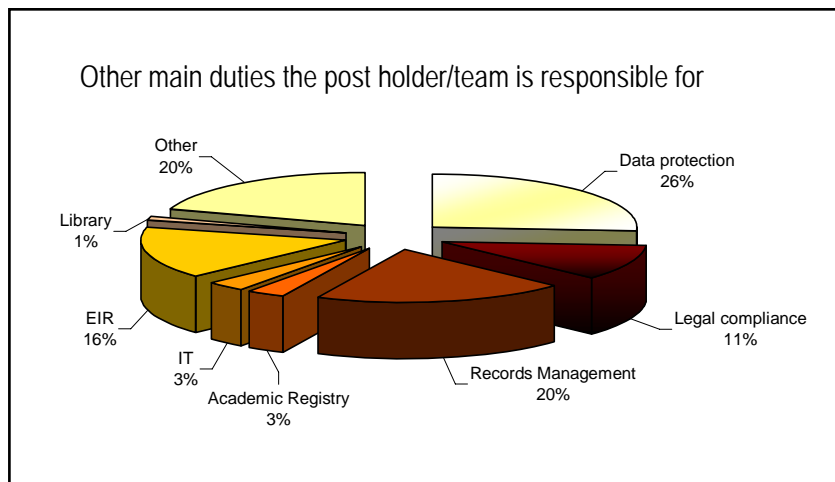
Q.27. Do you have an officially designated FOI Officer and/or team?

71 (93.4%) yes.
4 (5.3%) no.

Q.28. If so, approximately what equivalent FTE resource is devoted to FOI issues?



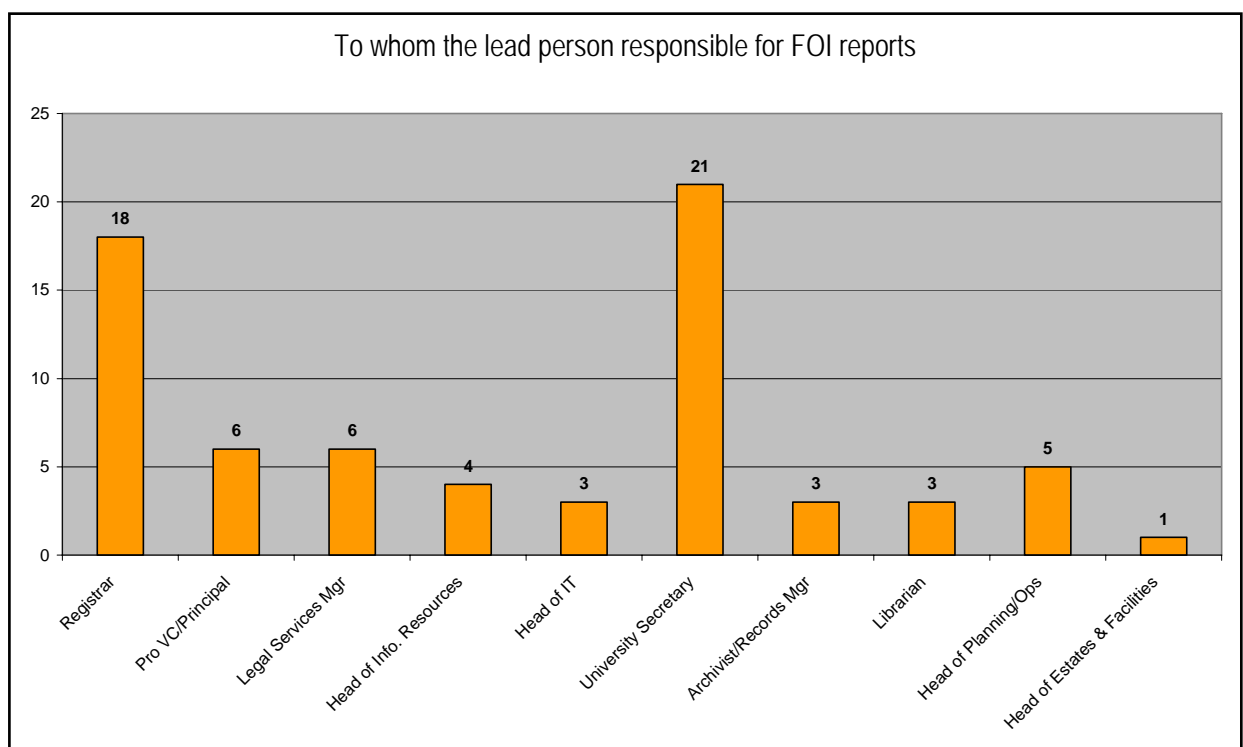
Q.29. If appropriate, what other main duties is this post holder / team responsible for?



Q.30. At what grade are these staff employed?

Too much variety in the form of response to be able to summarise.

Q.31. To whom does the lead person in this area report for FOI issues? (Please give title of post.)



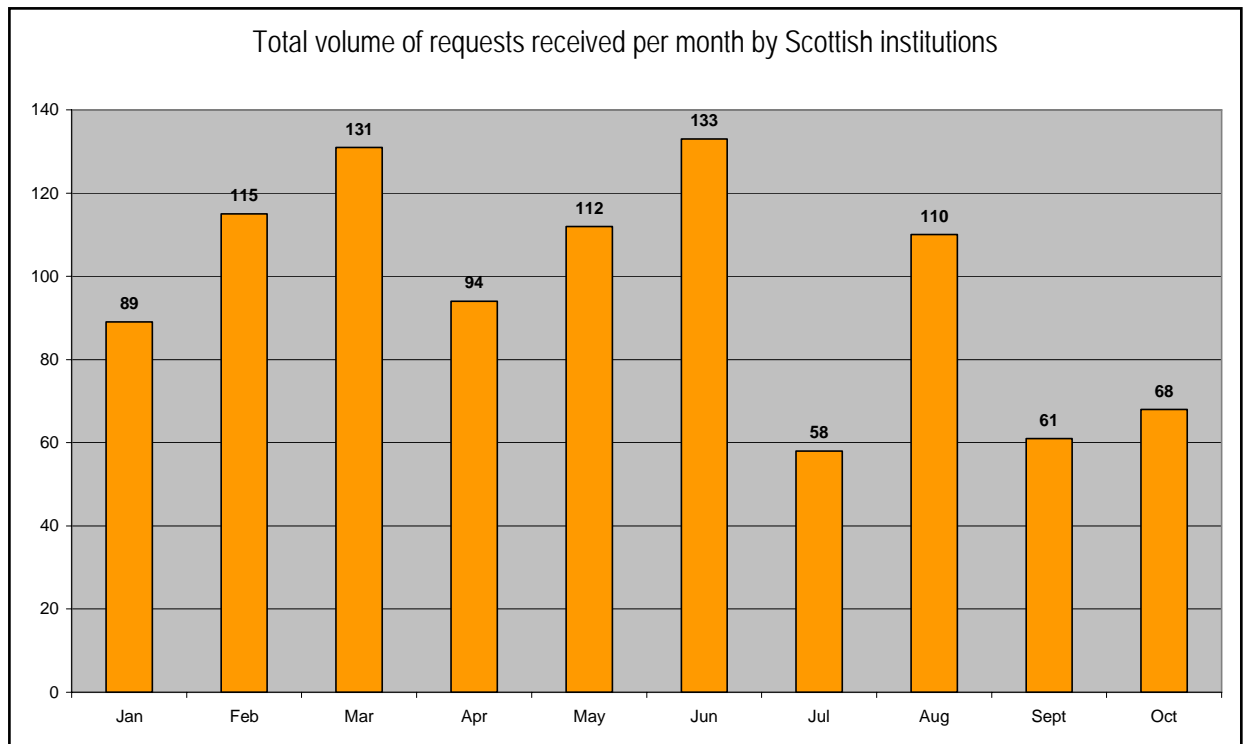
Q.32. If you do not have an officially designated FOI Officer, who is responsible for carrying out the following roles within your institution? (Please provide title of post in each case.)

Too few responses (5) and too much variety in the form of response to be able to draw useful conclusions.

Steve Bailey
JISC Executive
19th December 2005

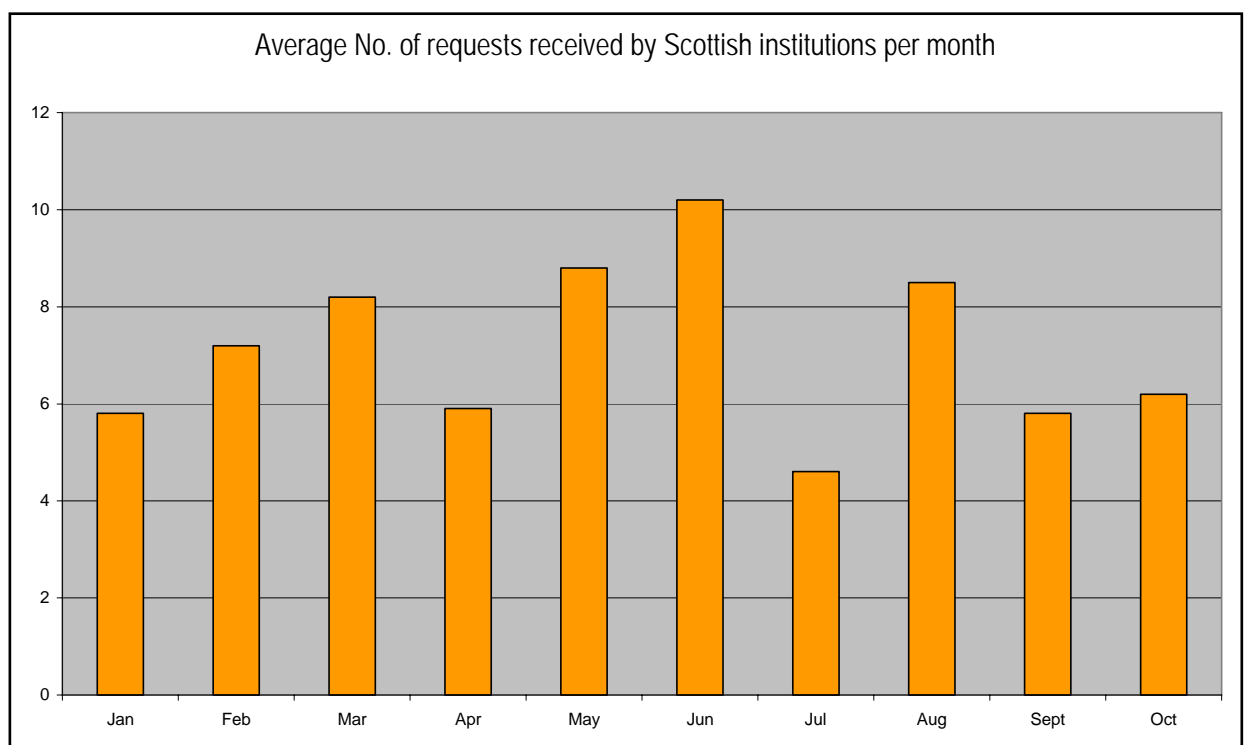
Appendix A

Summary of main findings and comparators from data derived from Scottish Higher Education Institutions as provided by the Scottish Higher Education Information Practitioners' (SHEIP) Group.



It should be noted that the number of respondents to the SHEIP survey varies over the course of the year and that this naturally has an impact on the total number of requests received as illustrated above. The numbers of respondents are as follows:

Jan – Apr 16 institutions
May – Aug 13 institutions
Sep – Oct 11 institutions (excluding one of the traditionally highest totalling institutions)



The averages indicated above are based on the actual number of institutions which responded to the survey on any given month.

