

Douglas J. Keenan

Dear Pro-Vice-Chancellor,

I write to appeal a decision by the Information Compliance Unit regarding a Request that I made under the Freedom of Information Act. Following is a summary of what has occurred.

My Request was submitted on April 10th. The decision was sent on May 22nd, the day after I wrote a letter of complaint to the UK Information Commissioner's Office (copy enclosed). The decision acknowledged that the university held the information, but claimed that the information was not in the format that I had asked for, and so my Request was refused.

The format that was specified in my Request is "electronic". In other words, I am requesting a copy of the computer files that contain the information. The decision's apparent claim that the university does not have the files on a computer is untrue. I telephoned the Information Compliance Officer to discuss this on May 22nd. The discussion did not resolve this.

The Officer has also noted that some of the information I am requesting is already available, in the International Tree Ring Data Bank. By telephone, I pointed out that my Request had mentioned the ITRDB (and so I must be aware of this). The Officer repeatedly claimed that my Request did not mention the ITRDB; that makes little sense to me.

The letter refusing my Request did not mention any appeal procedure. I noted that this was contrary to policy, and the Officer then sent me the requisite document.

I ask that my Request be fulfilled. This could be done by giving me a copy of the computer files that contain the requested information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keenan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

24 May 2007

From: D.J. Keenan
To: foi-enquiries@ico.gsi.gov.uk
Cc: vc.office@qub.ac.uk; info.compliance@qub.ac.uk
Sent: Monday, 21 May, 2007 10:07
Subject: FOI Act Request to Queen's University Belfast

Dear Commissioner,

I write to report a violation of the law by Queen's University Belfast (QUB).

On April 10th, I submitted a Request for Information to the Information Compliance Unit at QUB.

On April 24th, having received no acknowledgement of my request, I telephoned QUB. The university claimed to have sent me a letter of acknowledgement by post; the letter was supposedly sent on April 16th, but had not (and has not) arrived. I pointed out that my Request had been sent by e-mail, and asked that all communications be done electronically. A copy of the letter was then forwarded to me by e-mail.

The letter claimed that my e-mailed Request had only been received on April 16th. The letter (correctly) stated that QUB had 20 business days to process my Request, and concluded that an overall response would be provided by May 15th, i.e. 20 business days after April 16th. No explanation of why it took six days to receive my e-mail was provided.

On May 11th, I received an e-mail from the Information Compliance Officer at QUB stating that a response to my Request would be provided on May 18th. The explanation given was that the Officer was on leave.

As of today, May 21st, I have received no other response to my Request. It has been 28 business days since my Request was submitted (allowing one business day for receiving the Request).

I ask that the university conform with the statutes.

Sincerely,
Douglas J. Keenan
Phone: 020 7537 4122

ATTACHMENTS: a complete copy of my e-mail correspondence with QUB (my original Request is enclosed with the attachment named "FOIAct_EIR").