

21 April 2026

FOI Ref 22700

Request - You asked Staffordshire Police (SP) the following:

'Please provide the information below. Where possible, include data from 1 January 2020 to present. If this is not available, please provide the closest available data and indicate the time frame.

1. Does your force participate in the PCDA and/or DHEP? Please specify which programmes are in use and the partner Higher Education Institution(s).
 2. How does your force classify academic misconduct by student officers (e.g. plagiarism, collusion, unauthorised materials, misuse of AI)?
 - a) Police misconduct
 - b) Academic/performance issue
 - c) Both
 - d) Other (please specify)
 3. Does your force have policies or guidance relating to academic misconduct by student officers? Please provide copies or links where available.
 4. What sanctions or outcomes may apply where academic misconduct is identified (e.g. reflective practice, misconduct proceedings, dismissal, removal from programme)? Please provide any relevant guidance.
 5. From 1 January 2020 to present, please provide:
 - a) Number of recorded cases of academic misconduct involving student officers
 - b) Outcomes (e.g. no action, management action, misconduct proceedings, dismissal/resignation)
 6. Are academic misconduct cases recorded as a distinct category, or within broader categories (e.g. integrity or discreditable conduct)? If the latter, how are they identified? If held, please indicate whether any cases involved contract cheating or AI-assisted misconduct.
 7. What is the role of the partner HEI in determining outcomes (e.g. HEI-led academic decisions, force-led misconduct decisions, or joint decision-making)? Please provide any relevant policy or procedural information.
 8. When academic misconduct is suspected, does the HEI notify the force:
 - At the point of suspicion/investigation
 - Only once concluded
 - At multiple stages (please specify)
- Is this information sharing governed by any formal agreement or policy? If so, please provide details or copies.

SP received your request on 24/03/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).'

SP's response to your enquiry is as follows:

SP holds the requested information.

1. Does your force participate in the PCDA and/or DHEP? Please specify which programmes are in use and the partner Higher Education Institution(s). – **Disclosed: the force utilises PCDA, DHEP, DCDHEP and PPD. The partner HEI is the University of Staffordshire.**
2. How does your force classify academic misconduct by student officers (e.g. plagiarism, collusion, unauthorised materials, misuse of AI)?
 - a) Police misconduct
 - b) Academic/performance issue
 - c) Both
 - d) Other (please specify) – **Disclosed: (c) Both.**
3. Does your force have policies or guidance relating to academic misconduct by student officers? Please provide copies or links where available. – **Disclosed: Please see the accompanying files entitled 'FOI 22700 Maladministration Malpractice Policy' and 'FOI 22700 Maladministration Malpractice Reporting Form.'**
4. What sanctions or outcomes may apply where academic misconduct is identified (e.g. reflective practice, misconduct proceedings, dismissal, removal from programme)? Please provide any relevant guidance. – **Disclosed: Each occasion would be reviewed on an individual basis. All the above would be considered as possible outcomes (that is reflective practice, misconduct proceedings, dismissal and removal from the programme). Guidance can be found in the Maladministration Malpractice Policy as detailed above.**
5. From 1 January 2020 to present, please provide:
 - a) Number of recorded cases of academic misconduct involving student officers – **No information held.**
 - b) Outcomes (e.g. no action, management action, misconduct proceedings, dismissal/resignation) – **No information held.**
6. Are academic misconduct cases recorded as a distinct category, or within broader categories (e.g. integrity or discreditable conduct)? If the latter, how are they identified? If held, please indicate whether any cases involved contract cheating or AI-assisted misconduct. – **Disclosed: No. Academic Misconduct is not recorded as a distinct category. They are identified by using Police Conduct Regulations. No information held on any cases.**
7. What is the role of the partner HEI in determining outcomes (e.g. HEI-led academic decisions, force-led misconduct decisions, or joint decision-making)? Please provide any relevant policy or procedural information. - **Disclosed: HEI will lead on Academic malpractice and misconduct if appropriate. Where the investigation is led by the police, the HEI will be witnesses and provide evidence. For policy procedural information please see the accompanying file entitled 'FOI 22700 Maladministration Malpractice Policy'**
8. When academic misconduct is suspected, does the HEI notify the force:
 - At the point of suspicion/investigation
 - Only once concluded

- At multiple stages (please specify) – **Disclosed: At the point of suspicion/investigation.**

Is this information sharing governed by any formal agreement or policy? If so, please provide details or copies. – **Partially Disclosed: Yes. Please see the below exemption.**

The following exemption has been applied:

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for parts of this particular request.

- Section 43(2) Commercial Interests

This is a prejudice based qualified exemption which means there is a requirement to provide evidence of harm and a public interest test needs to be considered.

Harm:

The information relating to the Information Sharing Agreement, if released into the public domain, would harm SP's negotiating position with regards to future contracts for services. There are commercially confidential clauses within the Information Sharing Agreement which are not permitted to be shared to the wider public.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 43(2)

Disclosure of the requested information would allow the public to be aware of how public funds are spent or allocated and thereby would provide transparency and accountability, showing that funds from the public purse are used appropriately and proportionally.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 43(2)

Through disclosure of the requested information, SP would find that its negotiating position would be greatly impaired through the release of details that would not only likely be prejudicial to SP but also to the agencies/companies involved. Releasing this information would be expected to have a detrimental effect on their ability to be competitive in the future and would be exceedingly likely to deter further enterprises submitting offers for tender in the future. This then would impede SP obtaining the most competitive or appropriate services in the future and negatively impact upon the public purse.

Balance test

It is the responsibility of SP, when dealing with commercial businesses, to not only protect their commercial interest but also that of SP. Commercial interests must be protected so that the best possible value for money is obtained through open competition, both for businesses and SP. This would not be achieved if full details were to be made available to the market.

Although the use of public funds must be open and transparent, SP is accountable for the money that it spends and utilises and if to release the information means the force is unable to negotiate future tendering and have the ability to secure value for money due to business relationships having been impaired, then this would not be in the public interest.

Having considered the public interest test factors, SP are required to determine whether, on balance, the factors favouring disclosure outweigh those which are against disclosure. It is our view that the factors favouring disclosure do not outweigh those which favour withholding the details. Therefore, SP declines to provide the information for the reasons stated above.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the SP website although personal details are not included.

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from SP, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing within two months of the date of receipt of this email, and should be addressed to:

IAT@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Information Access Team
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford
ST16 9JZ

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Information Access Team within two months of the SP response to the original FOI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing. The review will be conducted by a supervisor who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Information Access Team will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to forty working days.



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The independent supervisor will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, considering the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the independent supervisor will reply to the appellant with the result of the review. If the appellant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following link:
<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Freedom of Information
Information Access Team