

Waterford Institute of Technology Data Protection Policy

Introduction

WIT needs to collect and use personal data (information) about its staff, students and other individuals who come into contact with the Institute.

Personal data, in both automated and manual form, is data relating to a living individual who is or can be identified, either from the data or from the data in conjunction with other information that is in, or is likely to come into, the possession of WIT.

The purposes for which personal data is processed by the Institute include the organisation and administration of courses, examinations, research activities, the recruitment and payment of staff, compliance with statutory obligations, etc. Data Protection law safeguards the privacy rights of individuals in relation to the processing of their personal data. The Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 (together the "Data Protection Acts") confer rights on individuals as well as responsibilities on those persons processing personal data.

Purpose of this policy

This policy is a statement of WIT's commitment to protect the rights and privacy of individuals in accordance with the Data Protection Acts.

Access to this policy

This policy is available on the Institute website:

www.wit.ie/InformationCompliance/DataProtection/ and from the Data Compliance officer (tel.: 051-302608 email: dataprotection@wit.ie)

Data Protection Principles

WIT undertakes to perform its responsibilities in accordance with the eight stated Data Protection principles outlined in the Data Protection Acts:

1. *Obtain and process information fairly*
WIT obtains and processes personal data fairly and in accordance with its statutory and other legal obligations.
2. *Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and legitimate purposes*
WIT keeps personal data for purposes that are specific, lawful and clearly stated. Personal data will only be processed in a manner compatible with these purposes.
3. *Use and disclosure only in ways compatible with these purposes*
WIT only uses and discloses personal data in circumstances that are necessary for the purposes for which it collects and keeps the data.
4. *Keep it safe and secure*
WIT takes appropriate security measures against unauthorised access to, or alteration, disclosure or destruction of data and against accidental loss or destruction.
5. *Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date*
WIT operates procedures that ensure high levels of data accuracy, completeness and consistency.
6. *Ensure it is adequate, relevant and not excessive*
Personal data held by WIT are adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purposes for which it is provided.
7. *Retain for no longer than is necessary*
WIT has a policy on retention periods for personal data, which is available to view at www.wit.ie/InformationCompliance/FOI/
8. *Give a copy of his/ her personal data to that individual, on request*
WIT has procedures in place to ensure that data subjects can exercise their rights to access their personal data under the Data Protection Acts.

Responsibility

WIT has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Acts when it is the Data Controller of personal data. However, all employees and students of WIT who separately collect and/or control the content and use of personal data are individually responsible for compliance with the Data Protection Acts.

The Data Compliance officer provides advice to departments and offices to ensure that they are in a position to comply with the legislation.

Procedures and Guidelines

WIT is firmly committed to ensuring personal privacy and compliance with the Data Protection Acts, including the provision of best practice guidelines and procedures in relation to all aspects of Data Protection.

Telephone calls

WIT does not record the content of telephone calls. However a record is kept of all calls to, from and within the Institute. This record is made up of the telephone numbers and duration of the calls.

There is a voicemail service provided whereby people can leave messages for a member of staff when they are out of the office. The individual staff member has responsibility for deleting these messages. However, messages over 30 days old are deleted automatically.

CCTV

WIT has 80 CCTV cameras located throughout the Institute's campus. The images captured on these cameras are digitally recorded and stored in a secure facility. While CCTV footage is monitored by the Institute's security company, the Estates Manager and technical advisor, it is not disclosed to any third party except An Garda Síochána in the case of a disclosure pursuant to Section 8 of the Acts (e.g. required for the purpose of preventing, detecting or investigating offences).

Student Records

Electronic student records containing information about individual students (which typically could include name and address on entry and completion, contacting next of kin, programmes taken, examination results and awards obtained) are collected and processed by the Institute.

Most of this data is gathered during 1st year Registration. The information given on the registration form is stored on the Institute database and then used for multiple purposes related to the student's study (examples of the use of this data are: class lists, computer accounts, library access, WIT Card, examinations, graduation, etc.).

In accordance with the Institute's Records Retention Policy, student records are kept permanently.

Student Directories

Restrictions on access to student directories apply throughout the Institute. Information relevant to individual departments will be made available on written authorisation from Head of Function or nominee to the IT Support Department.

Staff Directories

Staff directories do not contain personal data. However, the Institute processes staff personal data where, for instance, it is required to make returns to statutory bodies such as the Revenue Commissioners and/or the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Procedure for obtaining personal data (Right of access)

Under section 4 of the Data Protection Acts, an individual has the right to request a copy, of certain information relating to them kept on computer or in a structured manual filing system by any person or organisation.

A request under section 4 must be in writing, should be addressed to the Data Compliance officer and should include any additional details that may be necessary to enable the organisation to locate the requested record; e.g. customer account number, staff number, or RSI number (if the request is to a public-sector organisation). A fee may be charged, but this cannot exceed €6.35.

Once a request is made, and appropriate fees paid (if any), the request will be considered and a response will be provided to the requester within 40 days.

Exceptions to the Right of Access

Sections 4 and 5 of the Data Protection Acts set out circumstances in which the right of an individual to obtain access to their personal records can be limited.

This is necessary in order to strike a balance between the rights of the individual, on the one hand, and some important needs of civil society, on the other hand. For example, a criminal suspect does not have a right to see the information held about him by An Garda Síochána, where that would impede a criminal investigation; and you do not have a right to see communications between a lawyer and his or her client, where that communication would be subject to legal privilege in court.

Section 4(6) of the Acts set out the restrictions regarding the right to obtain access to examination results.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed regularly in light of any legislative or other relevant developments.

Last updated: November 2007.