

Section 22: BIMM Institute Data Protection Policy

Why does BIMM need to hold personal data?

BIMM processes students' personal data as part of the necessary functioning of the institution. Personal data is information that can be used to identify students' individuals and which students provide by completing application and enrolment forms – as well as necessary information that we process while students are current, such as assessment results. All personal information provided by students, or about students, will be treated strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that student's confidentiality will be respected and that measures will be taken to prevent unauthorised disclosure.

We also ask students for a photograph for enrolment. Student photographs will be stored electronically and may be seen by BIMM staff. We never release student enrolment photographs to another student, or to those outside BIMM except the relevant awarding institution for the production of ID cards and the monitoring of quality. Students may also appear on CCTV records, which BIMM keeps for security purposes.

Disclosure of data

BIMM may provide limited data to Council Tax Offices of local authorities to enable them to assess whether students are liable for Council Tax. We shall report on student attendance and performance to the local education authority (LEA) or the Student Loan Company (SLC) on request, if students have been assessed for eligibility for support.

In certain circumstances, BIMM may be required to disclose personal data to the police or courts for the purposes of prevention or detection of crime, or where it is necessary to protect student's vital interests, in an extreme emergency. We do ask students to provide on their enrolment form the name, address and telephone number of someone who we can contact in an emergency.

BIMM keeps student records in an archive for a limited number of years after graduation in order to be able to confirm requests from prospective employers. We may provide references or confirm marks to potential employers on receipt of an official written request from them. If students cite BIMM on an employment/further study application, we will assume that students are giving us permission to release relevant personal data. Reports may also be provided to a sponsoring body, sponsoring employer, awarding university or LEA, provided that the receipt of information on student progress forms part of the conditions of student sponsorship or course validation.

At the end of student's studies, limited personal data will be retained for our Alumni records so that we can maintain contact with students.

It is normal practice to produce official results lists (by candidate number and not by name), showing the results of all students on a course. A copy of the list is given to each student on the course and may be placed on appropriate departmental noticeboards. If students feel that the publication of student's results in this way will cause significant damage and/or distress, students may ask for their details not to be shown on the list. Such a request must be made in writing to the student's Course Leader.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but to give students an idea of the various kinds of information processing that BIMM may need to undertake. We will not normally release data about students to student's parents, partner or other relative or external enquirer under any other circumstances, without having received student's specific written consent.

Access to data

The Data Protection Act gives students certain rights of access to their personal data records held by BIMM and the University. Much of the key personal data held is provided to students at enrolment for them to check each year. Student's confirmed assessment results will be forwarded to students on a transcript, after they have been agreed at the Examination Board. If students do want additionally to be notified of all the information that BIMM and the University holds about students, students should write to the Head of Student Services.

Accuracy

It is a requirement of the Data Protection Act that information processed about individuals is accurate. It is therefore essential that students keep the Student Support team informed if students change personal details such as address or name. We will need to write to students several times during their time as a student, for example to give students' assessment results and to tell students about awards ceremonies.

Sensitive data

Some personal data is defined as 'sensitive' under the 1998 Data Protection Act, including the following:

- Race or ethnic origin;
- Physical or mental health;
- The commission or alleged commission of an offence, and any proceedings arising from this.

In signing the enrolment form, students are giving us consent to process this data. If students have any questions, or wish to withhold their consent to our processing 'sensitive' data, please contact the Student Services Manager. Students can be advised of the circumstances under which we are required to process 'sensitive' data, although the following paragraphs set out in some detail how we use this data.

Ethnic origin

We ask students to tell us student's ethnic origin. BIMM will use this data only for the purposes of monitoring equality.

Health and disability

We ask students to tell us if they are disabled and also if they are in receipt of a disability allowance. Within BIMM, data about disability will be used for the purposes of monitoring equality. It will also be used as an essential part of the provision of a service to students with disabilities. If students declare a disability, the Head of Student Services may contact students to see if BIMM can provide any further help.

There may be circumstances when we have to release information in an extreme emergency, for example if students were taken ill and health professionals outside BIMM needed to know about a disability. The Data Protection Act recognises that it is not always possible to seek student consent to the release of sensitive data in an emergency.

Students may also disclose information about their health when completing a Mitigating Circumstances form.

Commission of an offence

Any person with a criminal conviction will have been asked to declare this on their UCAS or BIMM application form. Information about a criminal conviction is only used as part of the admission procedure.