

University Human Resources

Working at a Public University

Public Records – Open Records Laws

1. Chapter 22 of the Iowa Code requires state government entities such as the University of Iowa to provide the public with access to its records.
2. The Federal Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) imposes similar requirements on federal institutions. 5 U.S.C. 552.

By statute, public records include all "records, documents, tape or other information, stored or preserved in any medium," whether generated by University administrators, faculty, or staff.

Based upon this definition records may include your written communications such as emails, letters, notes, reports, etc. Salaries are also subject to open records requests and are published annually by local newspapers. Please see the Operations Manual for [Records Management](#).

Political Expression

The University of Iowa is a community that values the free expression of ideas and whose members hold a variety of political and philosophical views. As a public institution we cannot appear to support any particular political party or candidate, and any indication of partisanship on the part of the institution is to be avoided. The concern about the appearance of institutional support for a particular political viewpoint must be balanced against our respect for the rights of individuals to express political views in a manner that does not suggest institutional support. We urge departments and individuals to be respectful of the diversity of beliefs and refrain from displaying any campaign materials that may be seen as implying institutional support for a particular political party or candidate. Please review the [Political Expression Guidelines](#).

Lobbying

Working with legislative bodies to further the interests of the University is essential to its academic and financial well-being. The University entrusts that responsibility to its Office of Governmental Relations. University employees are prohibited from lobbying on behalf of the University, though faculty, staff, and students are free to communicate individually with elected representatives about their personal views. Any communication which is not coordinated through the Office of Governmental Relations needs to be carefully framed so as not to imply that the individual is communicating an institutional position or viewpoint on behalf of the University. Please see the Operations Manual for [Lobbying Restrictions Applicable to Public Employees and Officials](#).

Gifts

To assure responsible stewardship of resources and decision-making in the best interest of the University, Iowa law prohibits public employees and members of their immediate families from soliciting or accepting gifts from a "restricted donor." For more information on who is a restricted donor, please see the [Gift Law](#).

Purchasing

The state Code of Iowa, federal law, and the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, mandate competitive bidding for certain University purchases. Before purchasing any materials or services, work with individuals in your area who are expert in these procedures or with the [Purchasing Department](#).

Religious Guidelines

The State University of Iowa is a community whose members hold a variety of religious and philosophical views. As a public institution we respect the separation of church and state as a constitutional principle and practice, and we hold, as one of our core values, a commitment to "vigilantly protect free expression of thought."

Institutionally-sponsored religious symbols are not appropriate in a public institution. We urge departments to be respectful of our diversity of beliefs and refrain from displaying within public areas in the workplace any religious symbols that may be seen as implying institutional support for a particular religious viewpoint. Departments should also exercise good judgment and sensitivity concerning the appropriateness of seasonal, non-religious symbols in the workplace.

Our concern about the appearance of institutional support for a particular religious viewpoint must be balanced against our respect for the rights of individuals to express religious views in their personal dress and in their personal workplaces that are not located in public areas and do not suggest institutional support. Please refer to the [Equal Opportunity and Diversity](#) website.

Fundraising/Solicitation

On campus solicitation by organizations (such as charitable organizations.) not registered with an official Student Organization nor affiliated with the University may only occur with the approval of the Vice President for Human Resources under circumstances described Please refer to [Fund Solicitation](#) in the Operations Manual. Fundraising on behalf of the University is accomplished through the work of the [University of Iowa Foundation](#).

Decision-Making

So that learning and creative expression may flourish, the University takes seriously its obligation to protect academic freedom and free expression; maintain a safe, supportive, healthy, and humane environment; and nourish a system of collaborative decision making based on mutual respect and shared governance.

To that end while The University of Iowa is governed by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, day to day administration is delegated to the [President of the University](#). The President regularly consults with the Regents and University leadership (Provost, Vice Presidents, and Deans) and receives guidance from a variety of advisory committees and councils such as the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Student Government and Charter Committees (Information Technology, Campus Planning are examples) in making both strategic and significant operational decisions.

Link to this document on the Human Resources Website: <http://hr.uiowa.edu/onboarding/public-university>