

POLICY

Purpose

Ocean County College (OCC) is committed to transparency and accountability in accordance with the **New Jersey Open Public Records Act (OPRA)**, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq. This policy ensures that government records are made readily accessible for inspection, copying, or examination, while protecting confidential, proprietary, and personal information as required by law.

Definitions

All terms used in this policy shall have the meanings defined in OPRA. Notably:

- **Government Record:** Any record made, maintained, or received in the course of official business, including paper, electronic, audio, and visual formats.
- **Exempt Records:** Records excluded from public access under OPRA, including but not limited to:
 - Inter-agency or intra-agency advisory, consultative, or deliberative materials
 - Personal identifying information (e.g., SSNs, personal emails, phone numbers)
 - Student records protected under FERPA
 - Personnel records beyond basic employment information
 - Security and emergency procedures
 - Records related to ongoing investigations

Custodian of Records

The College has designated a Custodian of Government Records responsible for:

- Receiving and processing OPRA requests
- Determining whether access should be granted or denied
- Redacting exempt information
- Responding within seven (7) business days unless an extension is warranted

All College employees must forward OPRA requests to the Custodian or direct requestors accordingly.

Request Process

- Requests must be submitted in writing using the College's [OPRA Request Form](#) or equivalent format.
- Requests may be submitted via email opra@ocean.edu, mail, or in person.
- The Custodian may direct requestors to the College's website if the requested records are available online in full and unabridged form.
- Anonymous requests are permitted, but anonymous requestors cannot file appeals with the Government Records Council (GRC).

Denial and Appeal Rights

If a request is denied or not fulfilled within the statutory timeframe, requesters may:

- File a complaint with the NJ Government Records Council (GRC)
 - www.nj.gov/grc
 - Toll-free: 866-850-0511
- File an action in the Superior Court of New Jersey

Compliance with New OPRA Amendments (2024)

- OCC will maintain a searchable public records section on its website.
- Personal identifying information will be redacted in accordance with new privacy protections.
- Commercial requestors may be subject to special service charges.
- Records connected to legal proceedings must be certified and may be restricted.
- Custodians must balance public access with the protection of privacy and operational integrity.

Adopted: May 28, 2002
Revised: November 5, 2007
Revised: October 9, 2025

PROCEDURE

Access Hours

Government records not exempt from public access may be inspected, examined, or copied during regular business hours:

- Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Location: Office of the Custodian of Government Records

Submitting a Request

Requests must be submitted using the College's [OPRA Request Form](#) or similar format. Acceptable submission methods include:

- Hand delivery
- Mail
- Email: opra@ocean.edu
- Online

Upon receipt, the Custodian of Records will:

- Confirm whether the requested record is available
- Provide an estimated date of availability
- Specify applicable fees
- Respond within seven (7) business days, unless an extension is necessary

If access is denied or delayed, the Custodian will:

- Indicate the legal basis for denial or delay on the request form
- Return the form to the requestor promptly

Record Format

If the College does not maintain the record in the requested format:

- The Custodian will convert the record if feasible, or
- Provide it in an alternative format that is meaningful and accessible

Reproduction Fees

Fees for copies are set by law (N.J.S.A. 47:1A-5):

- \$0.05 per page for letter-sized documents
- \$0.07 per page for legal-sized documents
- Actual cost for formats such as CDs, DVDs, or flash drives
- Electronic records (email/fax): No charge

If actual duplication costs exceed the statutory rates, the Custodian may adjust fees accordingly.

Special Service Charges

A special service charge may apply when:

- The request requires extraordinary time or effort to fulfill
- The record format is not routinely maintained
- Significant data manipulation or programming is needed

Charges will be:

- Based on actual labor and technology costs
- Communicated to the requestor in advance
- Subject to review if the requestor objects

Deposits

- A 50% deposit may be required for requests exceeding \$25
- 100% deposit required for anonymous requests
- Final payment is due upon delivery of records

Compliance Monitoring

To ensure ongoing compliance with OPRA, the Custodian shall:

- Maintain a log of all OPRA requests and responses
- Periodically review procedures and response times
- Implement safeguards for confidential, proprietary, and exempt information

Adopted: May 30, 2002

Revised: September 25, 2007

Revised: March 23, 2010

Revised: November 9, 2010

Revised: October 9, 2025