

IN THE PAKISTAN INFORMATION COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

Appeal No. 1951-06/2022

Nadeem Umer

Vs

Allama Iqbal Open University

Fawad Malik: Information Commissioner

A. APPEAL

1. Mr. Nadeem Umer filed an application under the Right of Access to the Information Act, 2017 before the designated Officer, Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad. Through his application dated 19-05-2022 he has requested the following information:

“This is with reference to the advertisement dated 04-11-2020 published by the AIOU for the recruitment of Assistant Director Press and Media (BPS-17). You are requested to provide the following information:

- i. Required qualification and experience for the above mentioned post.*
- ii. Selection criteria for short listed candidates for the written test.*
- iii. Selection criteria for short listed candidates for interview.*
- iv. Complete minutes of meetings for selection of these recruitments.*
- v. List of the interview board members and notes/comments each member for each candidate appeared in the interview.”*

2. Feeling aggrieved for the non-provision of information he has filed his appeal before the Pakistan Commission on access to information, Islamabad.

B. PROCEEDINGS

3. The Public Information Officer/Assistant Registrar (Establishment), Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad vide letter dated 8.6.2022, was directed to provide reasons in writing within seven working days

as to why the requested information has not been provided to the applicant as under section 14 of the Right of Access to Information Act 2017, each public body is bound to respond to a request as early as possible and in any case not later than ten working days of the receipt of the request.

4. The reply was not submitted therefore the appeal was fixed for hearing before the Commission on 29.6.2022 but neither was the reply submitted nor any one appeared to represent the respondent public body.

C. COMMISSION'S VIEW

5. While dealing with the matters related to information and record sought by the citizens under the Act 2017, the public bodies are under obligation to respond the applications as mandated in the Act. In the case in hand the respondent has not acknowledged the application, information is not provided to the applicant in the stipulated time frame and the notices of the Commission are ignored. The reply is not submitted and the hearing before the Commission was not represented by the public body. It is presumed that the respondent public body is willfully avoiding the proceedings before the Commission and that the public body has nothing in the sleeves to submit in the defence. In such like circumstances the Commission is left with no option but to decide the appeal ex parte after going through the file in light of the Act.
6. The bare reading of the request depicts that the information and record sought by the appellant is enlisted in the category of public record as defined in the Act. Each public body is under compulsion to proactively publish including uploading over the internet in a manner to ensure its accessibility to the citizens, all the record detailed in section 5 of the Act.
7. Transparency in the working of the government departments is the essence for the enactment of the Act 2017. Its spirit is to ensure that the people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have access to the records held by the federal public bodies for making the government accountable to the people. This practise would improve the participation of the people in the public affairs aimed at reducing corruption, nepotism, discrimination, misuse of power and inefficiency in the governance.

D. ORDER

8. The appeal is allowed. The Public Information Officer/Assistant Registrar (Establishment), Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad is directed to furnish the appellant all the requested information detailed supra in para 1 of this order, forthwith, but in any case not later than seven days of the receipt of this order.

Mohammad Azam
Chief Information Commissioner

Fawad Malik
Information Commissioner

Zahid Abdullah
Information Commissioner

Announced on 19.07.2022

Certified that this order consists of 03 pages, each page has been read and signed