

Requests from Investigative Bodies

The ATIP Office processed 174 requests for disclosure of personal information under Section 8(2)(e) of the *Privacy Act*. This is a significant increase (26%) over the last fiscal year.

Enhanced Access

Screening Program

This unique program allows the department to release records that facilitate research access to greater volumes of information concerning Canada's conduct of international relations. In 2002-2003, the ATIP office screened some 118,000 pages of historical departmental records prior to transfer to the National Archives. The screening program started later than usual this year, and this is reflected in the lower overall number of pages screened. However, it is expected that the number will more than double in the next fiscal year.

Historical Section: Informal Access Program

This program provides an avenue for academics and serious researchers who seek access to records held by the Department in order to carry out to their work. With the assistance of departmental divisions, access to records held by the Department is expedited outside the formal framework of the *Access to Information Act* while ensuring that sensitive information remains protected.

Informal Access

The ATIP Office responded to a number of requests for informal access to information. Informal requests are also addressed to divisions within the Department, the Media Relations Office, the main departmental library which is located on the main floor of the building for enhanced public access, or to missions abroad. Departmental officers are encouraged to consider responding to informal requests for information. An ATIP website is also maintained, where descriptions of requests are placed once processing has been finalized, to allow the public to see what has been previously released: <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/department/privacy/menu-en.asp>

Reading Room

A reading room is available adjacent to the ATIP Office. Current departmental manuals and other documents are available to members of the public and requesters who wish to examine material being disclosed, rather than paying photocopying fees.