

**From:** Freedom of Information

**Sent:** 05 May 2020 15:49

**To:**

**Subject:** Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/158)

Dear

**Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/158)**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 12 April 2020, reference K/20/158.

Your request read:

“Proof requests showing that a student is a full-time student for Council Tax Disregard Discount

- 1) - Please advise, for the years commencing 1st April 2017, 2018 and 2019, how many students have requested a certificate to provide to their local authority for council tax purposes.
- 2) - Please advise, for the years commencing 1st April 2017, 2018 and 2019, how many enquiries were made by local authorities regarding individual students to confirm that they are full time students.
- 3) - Please advise, for the years commencing 1st April 2017, 2018 and 2019, what electronic or digital methods exist between the University and Local Authorities to provide this information, for examples, the ability of the local authority to look up claiming students directly or a data feed to local authorities of full time students on a regular basis.

Student Requests for Transcripts or Certificates

- 4) Please advise, for the academic years commencing 1st August 2016, 2017 and 2018, how many individual requests were received from students for a copy of their:
  - a) - academic transcript
  - b) - award certificate for any purpose.
- 5) - For the numbers responded to in question 4, please say how the documents were supplied:
  - a) - physically on paper issued by post or collected by hand
  - b) - electronically via email or on media such as USB, CD or similar
  - c) - via a third-party digital service such as Digitary
  - d) - Other (in which case please say how).”

The University of Leeds holds some of this information. For your convenience we have responded to each of your questions individually below. However, the answer to question three provides context to our other responses, and as such we have provided it first (so that you can refer to it later).

- 3) Please advise, for the years commencing 1st April 2017, 2018 and 2019, what electronic or digital methods exist between the University and Local Authorities to provide this information, for examples, the ability of the local authority to look up claiming students directly or a data feed to local authorities of full time students on a regular basis.**

The University of Leeds has data sharing agreements in place with Leeds City Council; City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Wakefield Council and Kirklees Council. These have been in place throughout the years you have specified. This means that we electronically and securely transfer information regarding students who meet the criteria for council tax exemption. This data transfer takes place once a year following the main registration period (early November). A second transfer is carried out at the start of Semester Two (February) to Leeds City Council only, as per our agreement with them. Any address changes during the year which fall outside of these transfer dates would not be captured and would require a Tax Exemption Certificate to be issued.

- 1) Please advise, for the years commencing 1st April 2017, 2018 and 2019, how many students have requested a certificate to provide to their local authority for council tax purposes.**

Please find this information contained within table below.

<b>Year (1 Apr – 31 Mar)</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
<b>Number of Tax Exemption Certificates issued</b>	1688	1158	978

Please note that this refers to printed certificates only, which are only issued to councils with which we do not have an electronic sharing process (see above) or where there has been a change to the electronic record since it was shared with the Council (typically this would be due to a change of address).

- 2) Please advise, for the years commencing 1st April 2017, 2018 and 2019, how many enquiries were made by local authorities regarding individual students to confirm that they are full time students.**

The University of Leeds does not record this information. Any such requests are sporadic and received via ordinary email channels, meaning the emails are regularly deleted. Where such a request is received, the student would ordinarily make a specific request for a Tax Exemption Certificate and therefore fall into the data provided in response to question one above.

- 4) Please advise, for the academic years commencing 1st August 2016, 2017 and 2018, how many individual requests were received from students for a copy of their:**
- a) - academic transcript
  - b) - award certificate for any purpose.
- 5) - For the numbers responded to in question 4, please say how the documents were supplied:**
- a) - physically on paper issued by post or collected by hand
  - b) - electronically via email or on media such as USB, CD or similar
  - c) - via a third-party digital service such as Digitary
  - d) - Other (in which case please say how).

We address these questions together. The information held by the University of Leeds is provided in table below. All documents are issued on paper (i.e. falling under 5a).

Academic Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Transcripts	5477	4579	3644
Replacement certificates*	778	758	775

\*please note that we do not issue copies of certificates (as per the wording of your request). If a student loses or damages their certificate, they can apply for a replacement. We have therefore provided information in respect of replacement certificates in the table above.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions about this email, however, please do not hesitate to contact us on [foi@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:foi@leeds.ac.uk)

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you can request an Internal Review. Requests for Internal Review should be made in writing using the following contact information:

Post: Mr D Wardle  
Deputy Secretary  
The University of Leeds  
Leeds  
LS2 9JT

Email: [foi@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:foi@leeds.ac.uk)

Requests for Internal Review should be submitted within 40 working days of receiving the University's response to your request. Further information about how the University manages Freedom of Information requests and about our complaints procedure is also available on our website ([www.leeds.ac.uk](http://www.leeds.ac.uk)).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review/complaints procedure provided by the University. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Kind regards

**Chloe Wilkins**  
Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat

University of Leeds