

From: Freedom of Information

Sent: 17 August 2020 15:47

To:

Subject: Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/282)

Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/282)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 24 July 2020, reference K/20/282.

Your request read:

“Regarding patents that your organisation does own or has previously owned, as a sole owner or jointly with others, please provide me with:

1. The number of licensing or assignment agreements signed between your organisation and another entity/entities, granting rights to such patents or transferring ownership of such patents, since the year 2000.
2. A list of all licensing agreements signed between your organisation and other parties on such patents, containing, for each agreement: the name(s) of the party/parties and year of signing, since the year 2000.
3. The annual income from each of these licensing agreements, by year, since the year 2000.
4. A list of all patents that your organisation does own or has previously owned, as a sole owner or jointly with others.”

The University of Leeds holds this information. For your convenience we have responded to each of your questions in turn below.

- 1. The number of licensing or assignment agreements signed between your organisation and another entity/entities, granting rights to such patents or transferring ownership of such patents, since the year 2000.**

UK Universities, including the University of Leeds, report licensing activities to Research England via the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey (HE-BCI). HE-BCI data is publicly available on the [UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#) and [HESA](#) websites. Please note that this includes all licences and assignments regardless of whether they relate to patented intellectual property.

- 2. A list of all licensing agreements signed between your organisation and other parties on such patents, containing, for each agreement: the name(s) of the party/parties and year of signing, since the year 2000.**
- 3. The annual income from each of these licensing agreements, by year, since the year 2000.**

We address these questions together

The University works with corporate partners on innovative, cutting edge projects, for which we have various licensing agreements, across a range of fields. Whether or not an organisation has a licence agreement with a University is, in itself, sensitive information. To disclose the names of organisations with whom the University partners would provide competitor organisations with information which they would not ordinarily have access to. This, in turn, would be likely to have a reputational impact (either positive or negative) on the organisations, which may impact on their position in the marketplace. We consider it likely that this would be likely to dissuade organisations from working with the University in future, reducing the University's ability to secure funding, participate in cutting-edge research and serve the needs of our students.

Section 43(2) of the FOI Act is a qualified exemption, which means that the University is required to conduct a public interest test. There is a general public interest inherent in the FOI Act which supports the disclosure of information on an open and transparent basis. We also consider there to be a general interest in understanding how the University earns and spends its money. However, we consider this interest to be met via University's commitment to adhering to high ethical standards and the University's values, which ensure our financial integrity.

We also consider there to be a strong and specific public interest in the University being able to work with corporate partners without undue interference or scrutiny. The University of Leeds is a world-leader in innovation and research and there is a very strong public interest in ensuring this work can continue.

As such, we are satisfied that the public interest in favour of disclosing the information is significantly outweighed by the public interest in maintaining the exemption.

4. A list of all patents that your organisation does own or has previously owned, as a sole owner or jointly with others.

This information is publicly available via various patent search websites, for example <https://worldwide.espacenet.com/patent/> or <https://patents.google.com/>

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

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

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).

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