

From: Freedom of Information

Sent: 09 September 2020 15:52

To:

Subject: Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/300)

Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/300)

Thank you for your clarified Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 11 August 2020, reference K/20/300.

Your clarified request reads as follows. Original text is given in roman (normal) font, while clarifications are provided in italicised text:

1. "I was wondering how much the university pays 'The Student Room' to get the information relevant to the university on there as well as responding to questions with reps etc. *As per question 1, I was assuming that subscriptions are paid annually so is there an annual subscription fee? If not annually, how frequent and what amount are the payments?*
2. Are there any other companies like 'The Student Room' or 'The Uni Guide' (formerly 'Which?') that the university pays a subscription to? These could include "Save the Student", "Student Money Saver", "Totum", "UniDays", "StudentBeans", "Top Universities", "Student Crowd", "The Uni Guide", "UCAS", "WhatUni", "University Compare" and "Findamasters.com". *I am interested in paid subscriptions to any of the mentioned websites. If you don't pay them anything then it's fine to leave that out. By 'other websites' I was enquiring to see if there were any other paid subscriptions (either one off, or regular) to these online services for students.*

If there are any other companies that the University pays a subscription for not included in the above list, I would appreciate it if you could let me know.

3. Would the University consider subscribing to other companies which provide extensive information for its students and would further enhance the student experience?
4. How much money did the university invest in student experience last year, for both current and prospective students? and how much of this was invested on online services? *By 'student experience' (in the original question) I meant how much of the budget (of the £41 million of student support, or maybe the surplus amount) would be invested into websites (aforementioned) or other businesses/companies which seek to enhance the student experience/satisfaction. Also, by 'last year', I meant academic year (again, assuming that the annual payment is done via the academic year rather than the calendar year)."*

The University of Leeds holds some of this information. For your convenience we have responded to each of your questions in turn below. For brevity we have not repeated your questions in full.

1. I was wondering how much the university pays 'The Student Room'

We do not have a subscription to The Student Room, nor do we pay for any advertising on the site. As such, our answer to this question is 'zero'.

2. Are there any other companies like 'The Student Room' or 'The Uni Guide' (formerly 'Which?') that the university pays a subscription to?

No, we do not.

3. Would the University consider subscribing to other companies which provide extensive information for its students and would further enhance the student experience?

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act gives you the right to request recorded information which you believe a public authority holds. This question does not seek recorded information, and therefore we are not able to provide a response under the FOI Act. More generally, we can advise that we have very limited budgets and generally only spend where there is an identifiable need.

4. How much money did the university invest in [websites which enhance the] student experience last [academic] year, for both current and prospective students?

We do not hold recorded information which specifically answers this question. As outlined in our responses to questions one and two above, we do not subscribe to any external/third party websites aimed at 'the student experience'. We do share information as appropriate with our students via our own electronic channels, but as the majority of these websites serve multiple audiences (e.g. students and staff), it is not possible to extrapolate a figure which relates to students alone.

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