

**From:** Freedom of Information

**Sent:** 11 November 2020 16:01

**To:**

**Subject:** Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/358)

Dear

**Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/358)**

Thank you for your clarified Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 14 October 2020, reference K/20/358.

Your original request read:

“Under the Freedom of Information Act, I request the following information about all instances of sexual misconduct reported by students at the University of Leeds from 2015/2016 until the end of the 2019/20 academic year inclusive.

I request information on the following:

- The number of reported instances of sexual assault
- The number of reported instances of rape  
(Including but not limited to those that took place within university operated premises, such as the students union, venues and halls of residence)
- Statistics of whether the perpetrator was a student or member of staff
- How many of these resulted in expulsion for the perpetrator

I would also like to know whether Leeds has a specific sexual misconduct policy, and where I could find that information on your website.”

Your clarification read:

“In relation to my third question, that applies to both questions 1 and 2, and I would like those statistics as numbers.  
Question four also applies to questions 1 and 2.”

The University of Leeds holds some of this information.

For your convenience we have provided responses to each part of your request in turn below.

**The number of reported instances of sexual assault reported by students between 2015/16 and the end of the 2019/20 academic year  
And  
Statistics of whether the perpetrator was a student or member of staff**

There have been 16 instances of sexual assault formally reported by students between 2015/16 and 2019/20 (i.e. excluding incidental comments or allegations which were not pursued). Of these, five allegations have been made against

members of staff, with the remaining 11 against other students. Please note that we do not hold information in relation to allegations made by students against other students prior to the 2018/19 academic year.

**The number of reported instances of rape reported by students between 2015/16 and the end of the 2019/20 academic year (Including but not limited to those that took place within university operated premises, such as the students union, venues and halls of residence)**

And

**Statistics of whether the perpetrator was a student or member of staff**

There have been two such allegations within the timeframe set out. Both allegations were made against other students. Please note that as above we do not hold information in relation to allegations made by students against other students prior to the 2018/19 academic year.

**How many of these resulted in expulsion for the perpetrator**

We are withholding this information under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Given the small number of alleged incidents (of both rape and sexual assault), we consider that providing any information in respect of this question would be likely to identify individuals associated with each incident. This would potentially include both the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s). This would be extremely distressing to those involved. Where students make a complaint of sexual assault or rape (or indeed any other complaint), it is incumbent on us to treat that complaint seriously, and in a confidential manner. Equally, our disciplinary processes are not intended to establish whether an individual (i.e. an alleged perpetrator) is legally guilty of an offence, and we therefore have an obligation to protect the identity of those individuals as well. To disclose any information which could lead to the identification of individuals would therefore be distinctly unfair, would undermine our complaints and disciplinary process and would ultimately discourage students from engaging with our services going forward. We are therefore satisfied that a section 40(2) exemption is appropriate.

In the hope that it is helpful, we can advise that all allegations are fully reviewed, with steps taken as necessary to mitigate risks to students and staff. While it may be necessary to suspend or dismiss/expel an individual, it is also possible that risk can be mitigated via other interventions, or that the individual concerned may elect to leave the University themselves. As such, even in cases where an alleged perpetrator has not been expelled from the University community, please be assured that appropriate steps will have been taken to protect individuals from future harm.

**Whether Leeds has a specific sexual misconduct policy, and where I could find that information on your website**

We do not have a specific sexual misconduct policy. However, we have issued guidance to staff via our [Professional Behaviours and Relationships Code of Conduct](#).

More generally, we can advise that whenever a complaint regarding sexual assault, violence or misconduct is made to the University of Leeds, we take a three-pronged approach. First and foremost, we establish what support the student raising the complaint may require, and act to put this in place as soon as possible. This may

include no-contact agreements, provision of wellbeing services (such as counselling) and/or signposting the individual to other appropriate services (e.g. NHS services) as required. A risk assessment would then be carried out, to establish any current and/or future risk to both the student who made the complaint and any other individuals (including the alleged perpetrator). Where there is deemed to be a high risk to any individual(s) (for instance, in very serious cases), we may take the decision to immediately suspend the accused party, pending further investigations. Disciplinary investigations and proceedings would then commence; examining whether the accused had breached the [General University Disciplinary Regulations](#). It is important to note at this stage that University Disciplinary proceedings are not designed or intended to establish whether an individual is legally guilty of an offence. Instead, consideration is made as to whether the student can continue with their studies in a manner which is conducive to learning without putting others at risk. If it is determined that continuation of study is not appropriate, the student may be suspended for a fixed period of time, or permanently excluded from the University. Alternatively, it may be decided that study can continue. In some cases, students may be permitted to continue study, but with specific support measures in place.

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