

From: Freedom of Information

Sent: 19 November 2020 15:55

To:

Subject: Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/444)

Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/444)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 30 October 2020, reference K/20/444.

Your request read:

“Can I receive a breakdown by ethnicity UK domiciled White/Asian/Black/Mixed/other including Arab and unknown for the following requests.

- i) Of all UK - domiciled applicants to study a PhD course
- ii) All successful UK - domiciled applicants to study a PhD course (ie those who received and accepted an offer from you to study a PhD course)

Can you give a total for each UK domiciled ethnicity group of White/Asian/Black/ Mixed/other including Arab and unknown for the following five academic years: 2015/16 b) 2016/17 c) 2017/18 d) 2018/19 e) 2019/20.

- iii) Can you give a breakdown of which subject areas/disciplines were awarded a PHD research placement. For example, humanities, social research, science, politics, etc. For the following academic years: 2015/16 b) 2016/17 c) 2017/18 d) 2018/19 e) 2019/20.

Rather than giving individual values for applicants and accepted offers for each academic year - could I instead please receive this data as an overall total for each ethnicity grouping for the five years year period. If you do not have records for each of the stated years, please refer to this in the answer - and instead provide a total for the years you do have.

If you do not hold detailed ethnicity data - please refer instead to: White / BAME.”

The University of Leeds holds some information relevant to your request.

However, we consider that to respond to part three of your request (subject areas/disciplines and PhD research placements) would take a significant amount of time, and would now allow for the completion of the remaining questions within the cost limit as set out in Section 12(1) of the FOI Act. Section 12(1) states that a public authority can refuse a request if complying with it would exceed the appropriate limit of £450. For the purposes of FOI, time spent on the permitted activities is calculated at the flat rate of £25 per person, per hour. The appropriate limit therefore represents

the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours to determine whether the information is held, and to locate, retrieve and extract the information.

We have outlined the reasons for invoking Section 12(1) below.

Ethnicity data is not routinely collected from PhD researchers alongside research placement information, and therefore is not recorded in an easily searchable format in the majority of cases. As such, the only means by which we could isolate this information would be to manually review the student records of all 468 PhD researchers who, over the five academic years relevant to your request, have been awarded a research placement. We estimate that it would take between five and ten minutes per placement to establish the name and student number of the researcher, use that information to locate their student record, and then isolate their ethnicity data. As such, we consider that to respond to part three of your request would take between 39 hours and 78 hours. There is no obligation for students to provide ethnicity data to the University, and as such there is no guarantee that this search would produce full and complete data. Further time would then be required to answer the remaining parts of your request.

We are therefore satisfied that section 12(1) applies in this case. However, if you were to refine your request, either removing part three in its entirety or significantly reducing the breadth of it (i.e. fewer academic years, specific subject areas or a combination), we may be able to provide information within the 18 hour limit.

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