Dear

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 6 December 2019, reference J/19/508. Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in providing a response to your request.

Your request read:

“1) How much was spent by the University of Leeds on graduation ceremonies and celebrations each year from 2014-2019
2) A breakdown of what specifically this money is being spent on”

The University of Leeds holds this information. However, we are refusing this request under section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 12(1) sets out that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit. For the University of Leeds, the appropriate limit is 18 hours/£450. We have outlined below why complying with the request will exceed the limit.

Information in relation to graduation celebrations are not held centrally. Not all schools or faculties will hold graduation celebrations all of the time. As such, the only way to locate the information you have requested would be to contact each school and faculty individually.

Therefore, to locate this information the University of Leeds would need to interrogate the records of each individual school, and of all central administration teams. There are seven faculties, and 33 individual schools within the University. Even allowing a very conservative estimate of thirty minutes per faculty/school, per academic year, we estimate that this would take a minimum of 33 hours to complete. This exceeds the appropriate limit as set out at section 12(1).

Section 12(1) is an absolute exemption and as such the University is not required to consider the public interest test.

However, under our section 16(1) duty to advise and assist applicants, we can advise that information in relation to graduation ceremonies is held centrally and could be provided within 18 hours. As such, you may wish to submit a revised request which is limited to graduation ceremonies only.

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
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.

Sincerely

Chloe Wilkins
Freedom of Information Officer
University of Leeds