Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 4 January 2020, reference K/20/005.

Your request read:

“I would be grateful if you would treat this correspondence as a formal request for disclosure of the following information, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FoI").

1. During each of the academic years dating back to 2016-17 – and including the current academic year beginning in 2019 – please tell me the number of flights taken by staff and the total cost of these flights.

2. For the same period, please provide an itemised list of all flights taken by the senior management team (or equivalent) – including the vice chancellor – providing the following information:
   • The position of the person who took it
   • the date and return date
   • departure and destination airports
   • the reason for the flight (please be reasonably precise – if, by way of example, the reason was a conference, please indicate what this conference was.

Should the sum cost of answering these two questions take you above the cost threshold specified in section 12 of the FOIA (£450), please focus solely on answering question one, which I believe should fall well within said limit.

Please be aware that this is a refined but qualitatively different version of an FOI request I previously sent on 22 November 2019. Please also be aware that particular request received no response. If this one also goes unanswered, I will be obliged to take up the matter with the Information Commissioner and/or to pursue legal avenues.”

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 how we have come to this conclusion.

There is no central repository containing the information you have requested. Flights may be paid for via purchase cards, through purchase orders, or in some circumstances reimbursed via expenses. 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 33 individual schools within the University. There are 21 central administration teams. Your request encompasses three complete academic years, and one in-progress academic year. Taking a very
conservative estimate of thirty minutes per school or department, per academic year (which we do not anticipate would be sufficient time), this would take approximately 81 hours to complete.

We have been unable to limit your request to question one only as per your email as even without the inclusion of question two, the appropriate limit would still be exceeded.

If you were to refine your request, for example to a specific school or team over a shorter timeframe, we may be able to provide some information. Refined requests should be sent to foi@leeds.ac.uk.

In the hope that it is helpful, please find details of expense claims submitted by the Vice-Chancellor on our website. This includes some information on air travel. While this does not address your enquiry in full, we hope that it is of some use.

We can also advise that we have reviewed our records and we do not appear to have received the earlier request referred to in your email.

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.

Sincerely

Chloe Wilkins