Dear Applicant,

Freedom of Information request reference K/20/097

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 24 February 2020, reference K/20/097.

Your request read:

1) “The names of Fashion houses, organisations and companies that students on BA and MA courses related to fashion are currently banned or blacklisted from interning or participating in university-affiliated work placements at - even if that ban is only partial, e.g. for particular courses/areas.
2) The names of Fashion houses, organisations and companies that students on BA and MA courses related to fashion have been banned or blacklisted from interning or participating in university-affiliated work placements at for each given year starting from 2010 - even if that ban is only partial, e.g. for particular courses/areas.
3) Details of why organisations are or have historically been banned or blacklisted - including complaints that were made, discussions between your authorities and those of the fashion organisation, the stage in the course that a relevant student was at and details of their experience.
4) if an organisation applies for part (2) but not for part (1), details of why a historic ban has been lifted.
5) The number of occasions that students have complained to you - officially or informally - about the way they have been treated during internships or work placements at fashion houses, organisations and companies, for each year since 2010.
6) The number of occasions that your authorities have directly contacted fashion houses, organisations and companies as a result of student complaints or suspicions of how a student is being treated, for each year since 2010.
7) Details of each complaint or each intervention covered by part (5) and (6).”

The University of Leeds may hold some recorded information in relation to your request.

The University of Leeds has not “blacklisted” any organisations, or banned students on BA and MA courses related to fashion from engaging with any fashion houses, organisations or companies. Accordingly, we hold no recorded information in relation to parts one, two, three or four of your request.

Over 1200 student placements are arranged each year. As such, it is not practical for the details of individual arrangements to be managed centrally. Instead, university staff across the School of Design communicate regularly with placement students over the course of their year to address any emerging issues. We do not hold a central record of these communications. As such, the only means by which we could establish whether any relevant information is held would be to manually review all correspondence across the School of Design since 2010. This would take grossly in excess of the 18-hour appropriate limit set out at section 12(1) of the Freedom of
Information Act. Due to the breadth of your request we are unfortunately unable to provide an estimate of how long this would take. We are therefore unable to respond to parts five, six or seven of your request.

As part of our section 16(1) duty to advise and assist, we are required to set out ways in which you may be able to limit the scope of your request in order to reduce the total amount of time required to comply with it. In this case, it would be theoretically possible to reduce the scope of your request in a number of ways:

- Reducing the number of years you are requesting information on. The shorter and more recent the timeframe of your request, the less time will be required, and;
- Specifying staff, placements, or fashion houses you are interested in.
  - You may find the People page of the School of Design web page helpful, and;
- Providing key words which can be used in searches for relevant information. These may reflect any areas you are particularly interested in.

However, we would advise that due to the ad-hoc nature in which students are likely to make comments regarding their placements, it is possible that a search could be completed and no relevant results found. You may wish to take this into account should you wish to submit a refined request.

We can also advise, outside of the FOI Act, that upon receipt of your request we contacted the School of Design in order to commence location and retrieval of relevant information. No-one was immediately aware of any complaints or concerns which would fall within the scope of your request. While this is not conclusive, we consider it very unlikely that, even with an appropriate reduction in scope, any relevant information will be located.

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