Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/495)

Thank you for your clarified Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 28 December 2020, reference K/20/495.

Your clarified request read as follows. Clarifications are shown in italicised text:

“Please could you provide the average GCSE attainment achieved by students admitted into the mathematics BSc undergraduate course.

Specifically:

- the average (or modal) GCSE grade for mathematics
- the average (or modal) GCSE grade for English language
- the average (or modal) proportion of grade 8/9 (A*) grades achieved.

I would like the information to be regarding the 2018/19 & 2019/20 cohorts please.

Secondly, pls provide the proportion of students that didn’t study Further Mathematics A-Level, that were ultimately admitted onto the Mathematics BSc undergraduate course.

And for the Further Maths enquiry to be related strictly to students that studied A-Levels.”

The University of Leeds holds information relevant to your request. However, we consider that to respond to your request as it is currently framed would exceed 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.

We do not separately record GCSE information for applicants. Applications are first reviewed in order to sift out those which do not meet the minimum course requirements (e.g. students who have not secured appropriate grades or taken the necessary courses). From this point onwards, there is no particular need for us to
isolate GCSE grades. As such, the only place this information exists is within the original applications. We do not separate successful applications from the applications of other candidates who made the University of Leeds their firm or insurance UCAS choice.

As such, we would need to review a total of 2008 applications (1010 for 2018/19 and 998 in 2019/20) in order to locate the applications of those who were successful in securing a place. We estimate that each application would take an average of one minute to review. This initial review would therefore take approximately 33.5 hours to complete.

Further work would then be required to isolate the information you have requested from the applications of the successful candidates.

There were 268 new students in 2018/19, and 260 in 2019/20. A total of 528 applications would therefore need to be reviewed. We estimate that it would take an average of two minutes to review each application and extract the information you have requested. This equates to a further 17.6 hours. In total, we therefore calculate that it would take approximately 51 hours to review, locate and extract the GCSE information you have requested.

Based on the numbers above, even if you were to limit the GCSE-element of your request to a single admissions year (i.e. either 2018/19 or 2019/20), the work required to isolate the information you have requested would still take over 18 hours. As such, in order to refine your request, we recommend that you limit your request to the A-Level related questions 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
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