Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/109)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 1 March 2021, reference K/21/107.

Your request read:

“For the most recent admission cycle (2020 entry) for A100 Medicine, may I please request:
1. The average GCSE A* count for applicants, candidates shortlisted for interview, and candidates with offers
2. The average BMAT scores in sections 1, 2 and 3/UCAT scores for applicants, candidates shortlisted for interview, and candidates with offers
3. The average % for students offering Biology, chemistry and Mathematics at A level, for applicants, candidates shortlisted for an interview, and candidates with offers.
4. The average % for students offering Biology, chemistry and physics at A level, for applicants, candidates shortlisted for an interview, and candidates with offers
5. The % of students given an offer who took Further maths as an A level
6. In order of importance, what does Leeds university look for in applicants from GCSE grades, UCAT score, A level grades, extracurricular achievements, personal statement e.t.c”

The University of Leeds holds some of this information. However, we are refusing your requests under section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 14(1) sets out that public authorities such as the University of Leeds do not have to comply with FOI requests where the request, or its impact on a public authority, cannot be justified. We have set out below an outline of the information we do and do not hold, and where the burden associated with your request sits.

When applying to study the A100 Medicine and Surgery course, specific qualifications are required. GCSE grades are used as a starting point during the admissions process. Those who have not secured sufficient GCSE grades in appropriate courses do not progress through the admissions process. After this initial sift of applications, consideration moves on to A-Level (or equivalent) qualifications, interview scores etc. As such, there is no need for us to separately record the individual GCSE grades of students offered an interview and/or a place on the course. This impacts on our ability to answer questions four and five of your request.

If applying based on A-Level qualifications, either Chemistry or Biology must be offered, with either Physics or Maths if Chemistry is not taken. Those candidates who do not offer the appropriate qualifications will not progress through the
admissions process. As with GCSE grades, there is therefore no need for us to separately record the A-Level qualifications taken by candidates. Taking a fourth A2 level qualification does not provide any advantage over candidates who take three, and as such the fourth course does not form part of any offer made. Extended Project Qualifications (EPQs) do not form part of any offers made, either. As such, there is no need for us to separately record information in relation to fourth A-Levels or EPQs. This impacts on our ability to respond to questions one, two, three, six and seven of your request.

As such, in order to isolate the information you have requested in questions one to seven (inclusive) of your request, it would be necessary for us to manually review the UCAS application forms of all applicants within the 2020 entry admission cycles. We received over 2000 applications or 2020 entry to the A100 Medicine and Surgery course. There are no means by which we could conduct an automated search for this information; due to the format in which UCAS forms are held and the fact that some of the information you have requested is likely to be recorded in free text fields (which may include typing errors or spelling mistakes), a keyword search would not be of use.

The admissions process for 2021 entry is ongoing and the School of Medicine are currently in the process of conducting interviews with candidates. The time required to isolate the information you have requested would therefore have a significant impact on our ability to carry out the admissions process in a timely fashion. It is essential that we protect the admissions process and responding to your request during admissions would place an undue burden on the University. This is only exacerbated by the additional strain placed on our services as a result of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

We also note that you have requested very similar information in another FOI request, which has been allocated the reference number K/21/107. The work required across both requests significantly increases the burden on the University.

We do not consider there to be any particular public interest in the information you have requested, and as such the burden cannot be said to be justifiable.

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.

Yours sincerely

Chloe Wilkins
Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat
University of Leeds