Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/061)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 1 February 2021, reference K/21/061. Please accept our apologies for the delay in providing your response.

Your originally submitted three FOI requests to the University of Leeds between November 2020 and January 2021. One of these requests read:

“From May 25 up to date, OR if this is too large a timeframe, the week following May 25, the week following June 7, and from September 1st up to date.

Specifically, when the relevant faculty may have met or discussed the relevant material

Could you provide me with email correspondence to and from the heads of department for English

In relation to:

1) "Blak Lives Matter" and the "curriculum" and "decolonising" and "anti-racist" as suggested search terms.

A question form of this may be: "What changes to the English syllabus have been proposed in light of the Black Lives Matter movement?"

2) Emails including secondary search terms including:

Kipling, Woolf, Dickens, Eliot, Conrad

In relation to 1) search terms above

A question form of this may be: "What specific figures might be removed from the syllabus, or taught with greater context?"

The University of Leeds refused these three requests under section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, due to the inappropriate burden they would place on the organisation. On 1 February 2021, you wrote to the University as follows:

“Rather than aggregating responses into a burdensome request that will be rejected, could I request that the request purely focusses on the English department and the others can be dropped?”
This email sets out our response to your request regarding the English department.

The University of Leeds holds some information relevant to your request. Please find attached to this email a PDF document setting out the email correspondence we have identified as being relevant to your request, and a PDF document containing the attachments to those emails.

Please note that we have redacted names, contact information and other personal information (such as references to personal appointments, absence from work etc.) under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) sets out that information is exempt from disclosure if it is the personal data of someone other than the person making the request, and disclosure would; contravene the data protection principles; contravene an objection to processing; or if the data is exempt from the right of subject access.

Some limited information has been redacted under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 43(2) sets out that information can be withheld if disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation, unless there is an overwhelming public interest in disclosure. The information we have redacted under section 43(2) includes discussions relating to tuition fee income within the School of English. We consider that to release this information could provide competitor organisations with an advantage, by providing an unusual insight into our income projections. This would clearly be prejudicial to the commercial interest of the University of Leeds.

Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption, which means that we are required to consider whether the public interest is in favour of withholding or releasing the information. Although we note that there will be a general interest in the income of the University, we do not consider there to be any specific public interest in the release of this information. We publish accounts each year which demonstrate our total income from student tuition fees, which we consider meets the general public interest in our income. Conversely, there is a strong public interest in ensuring that universities can operate in a competitive market place, without providing unfair advantages to other organisations within the sector. We are therefore satisfied that the public interest is in favour of withholding the information.

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