

From: [removed **On Behalf Of** Freedom of Information

Sent: 28 June 2021 12:24

To:

Subject: Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/170)

Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/170)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 3 April 2021, reference K/21/170. Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in providing a response to your request.

Your request read:

“These all relate to Mitigating Circumstances at the university.

1. Please can you provide figures for the number of students who have made an application for mitigating circumstances during the last 4 academic years, inclusive of the current 2020/21 academic year. For figures in the current academic year, please ensure these are the most recent available at the time of writing. Please provide a breakdown of these figures by undergraduate and postgraduate students.

2. Please indicate the number of applications for mitigating circumstances that were rejected in each of these academic years, broken down by undergraduate and postgraduate students.

3. Please provide the most common reasons for rejection of requests for mitigating circumstances. As reasons will likely vary significantly, please summarise/group these as appropriate e.g. lack of evidence submitted, mitigating event too far from exam etc.”

The University of Leeds may hold some of this information.

However, we consider that to respond to your request would exceed the cost limit as set out in Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information 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.

The University does not hold a central repository of all extenuating/mitigating circumstances forms submitted. These are held at an individual school level. There are 33 individual schools at the University of Leeds. In order to identify cases relevant to your request, and to isolate the information you are seeking (e.g. reason for rejection request), each individual form would need to be reviewed in turn. Mitigating circumstances forms can be completed by hand and as such this review

would need to be conducted manually. In order to complete this work within the appropriate limit of 18 hours, each school would need to review all mitigating circumstances requests received in the previous five academic years in less than 33 minutes (33 schools each taking 33 minutes gives a total of 1089 minutes/18.15 hours). The University of Leeds receives thousands of mitigating circumstances requests each year, and as such it is more likely that each school would require several hours per year. This review would therefore take far in excess of 18 hours (probably in the region of several hundred hours). Further time would then be required to trace the requests forward in order to locate the information requested at parts three and four of your request.

If you would like to submit a refined version of your request, we recommend that you limit the scope of the question to a single School, and for a single academic year. Please bear in mind that student records are held for a minimum of one, and maximum of six years after the student has left. As such, the older the information is which you request, the more likely it is that some information will have been destroyed in line with our Retention Policy. Older information is also less likely to be held in a readily-accessible format, and is therefore likely to require more time to review and extract.

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,