

From: Freedom of Information

Sent: 29 June 2021 15:01

To:

Subject: Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/226 and K/21/227)

Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/226 and K/21/227)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) requests dated 9 May 2021 and 2 June 2021, references K/21/226 and K/21/227.

Your requests read:

“For the history department

From May 25 up to date, OR if this is too large a timeframe, the week following May 25, the week following June 7, the week following September 1st, and (if possible within limits) January 1 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 head of department - emails that are still held by the head of department

In relation to:

1) "Black 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 syllabus have been proposed in light of the Black Lives Matter movement?"

2) Emails including secondary search terms including:

"Black Lives Matter" and the "curriculum" and "decolonising" and “anti-racist” “colonialism” 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?"

3) For each faculty could you please provide any guidance that has been issued to staff or students on issues of race, decolonising, or Black Lives Matter

4) Could you please any list created by staff or students in relation to individual historical figures which has been created in relation to the above search terms, that is, in response to Black Lives Matter issues”

And

“For science departments

Could this be broken down into separate requests for physics, biology and chemistry faculties or nearest equivalent

From May 25 up to date, OR if this is too large a timeframe, the week following May 25, the week following June 7, the week following September 1st, and (if possible within limits) January 1 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 science faculties

In relation to:

1) "Black 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 syllabus have been proposed in light of the Black Lives Matter movement?"

2) Emails including secondary search terms including:

"Black Lives Matter" and the "curriculum" and "decolonising" and "anti-racist" "colonialism"

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?"

3) For each faculty could you please provide any guidance that has been issued to staff or students on issues of race, decolonising, or Black Lives Matter"

The University of Leeds holds information relevant to your requests. 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 previously refused similar requests seeking the same information from the Schools of Music, English and Philosophy under section 14(1) due to the burden responding would place on those schools. You then refined your request to the School of English only, and this was responded to under reference K/21/061.

You have now submitted further requests seeking the same type of information for the School of History and 'science departments'. This would again place a very significant burden on the University of Leeds, and this impact cannot be justified, for the same reasons as were set out in our previous response.

We understand that there is a strong and genuine public interest in how the University responds to social issues, such as the Black Lives Matter movement and wider concerns regarding the decolonisation of curricula, increasing representation and accurately reflecting our diverse community and history. We recognise that it is important that the public, and more particularly, members of our University community are able to scrutinise our responses and actions, and hold us to account where we do not meet expectations. However, these legitimate interests must be balanced against the significant amount of time which would be required to prepare the requested material for release, and also considered in the context of the steps already taken by the University.

We already directly communicate with members of the University community regarding important matters such as those highlighted by your request. We have also published a range of information setting out the recent and ongoing Equality and Inclusion work we undertake (via our [Equality Policy Unit](#)). Where students or members of the community have concerns about our actions (or inactions), we encourage direct conversations with Head of Schools, student representatives and via appropriate committees.

We also note the significant amount of time which would need to be spent on your request, in order to prepare the material for release. The burden on the University as a result of your requests is exacerbated by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, which places additional strain on resources and means it is essential that we prioritise the planning for, and delivery of teaching.

Based on the requests you have made to the University to date, we also consider it to be very likely that you will continue to submit similar requests for other Schools within the University, therefore requiring additional effort.

On balance we therefore consider that, although there is a genuine public interest in the information you have requested, this interest is met via our direct communications with staff and students, the fact that students and staff members can directly raise concerns with the University, and via the information we have published online and that which we have already released to you under the reference K/21/061. The interests are also outweighed by the very significant burden which would be placed upon the University, not only as a result of the requests you have already submitted, but also due to the likelihood of further requests being submitted in future.

Please note that, as per section 17(6) of the Freedom of Information Act, any further requests for this information (regardless of the department to which it relates) will be read but not responded to.

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