From: Freedom of Information  
Sent: 14 September 2021 15:39  
To:  
Subject: Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/445)

Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/445)


Your request read:

“1. A list of all the instances where the University, or its departments or staff members, have employed the services of external expertise or consultancy for every year for the last five years. Please include the cost of the services provided, the stated purpose, the department they were assisting, and the name of the company where this data is available.

   a) If individual cost information is not available, please provide the total cost spent on external expertise or consultancy over the last five years.

   b) If individual information is not available, please provide the total number of contracts the University has made employing the services of external expertise or consultancy in the last five years.

2. If a full list of instances is not possible, the 10 contracts employing the services of external expertise or consultancy with the greatest cost to the university. Please include the cost of the services provided, the stated purpose, the department they were assisting, and the name of the company where this data is available.”

The University of Leeds may hold some information relevant to your request. However, we consider that to respond to your request 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.

There is no central repository in which this information is held. The only means of collating this information would be to ask all teams and departments (of which there are hundreds) across the University to review their individual records in the hope of locating information which relates to your request. Given the breadth of your request (any external expertise), there is no targeted means which teams could use to search for information. It would require many hours of manual review of both
financial records and other documents to collate the information you have requested. It is therefore not possible for us to provide an estimate of how long it would take to collate this information, but based on the number of teams which would be involved it is clear that it would grossly exceed the 18 hour appropriate limit.

If you would like to refine your request, we recommend that you limit your query to a single team, and a single academic year.

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