

Dear Applicant,

Freedom of Information request reference K/20/044

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 23 January 2020, reference K/20/044.

Your request read:

“I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to request the following information in regards to academic misconduct at your university:

1. Total number of male students found guilty of cheating on exams per year for the academic years:
 - a) a)2015/16
 - b) b)2016/17
 - c) c)2017/18
 - d) d)2018/19
2. Total number of female students found guilty of cheating on exams per year for the academic years:
 - a) 2015/16
 - b) 2016/17
 - c) 2017/18
 - d) 2018/19
3. Total number of male students found guilty of plagiarism on assessed coursework per year for the academic years:
 - a) 2015/16
 - b) 2016/17
 - c) 2017/18
 - d) 2018/19
4. Total number of female students found guilty of plagiarism on assessed coursework per year for the academic years:
 - a) 2015/16
 - b) 2016/17
 - c) 2017/18
 - d) 2018/19
5. Total number of male students enrolled at your university per year for the academic years:
 - a) 2015/16
 - b) 2016/17
 - c) 2017/18
 - d) 2018/19
6. Total number of female students enrolled at your university per year for the academic years:
 - a) 2015/16
 - b) 2016/17
 - c) 2017/18
 - d) 2018/19”

The University of Leeds holds some information relevant to your request. However, we consider that to respond to your request as it is currently framed 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.

The information you have requested is not held centrally. It may be helpful if we first explain how the University of Leeds reviews and manages allegations of academic malpractice.

All allegations are initially actioned by the relevant School (i.e. allegations against an English Language and Literature student would be actioned by the School of English). Depending on the nature of the alleged offence, it may be appropriate for the matter to remain at the individual School level. Serious, repeated or otherwise grievous offences, however, may necessitate referral to the University level. A non-exhaustive list of [list of examples](#) of malpractice in University assessments, including whether they may be suitable for management at the School level can be found on our website.

The majority of cases are suitable for management at the School level, without referral to the University level. As such, records in relation to academic malpractice are held primarily at the School level. Although individual Schools do provide the University Secretariat with the total number of reported cases per academic year, there is no requirement to provide details of cases unless the matter requires referral to the University level.

Furthermore, information in relation to the gender of the student is not recorded as standard as part of academic malpractice case files, and does not form part of the centralised reporting made to the University Secretariat. As such, the only way to locate the information you have requested would be to contact each school individually, and ask them to review the individual case files.

We estimate that it would take individual Schools a minimum of five minutes to locate the information you have requested per reported case. In some cases, it may be possible to locate the information much more quickly (e.g. if a student admits an offence, resulting in a shorter process overall). However, it is also likely that some cases will be far more complicated (e.g. with mitigating factors, multiple agents or other complicating factors) and will therefore take more time to review.

In the 2018/19 academic year alone, there were 516 confirmed first offence academic malpractice cases reported. As such, we estimate that it would take a minimum of 43 hours for individual Schools to locate, retrieve and extract the information you have requested at questions three and four, for the 2018/19 academic year only. Further time would then be required for the Secretariat to review files for cases managed at the University level (in cases where the requested information could not be found at the School level). It is likely that the Secretariat would require significantly more than five minutes per case, as the cases which reach University level are, by their nature more complicated. There were 44 cases at

the University level in 2018/19. If each case took ten minutes to review, a further seven hours would be required.

As such, the total time required to comply with your request as it currently stands would greatly exceed the appropriate limit of 18 hours as set out in section 12(1) of the FOI Act.

In line with our section 16 duty to advise and assist, we can advise that we may be able to provide some information within the appropriate limit. The Secretariat started to record the gender of students subject to University-level proceeds (see above) in the 2018/19 academic year. As such, we may be able to provide information in respect of questions one and two, for 2018/19 only.

Alternatively, we may be able to provide information at the level you have requested for a single school over a single academic year. There are 33 individual Schools within the University. You can find information on them, including their Faculty, on our [website](#).

Please note that we cannot guarantee that we will be able to provide information requested.

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.

Kind regards

Chloe Wilkins

Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat

University of Leeds