# Your Review Outcome

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| Our Ref: | 1969 |
| Date: | 30/3/2020 |

Dear Stuart

Thank you for your application to review our handling of your recent request for information reference 1827 which was received by us on 29/2/2020.

## Your original request and our response:

On 21/10/2019 we provided the response below:



## Your dissatisfaction with our response:

You responded and raised the following point(s):

For your information, the collated data from all institutions who responded to my requests is available here: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3659970

I believe this means your original response is illogical. I believe that you can (and should) release the information. As you can see, I have sent the same request to all higher education institutions in the UK, and the majority have now responded to the request by releasing the data.

As a reminder, you have already released expenditure in previous years, e.g. https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/academic\_journal\_costs\_319 and https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/elsevier\_journal\_subscription\_co\_4. The full dataset for all institutions in previous years is also available at https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.1186832.v23 and https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.4542433.v6.

Since negotiations for journal agreements generally occur on a sector-wide level through a single central negotiator – Jisc Collections – it is not in your institution’s interest for figures to remain secret. Indeed, full transparency of these figures can show your institution how much comparable institutions are paying, allowing you to understand whether you are receiving appropriate value from your payments. The current situation is almost complete transparency with regards to the amounts paid by UK institutions to most of the major journal publishers.

Finally, I believe there is a high public interest in releasing the data, as evidenced by the high level of engagement with earlier data releases (https://figshare.altmetric.com/details/2726745) and news articles about it (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/spending-on-subscriptions-to-journals-rises-by-up-to-50/2016635.article). It has directly informed UK government policy documents (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-access-to-research-independent-advice-2018). The publishing sector is moving towards greater transparency, such as through the forthcoming Plan S requirements (https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/). To be accountable for the expenditure of public funds, and to align your practices with best practice across the sector, I urge you again to release the information.

As these comments express dissatisfaction with our response the University interprets this as a request for an internal review of our handling of your request as per the [Freedom of Information Code of Practice](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/744071/CoP_FOI_Code_of_Practice_-_Minor_Amendments_20180926_.pdf) (Section 5) and the Information Commissioner’s [Guidance](https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1624144/section-45-code-of-practice-request-handling-foia.pdf) (Section 77).

## Your review reached the following conclusions:

The University’s commercial prejudice concerns have been reviewed in light of the above case and clarity over the intended use of the data. Following this review the University is now in a position to disclose the data.

## Conclusion

The following disclosure is now made following review of commercial prejudice concerns and public interest factors:



I trust this resolves the concerns raised over our handling of your request. However, if you are still not satisfied you have the right to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner who can be contacted:

* at the following address:

Information Commissioner’s Office,

Wycliffe House,

Water Lane,

Wilmslow,

Cheshire,

SK9 5AF,

* by telephone on 01625 454700,
* or online at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/official-information-concerns-report/official-information-concern/>.

Yours sincerely

David Humphreys

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| **Information Compliance Team**  ARU, Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford, CM1 1SQfoi@anglia.ac.uk [aru.ac.uk](http://www.aru.ac.uk/) |
| ARU Cambridge | ARU Chelmsford | ARU London | ARU Peterborough |