



**By e-mail:** Matthew Procter <request-360957-4f5b1c59@whatdotheyknow.com>

Office of the University Secretary  
4 West  
University of Bath  
Claverton Down  
Bath  
BA2 7AY

21 October 2016

Dear Mr Procter

**Request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 2000 – 2016/179**

Your request for information was received on 26 September 2016 and handled under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2000. It is reproduced below for your reference:

*"Please could you outline the income and expenditure from university owned accommodation over the past 10 years. Could you break this down into fees from students and non-student income such as conferences and events, and break down the expenditure onto 'day to day running' and capital expenditure as best you can. Could you also provide any projections you have regarding the above for the next 5 years.*

*Could you also outline the average cost of a room in university owned accommodation over last 10 years, and the range from the cheapest to the most expensive, and again, the projections for the next 5 years.*

*could you also outline The number of rooms available, and the number of students housed by university accommodation, and your projections for the next 5 years.*

*Finally, could you outline any agreement you have with private provision of student accommodation, such as the university 'partnering' with a private company to either*

- *Secure rooms for students directed through your accommodation services*
- *The management of university owned accommodation services by private companies*

*If you have any arrangement with a private provider which is similar in its scope to the two mentioned above, please could you outline what it is, and how many students it affects,"*

Section 1(1) usually entitles you to be told whether the requested information is held and have that information provided to you unless it is judged to be exempt from disclosure. The University is able to provide you with following information.

1. The total income and expenditure attributed to University owned accommodation (including catering<sup>1</sup>) is published in the University's annual Financial Statements, which are available via the following link:

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/finance-procurement/about-us/statements/index.html> (see Notes 4 and 8)

This information is therefore exempt from disclosure under section 21 of the FOIA (reasonably available elsewhere). The Financial Statements for 2015/16 will be published by January 2017 and are therefore exempt from disclosure under section 22(1) (intended for future publication). Section 22 is a qualified exemption subject to the application of a public interest test. The University considers that the public interest weighs in favour of maintaining the exemption because it has failed to identify a specific public interest in favour of disclosing the information ahead of the agreed publication schedule for this financial information. The University has concluded that the public interest in financial transparency is sufficiently met via the information it has committed to publish via these Financial Statements. Furthermore it considers that the undermining of a schedule designed to ensure that appropriate internal and external fiscal verification and approval processes are in place prior to the publication of financial information would not be in the public interest. The University is able to provide you with capital expenditure associated with accommodation for the last 5 years (as per your clarification) in the table below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total accommodation capital expenditure</b>
2011/12	1,919,215
2012/13	9,181,753
2013/14	31,454,260
2014/15	4,621,373
2015/16	4,816,557

The further breakdowns you have requested and all projections are exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) of the FOIA which applies when disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any organisation (including the University itself). In this instance the University considers that disclosure would be likely to prejudice its own commercial interests by providing competing private residence/accommodation providers with strategically valuable commercial intelligence concerning the University's accommodation business model which could be used to their benefit and the University's detriment. This is particularly apposite in an increasingly competitive student residence market in the city of Bath. Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption subject to the application of a public interest test. The University acknowledges a general public interest in favour of transparency in the management and administration of its student accommodation. However it has judged that this interest is met by the information it already publishes via its website such as the previously cited Financial Statements and detailed information on its Student Accommodation pages (such as a full list of current prices and terms & conditions of the accommodation contract). Moreover it has concluded that any public interest factors in favour of disclosure are outweighed in this instance by the cited likely prejudice to the University's commercial interests. This would not be in the public interest in the context of an organisation that conducts teaching and research for the public benefit.

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<sup>1</sup> NB this is for University wide catering service (not just specifically catering provision for student residences, which isn't held)

The University is also able to provide you with five years' worth of data in relation to the second part of your request:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Ave. (mean) cost of a room per week</b>	<b>Cheapest room/bed per week</b>	<b>Most expensive room per week</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
<b>2010/11</b>	£100.64	£55.00	£205.00	3,354
<b>2011/12</b>	£102.72	£58.00	£216.00	3,372
<b>2012/13</b>	£107.18	£60.00	£210.00	3,394
<b>2013/14</b>	£111.00	£60.00	£215.00	3,387
<b>2014/15</b>	£119.10	£60.00	£215.00	4,086
<b>2015/16</b>	£126.00	£62.00	£221.00	4,078

The projections you have requested are exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) for the same reasons outlined above. However you may find the University's Estates Masterplan useful, which outlines the University's long term strategy regarding student accommodation:

[http://www.bath.ac.uk/estates/docs/Masterplan\\_2009\\_to\\_2020\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.bath.ac.uk/estates/docs/Masterplan_2009_to_2020_Final_Report.pdf) (See Page 13)

The University can confirm that it has a Nomination Agreement in place with a private provider with regards to the provision of student accommodation. Details of this agreement are available via the following link:

<http://www.empiric.co.uk/about-us/news/nomination-agreement-with-university-of-bath>

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of how your request was handled you may ask the University to conduct an internal review. A request for an internal review must be submitted within 40 working days of receipt by you of this response. Requests received outside this period will only be considered at the University's discretion and where there is a valid reason to do so. Applications for internal review should be addressed in writing to:

University Secretary  
University of Bath  
Claverton Down  
Bath, BA2 7AY or e-mail [M.G.W.Humphriss@bath.ac.uk](mailto:M.G.W.Humphriss@bath.ac.uk).

If you still feel dissatisfied following the outcome of the internal review you may appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

The Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Further details of this process are available via the following link:

[http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints/freedom\\_of\\_information.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints/freedom_of_information.aspx)

Please note that the Information Commissioner will only consider appeals once the internal review process has been completed.

Yours sincerely

James Button  
Freedom of Information Officer