



**By e-mail:** Zhongbowen Cui <request-624308-8afcac70@whatdotheyknow.com>

Office of the Vice-Chancellor  
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University of Bath  
Claverton Down  
Bath  
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9 December 2019

Dear Zhongbowen Cui

**Request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 2000 – 2019/351**

Your request was received on 29 November 2019, and is copied below for your reference:

*"I am requesting for the following information. Please kindly provide data for 2019/2020 admission cycle.*

- 1. List of all postgraduate taught courses for 2019/2020*
- 2. Number of applicants (all postgraduate programmes)*
- 3. Number of offers made (all postgraduate programmes)*
- 4. Number of Chinese applications and offers made (all postgraduate programmes)"*

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

A list of courses (question 1) is in the attached pdf document.

We are unable to provide the level of detailed data requested for question 2, and any data for questions 3 and 4, in accordance with section 43(2) of the FOIA, as the University believes that disclosure would, or would be likely to be prejudicial to its commercial interests. Please see below for further details. However, we are able to provide data for each faculty, and our School of Management, for question 2, and this is below.

<b>Faculty/School</b>	<b>Applications 2019 entry</b>
Engineering & Design	2,077
Humanities & Social Sciences	4,029
Science	2,215
Management	5,368
University total	13,689

Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption, and I am required to carry out a 'Public Interest Test' to determine whether the public interest is better served by maintaining the exemption (and hence withholding the information) or by disclosing the information. I have completed this test and concluded that the public interest lies in not disclosing the additional information.

The University operates in a highly competitive environment, including for the teaching of postgraduate students, facing competition from some of the country's most long-established and best-known universities, and Higher Education Institutions outside the United Kingdom. The University notes that disclosure under the FOIA must be considered as disclosure to the public at large, so releasing information by course and for offers in addition to applications would put into the public domain a significant amount of new data and business intelligence that would benefit our academic rivals in the UK and beyond, and potentially harm the University's interests and ability to run a wide range of high-quality postgraduate courses, by identifying the respective strengths of individual courses.

The University does routinely report a significant amount of data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, much of which is put in the public domain, such as through [www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/releases](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/releases). This data is only released after substantial delay, and not at the level of detail associated with this request, reflecting in part the intensity of the competitive environment we face.

Changes in the Chinese market have meant that we, in common with other UK Higher Education institutions, are reviewing our market strategy. To provide information about interest in our programme portfolio from this important market at this point in the new recruitment cycle would, or would be likely to also commercially prejudice the interests of the University by potentially disclosing to competitor universities, and other third parties, valuable data about student preferences and the strengths of our courses.

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 Freedom of Information Team, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath BA2 7AY or e-mail [freedom-of-information@bath.ac.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information@bath.ac.uk).

If you remain dissatisfied you may appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. Further details of this process are available via the following link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/official-information-concerns-report/official-information-concern/>. Please note that the Information Commissioner will only consider appeals once the internal review process has been completed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Evans', written over a horizontal line.

John Evans  
Freedom of Information Officer