



By e-mail: request-773436-bc4f08f0@whatdotheyknow.com

Freedom of Information Office
4 West
University of Bath
Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7AY

3rd August 2021

Dear Mr Hall

Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 2000 – 2021/206

Your request was received on 12th July 2021 and has been handled under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2000.

Section 1(1)(a)(b) 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. Details of the request text are reproduced below, together with the formal response provided by the University of Bath.

Request:

From 2010 onwards, please may I have the following information for the Computer Science BSc course:

- number of applicants*
- number of offers made*
- number of enrolled students*

If possible could I also have a breakdown of the predicted and achieved A-level of applicants.

Response:

Please find attached response for the years 2010 – 2020 as requested.

The data provided is for all versions of BSc Computer Science (3 year, 4 year with placement and 4 year with study abroad). As with most of these types of request, this is a subset of the group of students who would be considered as a 'cohort' of applicants, as students are considered and admitted alongside applicants to all other Computer Science degrees (except MComp/BSc Computer Science & Mathematics).

The summary grade information includes only those students who were predicted or achieved grades in three A level subjects respectively - they are obviously a subset of the students counted in the main table. The collection and recording of predictions and achieved grades are separate processes, so the two respective groups are not exactly the same; this is why the totals in a given year will be slightly different.

Information has been provided as per the University of Bath's conventional internal presentation of this kind of data, where grade combinations are grouped together in equivalency bands (A*AB = AAA, A*BB = AAB, etc).

Please note that information relating to 2020/21 (ie. current year information) has been exempted by virtue of s43(2). This exemption is engaged where disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any organisation, including the University itself.

Section 43 is a qualified exemption, which means that once the likely commercial prejudice has been identified and the exemption engaged, public interest factors for and against disclosure must be considered.

On this occasion, the University of Bath considers that disclosure of the requested information for the current, on-going academic intake would be likely to prejudice its own commercial advantage. Release would provide competitors with valuable commercial intelligence and unfairly inform other universities vying to attract the same students of the University's current commercial viability in respect of the courses you have identified. The marketplace in which the University operates, is increasingly competitive and apprising competitors of sensitive current commercial information is likely to erode the university's competitive edge.

To maintain and consolidate its position as a global leader in key academic arenas against national and international competition, the University must retain an element of commercial integrity in certain key areas of its operation and one such area, is current year application and offer information.

It is the University's opinion therefore, that the public interest favours the non-disclosure of the 2020/21 information. The conclusion is that the public interest factors in favour of disclosure are outweighed by the potential harm to the University's commercial interests that would be likely to result from disclosure of this information.

The University acknowledges a general public interest in favour of transparency and publishes details of its student demographics here:

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/student-numbers/>

HESA is also provided with data about the University's student figures each year:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from>

Complaint Rights:

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 emailed to: The Freedom of Information Team, freedom-of-information@bath.ac.uk or addressed in writing to University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 7AY.

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 'Rebecca Warhurst', written in a cursive style.

Rebecca Warhurst
Freedom of Information Officer