



By e-mail: Jack Heap
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Office of the University Secretary
4 West
University of Bath
Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7AY

12 March 2019

Dear Mr Heap

Request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 2000 – 2019/059

Your request was received on 23 February 2019 and handled under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2000. The request is copied below for your *reference*.

'I would like to request the following information for undergraduate courses at the University of Bath.

- 1. Which is your most competitive course - defined by the ratio between applicants and spaces or applications and offers*
- 2. Which course has the highest entry requirements?*
- 3. Which course has the highest UCAS points per pupil?'*

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. We can provide the following information.

The University of Bath's admissions processes considers applicants for groups of degrees, rather than individual courses, and our places and entry requirements are set accordingly.

For example, students who apply for any of the following degrees would be considered against a single set of places for "Economics", using the same criteria: BSc Economics, BSc Economics with placement, BSc Economics with study year abroad, BSc Economics & Politics, BSc Economics & Politics with placement and BSc Economics & Politics with study year abroad.

The number of students joining any individual degree is not a consideration for admissions and all applicants are treated the same. For the purposes of this request we have therefore provided answers for groups of degrees (which in some cases are groups of one), as they cannot otherwise be meaningfully sub-divided. All data is based on undergraduate applications and entrants for the 2018/19 academic year.

Question 1

The University would not define "competitive" by either of these definitions.

For example, both Management and International Management degrees attract a high number of international applications that do not necessarily convert to offers or to enrolment to these degrees. Therefore this disproportionately inflates the ratio of applicants to spaces.

Similarly, 'popular' courses often attract applicants with a wider variety of academic achievements and potential, meaning much higher applications per place ratios, but that does

not mean the likelihood of offer for a reasonably qualified applicant is less than if the same applicant applied to a less popular degree with identical requirements.

By the ratio of applicants to spaces: Management (BSc Management + BSc Management with placement).

By the ratio of applicants to offers: International Management (BSc International Management with placement, which is admitted to as a single degree).

Question 2

The University has many degrees with A level requirements of A*AA including: Architecture, Civil Engineering (including Civil & Architectural Engineering), Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering (including Design Engineering, Automotive Engineering and Aerospace Engineering), Economics (including Economics & Politics), Economics & Mathematics, Psychology, Mathematics (including Mathematical Sciences and Statistics), Natural Sciences, Mathematics & Physics and Physics.

Degrees in Mathematical Sciences has the possibility of the highest entry requirements, with a requirement of A*A*A + an additional mathematics test. However, these requirements only apply to students who have not studied A level or AS level Further Mathematics, which represent an extreme minority of applicants applying to the degree. The typical requirements for most applicants are A*AA. Natural Sciences has the offer with the combination of highest grades and strictest requirements (applicable to all applicants): A*AA including Mathematics and two core science requirements.

Question 3

In common with most universities and courses at “high tariff” universities, the University of Bath does not use UCAS tariff as the basis of its admissions decisions and our academic judgement on applicants would not always align with their respective tariff scores. In particular, students holding the International Baccalaureate (IB), BTEC or Scottish Advanced Highers will have tariff scores higher than A level students we deem to be equally qualified for entry to our degrees. As such, degrees which attract a higher proportion of entrants from these backgrounds may have higher average tariffs but this does not necessarily mean students on those degrees are “better qualified”. The degrees listed below have a much higher proportion of IB entrants than many of our other degrees.

The courses with the highest mean UCAS points held by entrants (excluding students who entered with qualifications not included in the UCAS Tariff) are BSc International Management and MSci/BSc Psychology (including placement and integrated masters versions).

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

Yours sincerely



D Bean
Freedom of Information Officer