



By e-mail: request-758059-1186dc18@whatdotheyknow.com

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

3rd June 2021

Dear Mr Marshall

Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 2000 – 2021/168

Your request was received on 23rd May 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 Text:

- *The number of applications submitted this academic year for BSc/MSc Computer Science and other BSc/MSc Computer Science degrees for the 2021 entry year.*
- *The number of offers made this academic year for BSc/MSc Computer Science and other BSc/MSc Computer Science degrees for the 2021 entry year.*
- *The number of students entering the 2021 entry year with a deferred place. (i.e. applications made in 2019/2020 to study BSc/MSc Computer Science and other BSc/MSc Computer Science degrees which resulted in an offer to study in the 2021 entry year)*

I understand that I have made a similar request in March 2021, which was rejected, but since the date by which universities must respond to applications, 20th June 2021, has now passed, I hope you are able to provide me with the information requested.

Response:

The information you have requested has been exempted from disclosure in its entirety. Please see further details below.

S43(2) Commercial Interests

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the University of Bath, when refusing to provide information by way of a specific exemption, to specify the exemption in question and state

why it applies. In this case, s43(2), Commercial Interests, has been applied to detailed information relating to guidelines and tariffs.

S43(2) is engaged where information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person, including the public authority holding it. This exemption is qualified and class-based is therefore subject to the application of the public interest test.

Information about the number of applicants, offers and deferment for 2020/21, the current academic year, has been exempted from disclosure by virtue of s43(2) which applies 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 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 other institutions, prior to the conclusion of an admissions cycle, of sensitive current commercial information is likely to erode the university's competitive edge.

To ensure the University of Bath is able to maintain and consolidate its advantage in respect of current application and offer numbers at both MSc and BSc levels, it is the University's opinion that the public interest favours the non-disclosure of this information at this time. 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