

Our Reference: FOI.2020.09.406

**UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM**

Legal Services

**Director (Interim)
Mrs N Cárdenas Blanco
Solicitor**

S Williams
What Do They Know

(By Email)

18 December 2020

Dear S Williams

Re: request for information under The Freedom of Information Act.

Please accept our apologies for the delay in responding to your request for information dated 14 September 2020. If you have any queries with regard to this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please note our statement in respect of Copyright, which is also attached.

If you are dissatisfied with the manner in which your request has been dealt with, you may ask for an internal review. The University's Complaints and Appeals procedure is available at

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/policies-regs/information/index.aspx>

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Team
University of Birmingham

Encs

Your request for information reads:

Based on information given in FOI request FOI.2019.12.599, could the University please reply to the following questions:

1) What was the supply chain scope 3 emissions 18/19 figure please – the University said this should be available by the end of March 2020.

2) What were the Scope 3 emissions in 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 for the following categories?

Commuting, Students

Commuting, Staff

Business Travel

Water & Effluent

Waste & Recycling

Supply Chain

TOTAL

3) For the 11 flight tickets at the end of November 2019 to Dubai, was any carbon offset payment or other adjustment made by the University?

4) Have any carbon offset payments been made by the University prior to 2020?

5) Do University staff making arrangements through the University travel office been able to make personal carbon offset payments?

6) Has the University undertaken any analysis as to the advantages and disadvantages of carbon offset payments for staff flights booked through the travel office.

If so please supply a copy of any information which is held.

The University of Birmingham responds:

The University of Birmingham is required to respond to a request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act") if it holds the information being requested, unless it is appropriate to apply one of the limited exemptions set out in the Act.

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic The University of Birmingham is adapting its usual approach to processing Freedom of Information requests in order to meet the unprecedented challenges we are all facing. Between 23 March 2020 and 30 September 2020, the University campus was effectively closed with only essential staff, and researchers engaged in supporting action on COVID 19 on campus. Whilst some staff are able to work remotely, since 23 March 2020 they are concentrating on supporting teaching and learning for our students who have returned for the new academic year under challenging circumstances. We are mindful that information

requests place some degree of demand on a public authority's resources in terms of costs and staff time and that for the foreseeable future The University must prioritise resources to other areas.

- 1. What was the supply chain scope 3 emissions 18/19 figure please – the University said this should be available by the end of March 2020.**

The University changed its financial payment and reporting software from Proactis to Core Systems (Oracle Fusion) from June 2019. The previous supply chain scope 3 emissions data were calculated using a coding structure which was not replicated in the new software. Therefore, for 2018/19, this meant a change to how the data was collected within the academic year.

Due to the change in systems, we have investigated obtaining a robust dataset for 18/19 that is comparable to previous years, but this has not been possible. We are currently looking at other methods of doing this to seek to update the Supply Chain Emissions figure for both 18/19 and 19/20 by the end of March 2021.

- 2. What were the Scope 3 emissions in 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 for the following categories?**

Source	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Commuting, Students	7,514	3,323	3,323
Commuting, Staff	5,698	4,446	4,446
Business Travel	4,588	9,815	8,761
Water & Effluent	529	575	542
Waste & Recycling	330	64	62
Supply Chain	53,348	80,537	94,299
TOTAL	72,007	98,760	111,432

- 3. For the 11 flight tickets at the end of November 2019 to Dubai, was any carbon offset payment or other adjustment made by the University?**

We do not currently make carbon offset payments against individual flights; however this is being considered for future procurement exercises.

Key Travel Limited, our Business Travel Management partner, do carry out some offsetting as a whole but this is not linked to individual trips.

- 4. Have any carbon offset payments been made by the University prior to 2020?**

There have been no carbon offsetting payments made by the University prior to 2020. Our approved Business Management Travel Partner, Key Travel Limited, conducts offsetting work independently of the contract and these credentials help towards the sustainable procurement requirements within the

tender documents. In addition, some of the airlines conduct offsetting independently. For instance, British Airways offset against UK flights - <https://mediacentre.britishairways.com/factsheets/details/86/Factsheets-3/208>

The previous travel tender was completed in 2016 and the focus was on value for money, duty of care and traveler safety, availability of fares and sustainability. The sustainability focus at the time was more in terms of measuring levels of emissions.

The University is currently out to tender for Business Travel Management and have included more detail of carbon offsetting within the tender documents. This incorporates specific provision on reduction of carbon emissions and offsetting schemes.

5. Do University staff making arrangements through the University travel office been able to make personal carbon offset payments?

As stated above, there are no offsetting arrangements currently in place at an individual level. Staff are encouraged to consider lower carbon alternatives when booking travel as well as to consider whether they need to travel at all and if meetings can be held online.

Further information on Sustainability can be found at the following pages:
<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/social-responsibility/social-responsibility-and-sustainability.aspx>

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/birmingham/about-us/environment/what-we-do/index.aspx>

The Sustainable Procurement Policy can be found here:
<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/environment/procurement.pdf>

6. Has the University undertaken any analysis as to the advantages and disadvantages of carbon offset payments for staff flights booked through the travel office.

The University does not have a travel office but engages Key Travel Limited as a Business Travel Management Company. Details of Key Travel's sustainability and approach to offsetting can be found at <https://www.keytravel.com/travel-with-us/sustainability/>.

The University of Birmingham

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