



22 November 2023

File ref: FOI2023/00814

J. Dennis

Sent by email: request-1041887-
fa542554@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear J. Dennis

Freedom of Information request: FOI2023/00814

Thank you for your email of 27 October 2023 requesting information about events hosted at the University's Regent Terrace property.

The University of Edinburgh is a global university, rooted in Scotland. We are internationally recognised for our research, development and innovation and we have provided world-class teaching to our students for more than 430 years. We are the largest university in Scotland and in 2021/22 our annual revenue was £1.3 billion, of which £331 million was research income. We have just under 50,000 students and over 15,000 staff. We are a founding member of the UK's Russell Group of leading research universities and a member of the League of European Research Universities.

University Principal

The University operates on a national and international stage and this is reflected in all areas of university life. The University Vice-Chancellor and Principal is Professor Peter Mathieson, who assumed the office in February 2018. The Principal is responsible for the overall operation of the University and as such represents the University at strategically significant meetings and events worldwide. In addition, he supports the global alumni community, our network of international offices and is also closely involved in maintaining and developing relations with major supporters of the University. [Further information about the Principal](#) and his role at the University is available on the website.

Principal's residence

In common with most other universities, accommodation for the Principal and their immediate family is provided as part of the role. The University does not provide residential accommodation for any other senior staff.

The Principal's residence is not used solely as a family home but also regularly used as a venue for hosting formal university events.

The residence is used for official events including to welcome international guests which strengthens the University's global reputation and increases our partnerships and potential funding streams.

The Principal's current residence was a gift donated to the University in 2015. The University and the donor agreed that the funding released from the sale of the previous residence would be allocated to create an endowment for access bursaries for students.

Events at the University's Regent Terrace property

You asked for information regarding all events hosted at the University's Regent Terrace property since Professor Peter Mathieson began as Principal/Vice-Chancellor, until the present, including any gap due to the pandemic. You have specifically asked for: the description of the event, date of the event, number of invitees, number of attendees, number of foreign dignitaries in attendance (a dignitary being a person who holds a high rank or office in a foreign country, as in the government or church), and the purpose of the event.

From February 2018 to 3 March 2020, 31 events were held. There then followed a two-year period during which such events were not permitted because of the pandemic-related restrictions. There have been 16 events since the pandemic restrictions were eased in the period from April 2022 up to and including to the end of November 2023. The information requested for each of these events can be found in the enclosed Excel spreadsheet, as requested.

Please note the numbers of those who attended an event is an approximation, as it is largely based on the signatures in the guest book. Not everyone who attended will have signed the guest book.

You will notice that for two events the number of invitees is unknown. For the event held on 12 December 2018, this information is not held, as the Principal's Office did not organise this event and the original organisers have since left the University. We are, however, able to give an estimated figure of around 65 to 70 invitees. For the event held on 28 November 2022, the number of invitees is not held as it was not recorded.

Using your definition of foreign dignitary, there have been no dignitaries who have attended any of the events.

Right to review

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may ask the University to conduct a review of this decision by contacting the University's Records Management Section in writing (e.g., by letter or email) or in some other recorded form (e.g. audio or video tape). You should describe the original request, explain your grounds for dissatisfaction, and include an address for correspondence. You have 40 working days from receipt of this letter to submit a review request. The contact details for the Records Management Section are at the top of this letter. When the review process has been completed, if you are still dissatisfied, you may use the [Scottish Information Commissioner's guidance on making an appeal](#) to make an appeal to the Commissioner. If you do not have access to the Internet, please let me know and I will provide a copy of the relevant web pages.

Privacy notice for information request applicants

[The University of Edinburgh's request privacy notice](#), which describes how we use the information you have supplied about yourself and your request, is published on the University website.

Yours sincerely

Celia Jenkins

Records Management Section

Enc. Enclosure_FOI2023_00814: Table 1: Details of formal events held at the Principal's residence, since February 2018 to November 2023 (as on 14 November 2023)

If you require this letter in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact the Records Management Section on 0131 651 4099 or email recordsmanagement@ed.ac.uk