

i.

All of the information submitted to the Scottish Funding Council on 18/01/2021 in response to the Call For Information, reference "SFC/CI/01/2021", outlined in the following:

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/callsforinformation_sfcci012021/Updated_estimates_of_non-EU_international_student_fee_income_AY_2020-21.pdf

Response

The University holds information which was submitted to the Scottish Funding Council in January 2021. We have considered your request to disclose this information and have concluded that this information is exempt from disclosure. This is because the release of this information could prejudice substantially the effective conduct of the University as it is important that the University is able to manage, discuss and review its financial position and forecasts in an appropriate environment in order to conduct this business effectively. The University considers this to be a genuine link between release of the information and harm to the University. *See Note 1.*

In addition, the University has concluded that disclosing the SFC submission of January 2021 would be damaging to the commercial interests of the University. *See Note 2.*

The information sets out detailed estimates in relation to prospective student numbers and budgets. As the University operates in a competitive market, this information could be used by competitor institutions for commercial advantage and disclosure of the information could as a result be commercially harmful to the University.

This is because disclosure of the information without associated context may lead to misrepresentation and misreporting which could be damaging to the University. As the University competes with other universities, both locally, nationally and globally for students it is important that the University maintains a reputation as strong and stable organisation. The University needs to be able to compete in a competitive market in order to secure maximum commercial benefit for the University.

ii.

All of the information submitted to the SFC outlined in the Call For Information, reference "SFC/CI/01/2021" document under points 2. and 3. (see above for the website address):

"2. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, universities provided two main financial returns to SFC in the course of the year:

- Forecasts submitted at the end of June (outturn forecast for the current year and forecasts for the following three years).
- Annual accounts submitted at the end of December (audited financial statements and supporting reports by institutions' audit committee, internal and external auditors)"

"3. As result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SFC requested institutions to provide additional financial returns, comprising updated forecasts for 2019-20 and 2020-21 by the end of April and the end of July 2020. These replaced the main 2020 Strategic Plan Forecast return. Institutions also provided updated financial forecasts at the end of November 2020"

Response

Point 2. The University's Financial Statement for 2019/20 can be found on our website at: <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/theuniversity/finance/annualfinancialstatements/> As the information is published on the University website we consider that the exemption within Section 25(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Information otherwise accessible, applies to this part of your request.

Point 3. We understand that you are requesting the following information: updated forecasts for 2019-20 and 2020-21, provided by GCU to SFC in April and July 2020 and updated financial forecasts provided by GCU to SFC in November 2020.

The University holds information which was submitted to the Scottish Funding Council. We have considered your request to disclose this information and have concluded that this information is exempt from disclosure. This is because the release of this information would be likely to prejudice substantially the effective conduct of the University as it is important that the University is able to manage, discuss and review its financial position and forecasts in an appropriate environment in order to conduct this business effectively. The University considers this to be a genuine link between release of the information and harm to the University. *See Note 1.*

In addition, the University has concluded that disclosing the SFC submissions would be damaging to the commercial interests of the University. *See Note 2.*

The information outlines detailed information in relation to the prospective student numbers and budgets. As the University operates in a competitive market, this information could be used by competitor institutions for commercial advantage and disclosure of the information could as a result be commercially harmful to the University.

This is because disclosure of the information without associated context may lead to misrepresentation and misreporting which could be damaging to the University. As the University competes with other universities, both locally, nationally and globally for students it is important that the University maintains a reputation as strong and stable organisation. The University needs to be able to compete in a competitive market in order to secure maximum commercial benefit for the University.

iii.

The full financial disclosure, including of income and expenditure of the following funds listed on the University website:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/finance/fundingyourcourse/discretionaryfund/>

Response

Academic Year 20/21	
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	Discretionary Fund	Higher Education Childcare Fund	Covid Winter Fund*	Nursing Discretionary Fund	Covid additional Discretionary Fund
Income	£755,879	£529,629	£1,636,000	£93,001	£173,045
Expenditure to date 20/01/2021	£352,000	£72,556	£0	£30,300	£173,045

*Note this funding was received by the University on February 2021.

The full financial disclosure, including of income and expenditure of the following funds listed on the University website:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/finance/othersourcesoffunding/internationalstudentshardshipfund/>

Response

The International Hardship Fund is not administered by Caledonian University. As a result, we do not hold financial records for this fund. We have this on our website as a possible means of financial support that International Students may apply to if eligible. We do not hold financial records for this fund. See Note 3.

The full financial disclosure, including of income and expenditure of the following funds listed on the University website:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/foundation/ourpriorities/commongoodfund/>

Response

Common Good Fund 20/21

Income £10,640*

Expenditure £14,502

*Common Good Fund income comprises of monthly and annual regular donations with funds accrued over time and then disbursed based on need. As a result, in any year expenditure may exceed income. The income figure presented is for 2020/21 donations received to date.

Note 1

The University views that the information is exempt under Section 30(b)(ii) and 30(c) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, *prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs*. In reaching this decision the University concluded the need to manage financial forecasts and planning effectively requires this information to remain confidential.

This exemption is a qualified exemption so the public interest test has been considered to determine whether in all circumstances of the case the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in maintaining the exemption. Whilst there is public interest in disclosure of information about the financial planning processes of the University, there is a powerful public interest in ensuring that there is an appropriate environment in which the organisation is able to

review and manage finance and budgets, freely and frankly. In this case the public interest would be best served by upholding the exemption and withholding the information requested.

Note 2

The University considers that the information requested is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 *Section 33(1)(b) Commercial interest and the economy* – that the disclosure of the information would, or would be likely to, prejudice substantially the commercial interests of any person, including those of the University.

This exemption requires the University to assess whether the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in maintaining the relevant exemption. The University believes that the public interest lies in the University being able to compete with other University's to secure maximum income. As a result, the public interest would be best served by upholding the exemption and withholding the information requested.

Note 3

As we do not hold information, notice is given under Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, that the information which you require is not held.