



5th March 2018

OUR REFERENCE: FOI/RFI-1982/Pani

Dear Mr Pani,

Your request for information received on 5th February 2018 has now been considered.

The response to your request is as follows:

- 1) What is the total amount that the university received in funds for research, industrial consultancy fees and/or funded researches from government, NGO or private companies in the last five financial years (from 2013 till 2017)? The information should be broken down by organization or company name, year per year (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017), in a CSV format, if possible.**

Please see attachment – 20180305ResDataRFI1982 (Tab 1 entitled Question 1 holds this data)

- 2) A portfolio statement for the funds the university has investments in. If you do not have a copy of it, can you provide a list of funds and corresponding management companies? Details should be broken down year by year, for the last financial years (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017), provided in a CSV format, if possible.**

Information not held.

Northumbria University do not have investment funds.

- 3) Can you provide details of research projects (such as executive summary and details of reports' publication, university department and researchers' names) of projects whose funds exceed £50,000, in the same period of time (2013-2017)?**

Please see attachment – 20180305ResData RFI1982 (Tab 2 entitled Question 3 holds this data).

Please note, details of projects are held by Northumbria University however we are not obliged to provide information which falls under the exemption provided by **Section 43** of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

43 Commercial interests.

“(2) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to; prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it)”

The University considers that disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the organisations and Northumbria University and that the exemption in section 43(2) is engaged in respect of all parties commercial interests.

This is because disclosure would damage the University and undermine its ability to secure future research funding from these source and other parties.

Because this is a qualified exemption under the Act, Northumbria University has had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing it.

The factors considered when deciding where the public interest lay include:

- Raising public awareness and furthering the understanding of Higher Education finances and relationships with the private sector.

The reasons for determining that the public interest favours withholding the information are:

- Providing information in response to a Freedom of Information Act request is akin to publishing the information for the world to see, therefore any information released would be considered ‘in the public domain’ and accessible to others.
- Whilst funders are aware of the obligations of the Freedom of Information Act on both public authorities and the companies themselves, there is still an expectation that a degree of confidence will attach to the commercially sensitive information.
- The Higher Education sector does not rely solely on the income of student fees as a means to sustain itself. Universities are equally reliant on the income generated by research in order to be able to invest in their future and the services offered to customers.
 - Disclosure of information such as this would damage the University’s reputation for respecting confidentiality in relation to research programmes funded by the private sector.
 - Release may also restrict the number of companies willing to work with the public sector.

- The University's excellent standards in research are valuable and important in their own right. They also benefit the UK's economy; and enhance the UK's international standing and reputation e.g. by attracting students and researchers from overseas to work at the University. The maintenance of these standards would be jeopardised by any harm to the University's ability to attract private money, and this would not be in the public interest.

For these reasons, the University considers that the public interest in maintaining the exemption in section 43(2) outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you are unhappy with our response or the way your request has been handled, you have the right to ask for an internal review. To request a review, please reply, in writing at the above address or via email. The review would be undertaken by Jay Wilson, the University's Head of Legal.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Should you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may then appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700

Yours sincerely

Nick Batson

Information Governance Rights Coordinator