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**Mr Ubaide**

**By Email:** [request-229568-1debbf59@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-229568-1debbf59@whatdotheyknow.com)

Tuesday, 14 October 2014

Dear Mr Ubaide,

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 request – A100 admissions**

In response to your request for information dated 15 September 2014, made under section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”), I am writing to confirm that the information you require exists and part of it is included in this response. We are unable to provide with all of the information as we consider some of the information to be exempt information under Part II of the Act.

More precisely we considered that the exemption under section 43(2) of the Act applies (Commercial interests).

An explanation is provided below.

You asked the following:

*“I have a few questions about the 2014/(deferred)2015 undergraduate medicine A100 entry.*

*1) How many of the students admitted were studying A Levels?*

The College received 2249 applications for the A100 course from students studying A-Levels.

*2) How many of the students admitted were resit applicants?*

None. King’s College London does not admit students who have resat exams, unless they have mitigating circumstances. The College has not had any such cases in the most recent application cycle.

To see the College’s general policy on re-sits please use the link below:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/lsm/education/meded/apply/a100faqs.pdf>

- 3) *For each applicant who was unsuccessful in obtaining an interview, can I get a list of their UKCAT score, their GCSE's, and predicted A Level results and subjects studied.*

Please see the Excel spreadsheet attached.

- 4) *For each applicant who was successful in obtaining an interview, can I get a list of their UKCAT score, their GCSE's, and predicted A Level results and subjects studied.*

Please see the Excel spreadsheet attached.

- 5) *Can I get a list of criteria that the interviewers looked at during the interview to determine a candidates suitability?*

Please see our response below.

The decision after interview will generally be solely based on the applicant's performance during the interview, however where two applicants perform equally well at interview UKCAT scores or academic grades may also be taken into consideration when making a decision.

- 6) *How was the interview scored? Was it a score out of 10 by each interviewer or anything along those lines?*

The interview is scored out of 100. This mark is based on two scores from two interviewers (each out of 50)

- 7) *For each applicant who was successful in obtaining an offer, can I get a list of their UKCAT score, their GCSE's, and predicted A Level results and subjects studied as well as their score in the interview stage?*

Please see the Excel spreadsheet attached.

- 8) *I would also like to know the UKCAT Cut-Off score for the 2014/2015 as well as 2013/2014*

This information is not available as the College does not use UKCAT GEP (A100) cut off scores. Instead the College uses "competitive averages", which provides an approximate indication as to the average low end score.

- 9) *Can I get the interview scores for each successful candidate as well along with the interview scores for unsuccessful candidates in the spreadsheet requested above?*

Please see the Excel spreadsheet attached.

*10) How will the SJT Situation Judgement section of the UKCAT be used in this year's admission cycle?"*

The College is following the guidance from UKCAT not to use SJT scores for this admissions cycle.

Regarding question 5 of your request we are refusing to answer this part of your request as we consider this information to be exempt under s.43(2) of the Act. (Commercial interest)

The First Tier Tribunal (Information Rights) has accepted that universities operate in a competitive environment and can have commercial interests.<sup>1</sup> Guidance issued by the Office of Government Commerce Guidance states that prejudice to commercial interest will generally mean 'detriment to the ability to do business' and that this "could involve giving commercial advantage to the competition and/or loss of shareholder/customer/supplier confidence."<sup>2</sup>

The prejudice test in sec.43 requires that it should be likely that release would harm the College's commercial interests. The harm need not be substantial but should not be completely trivial; and while the likelihood of prejudice need not be certain, there should be a significant risk of harm rather than a remote possibility.

While we understand that this information may be useful to you, the Higher Education sector operates in a commercial and highly competitive environment. Unlike many other types of public authorities subject to the Freedom of Information Act, they are in direct competition with each other. Universities in the UK are also in competition with overseas institutions, and certain private service providers, neither of whom are subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Disclosing detailed admissions criteria, such as interview score sheets would put the College at an unfair disadvantage in that this information could be used by our competitor institutions to their own commercial advantage in their admissions process. In addition, releasing this information would give an applicant an unfair competitive advantage over other applicants and would enable applicants to 'game the system' by crafting their applications in a way that was most likely to be successful based on the College's criteria and guidelines. This would consequently have a detrimental impact on the College's selection process, which is intended to select applicants based on qualifications and demonstrated ability.

Section 43 is a qualified exemption and requires us to consider whether the information requested should be disclosed in the public interest (notwithstanding it is believed that disclosure of the requested information would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the third party). Testing the public interest involves balancing factors for and against disclosure to decide whether the interest in maintaining the exemption is greater than the interest in disclosing the information.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Central Lancaster v Information Commissioner and David Colquhoun (EA/2009/0034), 8 December 2009.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/62062/ogc-foi-civil-procurement-guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62062/ogc-foi-civil-procurement-guidance.pdf)

We believe that there is a strong public interest in universities being able to run rigorous admissions processes, particularly in the case of programmes like Medicine where most students go on to work as medical staff in the NHS. As we have indicated, we believe that the integrity of our admissions processes would be undermined by the release of this information.

While we understand there is a public interest in the release of information that explains how universities' admission processes operate, that has to be balanced against the need to ensure the selection of the best candidates rather than those who are adept in shaping their applications to fit the College's processes.

Therefore we consider that the factors supporting non-disclosure in the public interest under Section 43 outweigh the factors in support of disclosure in the public interest.

This completes your request for information.

If you feel your request has not been properly handled or you are otherwise dissatisfied with the outcome of your request, you have the right to complain. Details of how to make a complaint can be found in our FoI Policy, a copy of which is available on our web site at:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/college/policyzone/index.php?id=209>.

Further information is also available from the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
Tel: 01625 545 700  
[www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely



Sarah Crampton  
Legal Compliance Officer