

Isha Gupta
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29 April 2021
Our Ref: FOI/2021/197

Dear Isha

Your Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email, which was received by the University on 30 March 2021. The University's response is set out in the enclosed document.

Your right to seek a review

Should you be dissatisfied with the way in which the University has dealt with your request, you have the right to require us to review our actions and decisions. If you wish to request a review, please contact the General Counsel, Aston University, Birmingham, B4 7ET or e-mail: foi_requests@aston.ac.uk within 40 working days. Your request must be in a recordable format (letter, email, audio tape, etc). You will receive a full response to your request for review within 20 working days of its receipt.

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which we have handled your request for review you may ask the Information Commissioner to review our decision. You must submit your complaint in writing to the Commissioner within 6 months of receiving the response to review letter. The Commissioner may be contacted at:

Address: Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113 / 01625 545 745 (+44 1625 545 745 if calling from overseas)
Fax: 01625 524 510

E-mail: notification@ico.gsi.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

Yours sincerely

Alice Mineyko

Alice Mineyko
Counsel

Your request	Our response
<p>1. What has been the total annual budget for marketing over the last 5 years (2017-2021)?</p> <p>2. How much of the marketing budget is spent on in-house marketing and how much is spent on 3rd party providers (e.g. Agencies)?</p> <p>3. What are they types of third party services used e.g. (managed marketing services, content creators, self-service platforms) and how is the expenditure distributed among them?</p> <p>4. How much of the marketing budget is spent on digital advertising and how much is spent on traditional advertising methods?</p> <p>5. What is the segmentation of digital expenditure by channel (e.g. how much is spent on Facebook ads, Google ads etc.) ?</p>	<p>In response to question 3, the University uses ad hoc advertising and PR services of PR, and contracts with agencies to produce and distribute marketing materials.</p> <p>With regard to questions 1, 2, 4 and 5, we confirm that we hold the information requested, but we consider that it would be contrary to the commercial interests of the University to release it. Information on how much Aston spends on marketing could be used by our competitors to assess the importance of this aspect of the University's strategy and our current assessment of its importance. This would be likely to provide them with a competitive advantage, which in turn would be likely to harm the financial position of the University. We therefore claim the exemption available under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and will not be releasing the information.</p> <p>We have considered carefully whether it would be in the public interest for us to provide you with the information, despite the section 43(2) exemption being applicable. The University acknowledges that there is a legitimate public interest in the interests of transparency and accountability. However, there is also a public interest in protecting the ability of universities to compete on a level playing field and to ensure that there is fair competition between them. We have concluded that the balance of the public interest in this case lies in withholding this information.</p>