

Dear Alessandro,

RE: INFORMATION REQUEST DATED 4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018

REF: FOI-00121

Further to your request for information please see our response below.

### **REQUEST 1**

**For the academic years between, and including, 2013/14 and so far, 2018/19. How much money has the university spent on sponsored social media content? I would ask for a yearly breakdown by social media platform and the amount spent per platform. Please note, I'm not asking for funds spent on advertising (I.E Hiring a videographer to record a video) but instead, money spent on sponsoring, promoting e.t.c a post.**

### **RESPONSE**

*We hold but are unable to disclose the information. Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is engaged because the release of this information would be prejudicial to the commercial interests of BCU and its suppliers engaged in these commercial arrangements. BCU, like the majority of universities, operates in a global market which is highly competitive for students. Funding is dependent on meeting recruitment targets and the investment of time and money in recruitment campaigns and strategy, including sponsored social media content, is fundamental to continue to attract students in the UK and overseas.*

*The principal prejudice, which would or would be likely to result from disclosure, is the loss of competitive advantage. Competitors, whether universities, private institutions offering alternative qualifications or media buying agencies operating on behalf of competitor institutions, would be able freely to exploit material and knowledge about BCU's marketing and promotion strategy.*

*There would be a significant risk to the University's recruitment position were other institutions with which BCU competes not required to practise reciprocal transparency provisions, since this would enable these competitors to use the information to undermine BCU's marketing and promotional strategy.*

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Requests for an internal review should be made to the Information Governance Manager at [FreedomOfInformation@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:FreedomOfInformation@bcu.ac.uk) or by writing to: Information Governance Manager, Birmingham City University, 15 Bartholomew Row, Birmingham, B5 5JU.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please see <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/getting/> for details of their procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.