

2 June 2020

Ref: FOI20 - 188

Dear Requester,

Thank you for your email of Prospective law Students requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please see the responses to each of your questions below:

- 1. I would like to know the following statistics , the number of applications received to your university for undergraduate degree studies for the years 2017,2018,2019 and 2020.**

Please see attached spreadsheet FOI20-188 Response data.

- 2. I would also like to know the number of total offers for undergraduate degree places made for the years of 2017,2018 ,2019 and 2020 .**

Please see attached spreadsheet FOI20-188 Response data.

- 3. I would like to know the average (mean) amount of money spent by the university on each student enrolled in an undergraduate degree , please separate this per department (e.g. for social sciences the university spent x amount on each student )and please provide these figures for the years 2017,2018,2019 and 2020. ,**

The Universities spend per department is submitted annually to HESA/ Office for Students who have the data available publicly for all Universities.

The data you have requested for past academic years is available through HESA's custom data request scheme (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/services/custom/data/request>) and is therefore exempt under Section 21 of the FOIA as it is already reasonably accessible through other means.

Data for the current and future years will be available at the same location following its publication by HESA. These data are therefore exempt from disclosure under Section 22 of the FOIA.

Data, which is disseminated by HESA for a fee, is considered to be commercially sensitive and is therefore exempt from disclosure under Section 43 of the FOIA.

Section 43 is a qualified exemption and as such a public interest test has been carried out. In favour of disclosure we considered the need for the University to report openly on its activity. Against that, we considered the commercial interests of HESA as the organisation responsible for disseminating



such statistics. HESA is the body nominated to provide statistics on the Higher Education sector in the UK. Disclosure of data available from HESA would prejudice their ability to sell said data via their paid service to third parties. There is likely to be significant commercial harm, as a public disclosure under the FOIA would allow the release of information with commercial value, therefore severely weakening their ability to continue to sell this level of data. Such sales assist in the finance of their operations and the pursuit of their charitable aims; reduction in income from such services could lead to consequences include loss of significant revenue, inability to offer the same level of service to other customers or potentially impact on jobs within their organisation.

Some of the data you have requested represents small populations of individuals, which therefore could easily be identified. This data would need to be anonymised and is exempt under Section 40 of the FOIA. It should be noted that HESA will also anonymise this data before release where appropriate.

**4. I would like to know what were the top 3 most common reasons why student applications for undergraduate courses were rejected ,**

The Universities top three reasons why applications were unsuccessful were:  
Did not meet offer requirements,  
Predicted / achieved grades below our published entry requirements and  
High volume of applications received with more qualifications that are applicable.

**5. I would like to know the total number of undergraduate degree places available as an estimate/ a range for the years 2015,2016,2017,2018,2019 and 2020.**

Please see attached spreadsheet FOI20-188 Response data.

**6. I would finally like to know the total undergraduate dropout rate as a percentage of total undergraduate students for the years 2017,2018,2019 and 2020.**

Please see attached spreadsheet FOI20-188 Response data.

Data for 2020/21 will not be available until the end of the academic year due to low numbers and the increased likelihood of disclosing personal data should the figures change within the academic year. They are therefore also exempt from disclosure under Section 40(2) of the FOIA.

The information you have requested is considered to be commercially sensitive as specified in section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act. As such this information will not be released.

Section 43 is a qualified exemption and so a public interest test has been carried out. In favour of disclosure we considered the principles of both transparency and accountability in the way a public authority performs its functions. Opposing this we considered the impact disclosure of this information could have on the University's market position, particularly as it may be used for direct comparison with the sector more broadly.

The University feels that public disclosure of information during the live admissions cycle is has the potential to be used by competitors to influence the University's position in the market. It is the view of the University that this outweighs the factors in favour of releasing the information at this time.

The format you have requested for the data would also allow constitute a pseudonymised dataset which would be exempt from disclosure under Section 43 of the FOIA which covers the personal data of individuals.



*This response has been prepared in accordance with a request received pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The supply of documents under FOI does not give the person who receives the information an automatic right to re-use the documents without obtaining the consent of the copyright holder. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. You must submit this to the Information Governance Office in writing within 40 days of receipt of this notification. Please quote the reference number above.*

*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. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. (<https://ico.org.uk/>)*

Kind Regards,

Information Governance

University of Exeter

