



9 March 2018

By email to: request-468019-47af29c0@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Michael Lee

I refer to your Freedom of Information request received on 28 February 2018 about vivas.

Details of any exemptions applied are below. Where any information is “not held”, this is explained below. Those parts of the University’s response (together with the details of how to ask the University to review the management of your request, or thereafter to seek a review by the Scottish Information Commissioner, should you wish to do so – please see below) constitutes the notice in writing that the information specified is not held by the University which is required under section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (“FOISA”).

Your enquiry and the University’s response.

Please refer to appendix.

This concludes the University’s response.

Your right to seek a review of how your information request was managed

If you are not satisfied with our response or our reasoning set out above, you have 40 working days in which to require a review of our decision. Any such request should be put in writing and should be sent to the University Secretary, Abertay University, at the address provided below. The request should:

- (a) detail your request for a review of our decision to be undertaken
- (b) describe the nature of your original request
- (c) explain the reasons why you are dissatisfied with our response

University Secretary
Abertay University
Bell Street
Dundee
DD1 1HD
Tel (01382) 308016

E-mail: S.Stewart@abertay.ac.uk

If you remain dissatisfied with how your request for information has been dealt with, you also have the right, in terms of section 47 of FOISA, and within 6 months, to apply to the Scottish

Information Commissioner for a decision as to whether we have handled your request properly.

Information relating to your right to seek review is available from the Scottish Information Commissioner's website:

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info>

or by contacting the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office at the following address:

Scottish Information Commissioner,
Kinburn Castle,
Doubledykes Road, St Andrews,
Fife KY16 9DS

Telephone: 01334 464610

Fax: 01334 464611

E-mail: <mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info>

Website: <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info>

Or via the SIC's online appeals service:

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Unhappywiththeresponse/AppealingtoCommissioner.aspx>

If you are unhappy with the Commissioner's decision, you also have the right to appeal further to the Court of Session, on a point of law only, under section 56 of FOISA. Please refer to the Commissioner's website (details above) for further information about your right of appeal to the Court of Session.

Yours sincerely,

FOI Processing

Academic Registry
Abertay University

Abertay University is a registered Scottish charity, no. SC016040

Appendix

I request the following. For each school within the university and for each academic year from 2006 to 2016 please provide:

- 1) The total number of viva examinations that took place for that school's students for that year.
- 2) The total number of viva examinations in which a student successfully passed.
- 3) Total that failed (please count conversion to MSc as a failure).

Please send me the above in .csv format.

Please see accompanying spreadsheet.

The University does not have data on the number of vivas held prior to 2015/16. Therefore, for the earlier years, the University can only provide the number of PhDs awarded. Please note that failure at the viva stage is very rare indeed; if a student is not progressing as expected towards a PhD submission, this should be addressed at an earlier stage, with a change to a lower award, or withdrawal, being considered at that point.

The University has not broken down the figures by School in the spreadsheet. This is because, as a very small University, the numbers in each category would be tiny. Where low numbers are concerned, the University redacts those below 5, so the data which we have provided to you are more meaningful than if broken down by School, most or all cells for which would contain "<5".

The University is required to keep individuals' personal data confidential under the Data Protection Act 1998. This includes where information, either on its own or in combination with other information, might lead to the identification of individuals and/or the disclosure of personal data about them, or their sensitive personal data. The University considers that to release all of the information requested would not be fair or lawful to the data subject(s) in terms of Principle 1 of the Data Protection Principles under the Data Protection Act 1998. The University has therefore applied the exemption for personal data in section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and has withheld some of the requested information.

If you wish to find out more about low numbers, please visit the Higher Education Statistics Agency's page below:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/about/regulation/data-protection/rounding-and-suppression-anonymise-statistics>
