



University of East Anglia

Information Services Directorate

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[REDACTED]

23 November 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_15-234)

We have now considered your request of 10 November 2015 for the following data:

'The total amount spent on new ICT equipment University wide in each of the last 5 years. For:

- a) ICT facilities accessible to students*
- b) ICT facilities accessible to lecturers and other teaching staff, and*
- c) ICT facilities accessible to administrative staff only*

If this data is not available monthly, or is not available under cost grounds, I would be willing to accept a total figure for the previous five calendar years.'

In our telephone conversation of 16 November I raised some potential difficulties we felt we may encounter in supplying the requested information. Thank you for your help in clarifying that ICT equipment should include basic hardware, such as PCs, monitors and printers, rather than specialist equipment, software or machines such as servers. Thank you also for explaining that you were interested in any information we could provide that would separate 'back of house' (e.g. staff areas) and 'front of house' ICT facilities, and that we should consider, if possible, the entire organisation as being in scope of the request.

Following this discussion we have considered the potential scope of information and our means of obtaining the data you seek. Unfortunately, on this occasion, we have determined that the cost of finding and assembling the requested information will still exceed the 'appropriate limit' as defined by section 12 of the Act and the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004/3244.

The 'appropriate limit' of £450, which equates to 18 hours' work, relates to a request in its entirety. If the University cannot locate, retrieve and extract some or all of the requested information within the 18 hours we are not obliged to retrieve any of the requested information.

To explain our situation, information on ICT spend is held within our finance system. We can run reports on items purchased using a specific IT-related product code, but are not able to readily extract information on what was purchased. So, for example, iPads may be purchased using the same code as an IT service contract and we

would only learn this by looking at the specific record. To extract and separate information on the types of IT hardware you require from other ICT equipment, software or services we would need to review all potentially relevant transactions. In addition, IT purchase orders could have been raised using different codes. Such expenditure would be missed if we were to rely on searching by one code.

Because of the difficulty in obtaining complete expenditure relevant to your request even providing one total for the whole five years would still require considerable manual checks to verify the data was in fact what you had requested.

Establishing which purchases were designed to be used by students, academic staff or administrative staff would also require a manual review of all potentially relevant orders to see if they contain this information. While we could run reports on individual departments to try and approximately separate equipment intended for staff / students, it is by no means certain we would hold this information in all cases, as those inputting the data use a free text field to enter descriptions, rather than using standard categories. It is likely we would need to consult with these departments involved to establish if they held recorded information about what the equipment was being used for.

Finally, to compound the difficulties with extracting the data from our finance system, within the requested five year time period the University has changed systems and we understand retrieving data from our old system is considerably more time-consuming than for our new system. Consequently, while it is difficult to provide an estimate of how long it would take to complete our response to your request we are certain it would be well in excess of 18 hours of work.

We are sorry that, despite your assistance, we are not able to fulfil your request on this occasion. We would however welcome a more streamlined request. We have considered what could be done within the 18 hour period and believe that we would be able to provide a full response if we were to concentrate our searches on one department (in our conversation I suggested our Information Services Directorate as the majority of IT-related purchases will originate from there). We think we could provide the requested information for this department for two years, although there may still be some ambiguity about whether certain resources were used by academic staff, administrative staff or students.

You also have the right of appeal against this response. If you wish to appeal, please set out in writing your reasons for appealing and send to the above address. You must appeal within 60 calendar days of the date of this letter. Any appeal received after that date will not be considered nor acknowledged. This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

You also have a subsequent right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. Further information is available on their website:

https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us, or by telephone on 0303 123 1113.

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Please quote our reference given at the head of this letter in all correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Ellen Paterson
Information Policy and Compliance Manager
University of East Anglia