

[REDACTED]

26 March 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_15-046)

We have now considered your request of 26 February 2015 for information on overseas trips taken for the purpose of staff and student recruitment.

Unfortunately, on this occasion we have determined that the cost of finding and assembling some of the requested information will 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.

With regard to student recruitment only, we can confirm that we are unable to answer questions 1, 2 or 3 within the time allowed. Each year staff in our Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing department will make approximately 40-50 trips abroad for the purposes of recruiting students. While we would be able to provide the total travel costs of these trips, we would not be able to break down the cost of each trip to the level of detail requested in questions 1, 2 and 3.

To provide the requested level of detail we would need to check every paper and electronic invoice associated with each trip. Payments may have been made in different ways (e.g. cash or individual or departmental credit card) and by different individuals, and we would need to match each payment to a specific trip. For the 120-150 trips that would have been taken over the requested time period we estimate it would take one member of staff approximately 2 weeks of work to determine what information was held and to locate, extract and collate all relevant information, allowing around 40 minutes work for each trip.

As we have established the parts of your request related to student recruitment would exceed the appropriate limit we have not retrieved any information relevant to costs of staff recruitment. However we can confirm that such information is not held centrally by our Human Resources department. We would therefore need to consult with each department and school of study within the University to establish if information is held, then retrieve and collate the data. Given the number of departments involved, this activity may in itself exceed the appropriate limit.

We would also note a further difficulty in quantifying the total costs as requested. The travel and associated costs for each trip – whether for the purposes of recruiting staff or students – would not by themselves represent the true total cost to the University. For example, there is a staff cost not only for those who are travelling, but also for those who support them, both in administrative support and liaison with academic staff.

I am sorry we are not able to fulfil your request on this occasion. However, should you choose to submit a further request, we have looked at the type of information that could be provided which might satisfy at least some of your requirements, and would not be subject to any exemption under the Act.

As summary travel and subsistence costs are recorded on our finance system under one code, we could, for example, provide the total travel and subsistence cost of all international office staff trips abroad for the purpose of student recruitment for each of the academic years 2013 and 2014 (pre-2013 information was recorded on a different finance system and would in itself be time-consuming to extract).

With regard to your fourth question (for the annual headcount of students from each of the countries visited for each year), it may be helpful to note that we disclosed the country of domicile of all 2013/14 undergraduate and postgraduate students in response to a previous FOI request¹. If you wished to submit a further request, we could provide a similar headcount of students from each of the countries visited for each year.

You 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.

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

¹ See: https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/6946481/FOI_14-154.pdf