



[REDACTED]

12 May 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2021/00222

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 21 April in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I'd like to make a Freedom of Information request about the studentships awarded by UKRI. I have looked at the summary data on Tableau, I would, however, like a spreadsheet that lists each applicant as a separate line item (so the full anonymised, rather than summary, data). I would like for each unnamed applicant:

- *their age,*
- *the institution/DTP through which they have applied,*
- *whether they applied prior to or during the PhD,*
- *the research council,*
- *ethnicity,*
- *gender,*
- *disability.*

Can I get this data for the 2014-15 year to the most current year that you have (assuming it is 2020-21)? If you only keep such records for awardees and not applicants, I am happy to receive that (in which case there would, for example, be 6565 rows for the 2014-15 year - according to the Tableau dashboard). I would like to run some correlation analyses, so it is important that I have as granular a data type as I can have access to (rather than the summary).

Our response

I can confirm UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hold the information relevant to your request.

We are withholding the information you have requested under section 40(2) of the FOIA.

To explain further, the detailed granular data by age, Research Council, Institution applied through, PhD, ethnicity, gender, and disability is exempt as this would result in the potential release of personal information about individuals and could lead to their identification, either from this information alone, or in combination with other information otherwise available to the public. We believe that this would undermine all applicants' expectation of confidentiality in such circumstances and would be unfair to those concerned.

Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018. The GDPR also recognises that ethnicity and health (disability) are protected characteristics and regards them as special category data. In relation to special category data there must be a lawful basis for processing under Article 6 of the GDPR and a specific condition under Article 9 must also be satisfied. In this case, we believe disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle, which provides that processing of personal data is lawful and fair.

We have considered the legitimate interests of all parties in disclosure of this information and have found that on balance there is not an overriding legitimate interest in disclosure that outweighs the reasonable expectations of privacy of the individuals concerned.

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and UKRI is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information.

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact:

Head of Information Governance


Email: foi@ukri.org or infogovernance@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints policy: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,


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