



[REDACTED]

14 March 2024

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/00106

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 12 February and your follow up correspondence of 27 February 2024 in which you requested the following:

Your request:

The EPSRC funds "Cooperative Awards in Science and Technology" (CASE) studentships for UK-based STEM doctoral students working on projects alongside businesses.

I would like to request the following information pertaining to collaborations between the EPSRC and BAE systems plc:

- * Records of monetary transactions between the EPSRC and BAE systems or between the EPSRC and the University bodies in the UK for CASE studentships, including the names of the Universities, departments and, if possible, research groups involved, dated appropriately.*
- * Records of funding from the EPSRC for any other research projects in collaboration with BAE systems, again including the names of the institutions involved and dated appropriately.*
- * Records of the research output resulting from said studentships and projects.*

I would like you to provide this information in either pdf or excel spreadsheet format to this email address.

Follow up correspondence dated 27 February 2024

Thank you for your email and the information provided. Although it was perhaps not as clear as it could have been, my request for "records of monetary transactions" (which you have approximated as records of research grants, which is fine) was intended to include records of the actual value of those transactions. I can see in the spreadsheet where a research grant was given for a project in collaboration with BAE systems but nowhere can I find the actual cash value of these grants. Am I missing something? If not, would it be possible to obtain this information asap?

Our response

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hold information relevant to your request. Please see the information below and attached.

The information you have requested is provided in the revised attached document 'FOI2024/00106 EPSRC-BAE collaborations 270224 revised'

The document contains the following tabs:

- Projects – covering projects since 1994 with BAE as a project partner, which include information on the relevant university/institution

- Studentships – covering iCase studentships with BAE as a project partner, which include information on the relevant university
- Key findings – for project outcomes
- Narrative impact – for project outcomes
- IP – registered intellectual property in relation to projects
- Publications – in relation to projects
- Spinouts – in relation to projects
- Key findings (Stu) – for project outcomes in relation to studentships
- Narrative impact (Stu) – for project outcomes in relation to studentships
- IP (Stu) – registered intellectual property in relation to studentships
- Publications (Stu) – in relation to studentships
- Spinouts (Stu) – in relation to studentships

Please note that we have approximated “Records of monetary transactions” as a record of where BAE systems was a ‘project partner’ as any monetary transactions normally take the form of project grant funding.

Further there are far more outcome entries for project grants than for studentships, because there is usually an under-reporting for studentships due to the fact that records are not updated as diligently after students have finished their PhD as they are for standard project grants.

In response to your follow up correspondence the revised data contains ‘grant value’ in column B for the projects and studentships tabs. Information on the partner contribution has been withheld under the exemption at Section 43(2) of the FOIA. This exemption is used where disclosure would likely result in a person's (an individual, a company, the public authority itself, or any other legal entities) commercial interests being prejudiced. Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption, and we are required to carry out the public interest test in favour of or against releasing the information.

Public interest in favour of disclosure

- There is a general public interest in the disclosure of this information to ensure transparency and openness of a public organisation.
- There is also a public interest in transparency in order to ensure the accountability of public organisations and how they spend public funding.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- There is a public interest in protecting commercially sensitive information, including information on partner contributions to projects, which are disclosed to UKRI in confidence.
- Disclosing the withheld information is likely to reduce the organisation's commercial advantage and thereby harm its commercial interests by revealing financial costings, which may harm their ability to compete for future commercial opportunities. We believe disclosing this information via FOI confers a disadvantage which would likely materially disadvantage and harm their interests.
- Releasing this information is likely to damage the possibility of ongoing relationships between UKRI and other organisations. Relationships may become untenable if third parties cannot be certain that their financial costings and other project details will remain confidential when held by UKRI.

Taking the above arguments into consideration, we reached the decision that the need for commercial confidentiality outweighs the public interest in disclosure; therefore, the information is exempt from disclosure.

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 within the next 40 working days:


Head of Information Governance
Email: foi@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: www.ico.org.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,


Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
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