



[REDACTED]

22 April 2025

Dear [REDACTED],

**Freedom of Information request: FOI2025/00262**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 28 February, and subsequent clarification received on the 25 March, in which you requested the following:

**Your request:**

*I would like to request copies of successful applications to the AHRC Curiosity Award – responsive mode, round 3.*

**Our response:**

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

There were five successful applications to the [AHRC responsive mode: Curiosity Award: round three](#)<sup>1</sup> funding opportunity, of which the corresponding applications are attached:

- AH/Z507015/1 – “Seeking seasonality in the archaeological record” (*APP32153\_Redacted*)
- AH/Z507039/1 – “Determining the approach, scale and feasibility for developing the Tape Archive Analysis Toolkit (TAAT)” (*APP33081\_Redacted*)
- AH/Z507040/1 – “Creative encounters in the Wills Tobacco Archive: exploring public and cultural health through interdisciplinary collaboration” (*APP32034\_Redacted*)
- AH/Z507052/1 – “Multilingual Early Modern London (1547-1714)” (*APP33492\_Redacted*)
- AH/Z507131/1 – “Towards Toddlerhood: reframing toddlers and their development through the arts” (*APP40092\_Redacted*)

We are exempting the names of all non-project leads, as well as the contact details, salary and career information and experience of all individuals under section 40(2) of the FOIA. Disclosing this information would contravene the first Data Protection Principle as defined under Section 86 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 5 of UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

We have determined that some of the information contained in the applications falls under Section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence.

To explain further, organisations and individuals apply for funding in confidence and with the expectation that their bid information, including their applications, will be kept in confidence. These expectations are set out in the 'Confidentiality' section of [Use of Grant Proposal & Training Grant information addendum](#)<sup>2</sup> and are also noted on page 29 of the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#)<sup>3</sup>, under 'Confidentiality and use of the information supplied'.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/ahrc-responsive-mode-curiosity-award-round-three/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/UKRI-310321-Use-of-grant-proposal-and-training-grant-information-addendum-V2.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AHRC-201224-Research-Funding-Guide-version-7.1-December-2024.pdf>

Therefore, if information exceeding that set out in these expectations was released, we believe it would result in an actionable breach of confidentiality. Section 41 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

We also believe that information related to a project's financial costs and resources, and contribution of project partners, falls under the scope of 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.

This is a qualified exemption, and a test was carried out to determine whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs public interest in disclosure.

### **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**

- Project applications contain commercially sensitive information such as salary information, project plans and costs which are disclosed to UKRI in confidence. The agreement we have with grant applicants is that we will not release any confidential information without their permission. Releasing this information could be taken advantage of by competitors in competing strategies for further funding opportunities.
- Disclosing information on project costs is likely to reduce the applicant's commercial advantage and thereby harm their commercial interests in a highly competitive field. We believe disclosing this information confers an advantage to competitors which would likely materially disadvantage and harm the interests of successful grant applicants, particularly in their ability to compete for grant funding.
- We follow the government guidance on [managing public money](#)<sup>4</sup>. Standards expected of all public services include integrity, reliability, spending money in the public interest and achieving value for money. Our current thorough process ensures that only the best projects receive public monies. Releasing this information could jeopardize the fair and transparent competition process and undermine our function to fund the best projects. In turn, undermining this process would go against our responsibilities to manage our use of public funds.
- We also considered the impact on UKRI if commercially sensitive information of organisations we and engage and work closely with were disclosed. We believe it would damage the trust in UKRI and likely impact our ability to carry out our role and manage our current and future investments.

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 please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

Head of Information Governance  
Email: [foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org)

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65c4a3773f634b001242c6b7/Managing\\_Public\\_Money\\_-\\_May\\_2023\\_2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65c4a3773f634b001242c6b7/Managing_Public_Money_-_May_2023_2.pdf)

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](http://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 procedure](#)<sup>5</sup>.

Yours sincerely,

  
Information Governance  
Information Rights Team  
UK Research and Innovation  
[foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org) | [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>