

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Decision notice

Date: 16 July 2024

Public Authority: Ravensbourne University London
Address: 6 Penrose Way
Greenwich Peninsula
London
SE10 0EW

Decision (including any steps ordered)

1. The complainant has requested information about academic relationships between Ravensbourne University London and particular companies.
2. The Commissioner's decision is that the above public authority ("the public authority") breached section 10(1) of FOIA by failing to provide a valid response to the request within the statutory time frame of 20 working days.
3. The Commissioner does not require further steps to be taken.

Request and response

4. On 15 January 2024, the complainant wrote to the public authority and requested information in the following terms:

"In the below request the phrase the phrase 'arms trade companies' relates to, but not limited to:

1. BAE systems
2. Babcock
3. QinetiQ
4. Rolls-Royce

5. Serco
6. Cobham
7. Raytheon
8. Airbus
9. General Dynamics
10. Leonardo MW
11. Lockheed Martin
12. Thales
13. MBDA
14. Elbit Systems
15. Caterpillar
16. MoD
17. DSTL
18. Atomic Weapons establishment
19. GKN
20. Boeing

'Academic partnership' refers to 'arms trade companies' involvement of any of the following:

- Graduate schemes/apprenticeships/Careers fair appearances
- Directly sponsored PhDs or Studentships
- Company involvement in university departments - i.e. MoD Laboratories, EPSRC centres for doctoral research.
- Any consultancy role.

Please may I request any relevant information or appearance of arms trade companies in the aforementioned capacities in the past five years:

May this be broken down by financial year, with the start/end date where applicable

The name of the arms company involved

The financial value of the relationship

The name of the relevant university department.”

5. The public authority responded on 6 April 2024 but it provided a response to a different request. It provided its response to the correct request on 16 April 2024.

Scope of the case

6. The complainant has confirmed that they are happy with the information they have now received, but wish to have the late response formally recorded.

Reasons for decision

7. Section 1(1) of FOIA states that:

“Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled –

(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and

(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him.”

8. Section 10(1) of FOIA states that a public authority must respond to a request promptly and “not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt”.

9. From the evidence provided to the Commissioner in this case, it is clear that the public authority did not deal with the request for information in accordance with FOIA. The Commissioner finds that the public authority has breached section 10(1) by failing to respond to the request within 20 working days.

Right of appeal

10. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)
GRC & GRP Tribunals,
PO Box 9300,
LEICESTER,
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0203 936 8963

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: grc@justice.gov.uk

Website: www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber

11. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
12. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

Keeley Christine
Senior Case Officer
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF