

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Decision notice

Date: 14 February 2017

Public Authority: The University of Manchester
Address: Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL

Decision (including any steps ordered)

1. The complainant has requested information from the University of Manchester ("the University") for information about the number of teaching assistants employed by the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures over a period of four academic years.
2. The Commissioner's decision is that the University did not deal with the request for information in accordance with the FOIA in the following way: it failed to provide a response to the request within the statutory timeframe of 20 working days as set out in section 10 of the FOIA.
3. As a response has now been provided, the Commissioner requires the University to take no steps.

Request and response

4. On 14 September 2016, the complainant wrote to the University and requested information in the following terms:

"Information required: Number of Teaching Assistants (formerly Graduate Teaching Assistants) employed by the School of Arts, Languages, and Cultures in the following academic years: 2012-2013; 2013-2014; 2014-2015; 2015-2016. It would be useful if the school

could also specify the number of TAs included in the recruitment pool during those years."

5. The University acknowledged the request on 15 September 2016.
6. The complainant reminded the University on 13 October 2016, 17 October 2016 and 1 November 2016 that a response was required.
7. The University provided some of the information to the complainant on 4 November 2016. It stated that the information was *"taking longer than anticipated to pull together"* and asked whether the complainant still required the rest of the information, which she confirmed she did.
8. Following the complainant making a complaint to the University on 4 November 2016, the remainder of the information was provided to her on 7 November 2016.

Scope of the case

9. The complainant contacted the Commissioner on 4 November 2016 to complain about the way her request for information had been handled. In particular, she was unhappy that it was not until 4 November 2016 that the University had suggested that the information would take time to collate.
10. She asked for a decision notice to be issued to consider the University's compliance with section 10 of the FOIA.
11. The Commissioner has therefore had to consider whether the University has handled the request in accordance with section 10 of the FOIA.

Reasons for decision

12. Section 10 of the 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."*
13. From the information provided to the Commissioner in this case, it is evident that the University did not respond to the request within the statutory timeframe of 20 working days. She has therefore found the University to be in breach of section 10 FOIA.

Right of appeal

14. 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: 0300 1234504

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: GRC@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk

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

15. 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.
16. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

Signed

Christopher Hogan
Team Manager
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF