

Our ref: FOI/2324/304/IR

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Freedom of Information Team

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We have conducted an internal review of your recent FOI request. A response is provided below.

Original request and response

You asked for the following:

1. *From 2015 to 2023, the numbers of University of Liverpool degrees (including all Bachelor and Master) conferred every year at the Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University. Please provide this information in aggregated numbers by different programmes.*
2. *Lists of education programmes, research projects, and research grants that are currently operational at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, either participated by Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University students and staff or sponsored by the Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University and the University of Liverpool.*
3. *University of Liverpool policies and governance structure which oversee the operations, including student experience and research, at the Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University. Please provide relevant policy documents and/or relevant administrative staff role specifications where applicable.*
4. *From 2015 to 2023, donations, grants, and research fundings (value £1,000 or more) received by the University of Liverpool and its affiliated entities from the Xi'an Jiaotong University and/or any affiliated individuals, companies, or relevant Chinese official agencies.*

We confirmed that the University held information within the scope of the request. We provided statistics to answer question 1 in full and provided weblinks for information relating to questions 2 and 3. We provided list of donations for question 4 but withheld information on research funding under Section 41(1) (Information provided in confidence) and Section 43(2) (commercial interest) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Reason for internal review

I am writing to request a review of your recent decision to withhold information regarding the University of Liverpool and Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University's research and funding arrangements with Chinese companies.

In your responses, you cited both commercial interests and confidentiality under the FOIA 2000. While I understand the need to protect sensitive commercial information and confidentiality obligations, I believe there is a public interest in the disclosure of certain aspects of the projects you've mentioned, especially given the potential human rights and security implications associated with such collaborations, which could be used to aid the development of Chinese military and acts of human rights violation.

I propose a partial disclosure which could satisfy the need of public scrutiny in this case while mitigating certain commercial and confidential impacts as you've mentioned:

- **Company Names:** Please disclose the names of the Chinese companies involved.
- **Duration of Contracts/Funding:** Please disclose the length of the agreements/funding periods.

I believe that by releasing the above information, confidential business information would still be protected while significantly enhance transparency and allow public scrutiny. It is crucial that the public are aware of whom the university is entering into partnerships with and the general terms of these engagements.

Internal review response

The purpose of an internal review is to consider whether your request was handled correctly under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

a) Handling of your request

We received your request on 25 February which was clarified on 22 March. We responded by email on 7 May. This was outside the statutory deadline and a failure to comply with section 10(1) of FOIA.

Our response set out our review procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner, as required by section 17(7) of the FOIA.

b) Reasons for the response, information withheld, or exemptions applied (if applicable)

I have reviewed the contractual arrangements of the withheld information. I have also considered the arguments presented in the original response and your reasons for review. I agree that the exemptions were correctly applied.

Following an internal review, if you remain dissatisfied, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Information on how to do this is available at <http://ico.org.uk/complaints>. There is no charge for making an appeal.

Yours sincerely



Data Protection Officer