Mr John Gilchrist
Freedom of Information Officer

19 December 2018

Ref: FOI/November 2018/ Jen Persson

By email to request-535651-0c3cd08e@whatdotheyknow.com

The Burroughs
Hendon
London
NW4 4BT
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 8411 4061
e-mail:
j.gilchrist@mdx.ac.uk
www.mdx.ac.uk

Dear Ms Persson

Your request for information received on 28 November 2018 has been dealt with under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

I am making a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Please can you provide information pertaining to any data analytics software used by the university using personal data about your students and staff, since 2012.

1a). Whether you are using any data analytics software at all:
1b) if so, which ones?
1c) what date this data analytics processing began?
1d) indicate whether in the past and ended, or still in current use

2a). Any predictive analytics software such as used in but not only, Blackboard, Xray and JISC supported Civitas.
2b) if so, which ones?
2c) what date this analytics processing began for predictive purposes?

3. If the answer to Q1a or Q2a is yes, please provide a copy of any contract terms on using the data by the provider company including
a) the data items feedling analytics, any profiling, and/or used in prediction
b) what the prediction purposes / aims are
c) training the software (such as AI and machine learning) by the provider using the data provided via your organisation.

4. Whether the University is using its own student or staff population data for machine learning for purposes not included in 1-3 above? (ie but not only, within the university computing department for any project or with another third-party)

5. From which time periods were the student or staff data collected which are processed in any of the above (ie not only, retrospective student data from the last ten years / only current intake which began in autumn term 2018)?

6. How many people/user accounts have access to the whole population student data in any of the above in this calendar year?

University Response

1a. No

2a. No

4. No

5. N/A

6. The Planning Office (5 analysts) have access to whole student population data and uses statistical analysis to look for correlations predictive of success. This is not a machine learning approach. We also have two data analysts who produce student engagement dashboards based on a sub-set of whole population student data which is shared with personal tutors.

I trust this satisfies your request sufficiently. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, you have the right to complain about the University's response to your request for information. If you have such a complaint, you may contact Mr David Maplas, Director of Student Affairs, Middlesex University, Hendon campus, London NW4 4BT, tel: 020 8411 5830, d.malpas@mdx.ac.uk within 40 days of the date of this letter for a review of the University's decision. If you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of that complaint, you may seek further recourse by lodging an appeal with the Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely

John Gilchrist
Freedom of Information Officer