

**Mr John Gilchrist**  
Freedom of Information Officer

30 October 2018

Ref: FOI/October 2018/ Mark McCaree

By email to request-523888-704b30ea@whatdotheyknow.com

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Dear Mr McCaree

Your request for information received on 3 October 2018 has been dealt with under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

Could you please provide me with the following information regarding the University's Careers Services and its business relationships with private ltd companies?

For the academic years 2016/17 OR 2017/18:

1. What was the total expenditure budget of the University's Careers Services (excluding operational costs such as salaries)?
2. How many private ltd companies did the University's Careers Service do business with?
3. Approximately how much did the University's Careers Services spent on acquiring products and services from third-party private companies?
4. How much did the University's Careers Services spend on careers literature (booklets, leaflets, handouts, etc.) provided by Graduate Prospects ltd?

### **University Response**

For the academic year 2017/18

1. Circa: £525K
2. This information was not available from the Careers Service so we do not hold the data you have requested
3. We consider the spent on acquiring products and services from third-party private companies to be commercially sensitive information because we reach agreement with these companies on the basis that financial and business information relating to a agreement and will not be disclosed to a third party. This information has therefore been withheld on the basis that it is considered to be exempt under s.43(2) of the FOIA.

This is a qualified exemption and we have therefore applied the public interest test. In making this decision we have weighed such factors as the University's desire to be open and transparent in all its dealings against the need to ensure that it is able to contract openly in the market place and protect the commercial interests of those companies, institutions and bodies it deals with. The disclosure of information would be likely to assist competitors in gaining an advantage over future bids; to release this information would be likely to prejudice the competitiveness of the incumbent companies when extending agreements; and it would also be likely to prejudice University's commercial interests by not being able to reach competitive agreements in increasingly competitive sector and thereby obtain the best possible value for money for the public purse. Accordingly, insofar as this element of your request is concerned and in accordance with Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act ("the Act") this letter acts as a refusal notice.

4. There was no spend with Graduate Prospects Ltd.

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](mailto: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