

Request Reference: 65-17

Date of Response: 16/05/2017

Request

I refer to your recent email dated 13/04/2017 requesting the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”):

“ . . .Please provide:

- number of all HNC/ HND's courses registered with you by St.Patricks since the introduction of the HNC/ HND's in 2012 when they were designated for public support*
- number of HNC/HND's law courses within St.Patricks finance by you since 2012.*
- please supply evidences in relation to the nature of these higher education courses within St.Patricks (law and others) , as they were registered and funded.*
- legal backgrounds and steps taken by SLC in regards to the students complaints in regards to this fraudulent misrepresentation and especially a full disclosure of the steps taken by the SLC Counter Fraud Team after the issue of waste in public money was reported.”*

I contacted you on 20/04/2017 to check our interpretation of your request or to seek further clarification and you provided the following response:

“ . . .- it will be greatly appreciated if you can provide the number of the HNC/HND law courses within St.Patricks College registered with you (since 2012 to present), the number of students studying HNC/ HND 's law courses, (since 2012 to present) financed by you with an undergraduate financial support.

- please specify if these HNC/ HND's law courses are appearing in your records as recognised undergraduate law courses, hence they were financed and registered with UCAS as such. If you can add the content for each academic year will be highly appreciated; I am already aware about the terms and conditions of financing.. . .”*

Response

I can confirm that some, but not all, of the information you have requested is held by the Student Loans Company Limited (“SLC”).

Questions 1 and 2 – number of HNC/HND courses added to SLC’s courses service

The table below will provide you with the total number of Higher National Diplomas (“HND's”) at St Patrick's and the number of HND Law courses that were added to SLC’s Course Management Service (“CMS”) as being designated for student finance by academic year.

Academic Year	Total Number of Courses on SLC’s CMS	Total Number of Law Courses on SLC’s CMS
2011/12	15	1
2012/13	39	5
2013/14	41	6
2014/15	25	4
2015/16	37	5

2016/17	27	1
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All courses added to SLC's CMS were full-time HND courses.

Question 3 – Evidences in relation to the nature of St Patrick's Higher Education courses as they were registered and funded

SLC does not hold any information/documentation in relation to the registration of HN programmes by St Patrick's with the relevant awarding body. The Department for Education ("DfE"), and previously the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills ("DBIS"), are responsible for the specific course designation for all Alternative Providers.

Question 4 – legal backgrounds and steps taken by SLC re student complaints about St Patrick's

In terms of complaints relating to Higher Education Providers ("HEPs"), including St Patrick's, if SLC's Counter Fraud Services Team receive any complaints or allegations about HEPs, these are reported directly to the DfE (and previously to DBIS). CFS's involvement is to provide support where necessary by providing management and any other requested information. Depending on the outcome of their enquiries, any sanctions imposed are made by DfE (and previously DBIS).

Question 5 - the number of students studying HNC/ HND 's law courses, (since 2012 to present) funded by SLC

The table below confirms the number of students studying HND law courses at St Patrick's who received a student finance payment from SLC, and has an effective date of 25/04/2017.

Academic Year	Number of students who received a student finance payment
2012/13	210
2013/14	400
2014/15	170
2015/16	40

Academic year 2016/17 has not been included as 2016/17 payments are still being paid.

Question 6 – whether these HNC/ HND's law courses are appearing in SLC's records as recognised undergraduate law courses

The HND law courses were added to SLC's CMS as designated for student support purposes. Under the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (as amended) under Schedule 2 of those regulations, HND's are identified as eligible for student support. SLC does not require to know whether any law course is a recognised undergraduate law course, therefore no information is held in this respect on our records. SLC only requires to know that a course is designated for student support by DfE.