



University of East Anglia

Information Services Directorate

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[REDACTED]

26 May 2016

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_16-114)

We have now considered your request of 16 May 2016 for the following information:

- ‘1. Minutes or notes of meetings of formal departmental or school student/faculty representative or liaison meetings for all UG and taught PG courses from 2011 academic year;*
- 2. Amounts of financial resource expensed, paid to, paid in kind or granted to any student society affiliated with academic departments and their courses since 2011 academic year; and*
- 3. Student complaint topics made formally to the University since 2011 academic year.’*

We regret that on this occasion we have determined that the cost of finding and assembling some of the requested information will exceed the ‘appropriate limit’ as defined by section 12 of the Act and the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004/3244.

The ‘appropriate limit’ of £450, which equates to 18 hours’ work, can relate to one request in its entirety or to a series of linked requests. If the University cannot locate, retrieve and extract some or all of the requested information within the 18 hours we are not obliged to retrieve any of the requested information.

In this case, your second question on its own would cause us to exceed the 18 hour limit. We do not hold one central record of all funding provided to student societies, and there is no single way of tracking down expenses or in-kind contributions. We would therefore need to collate the information held by each School and Faculty.

There are currently over 25 Schools within four Faculties. The School structure has changed since 2011, with some Schools merging and others separating. These changes would need to be taken into account when undertaking any searches, undoubtedly adding to the time taken to retrieve relevant data.

The types of funding each academic area may provide to its student societies will vary, but typically include covering the costs of catering for society meetings. There may also be agreements between a Head of School to provide specific funding, e.g. to cover travel expenses or workshop attendance.

There is no way of quickly searching the University's finance system for instances of such funding. The budget codes used to categorise different types of expenditure will not identify any particular student society. To identify which expenses relate to student societies, each academic area would need to manually check the finance systems (there have been two within the requested time period, adding to the complexity of the process) and they may also need to check individual invoices. For each School this process is likely to take several hours, and may not retrieve all potentially relevant data.

Due to the complexity of the searches and the manual effort required, we are certain that to provide a full response to this part of your request would significantly exceed 18 hours of staff time.

While we cannot provide the data requested in question 2, if you wished to submit a revised request we believe we could provide a full answer to question 3. We could also offer minutes, where held, from the University's staff student liaison committee (SSLC)¹ meetings. We believe the SSLC most closely matches your requirements in question 1, but would note that student representatives also attend School Board² meetings. If you did wish to submit another request we would be happy to discuss your requirements.

We hope this response adequately explains our position, however if you are not satisfied you have the right of appeal. If you wish to appeal, please set out in writing your reasons for appealing and send to the above address. You must appeal within 60 calendar days of the date of this letter. Any appeal received after that date will not be considered nor acknowledged. This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

You also have a subsequent right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. Further information is available on their website:

[https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact us](https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us), or by telephone on 0303 123 1113.

Please quote our reference given at the head of this letter in all correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Ellen Paterson
Information Policy and Compliance Manager
University of East Anglia

¹<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/8540534/Student+Representation+Code+of+Practice+2015-16.pdf>

² <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/7465902/Section+2+Boards+Of+Schools.pdf>