



University of East Anglia

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25 April 2017

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_17-085)

We have now considered your request of 31 March 2017 as amended on 12 April for information relating to the use of the UEA hardship fund in the period 2012-2017.

Our response is on page 3 of this letter, together with a copy of your request.

On this occasion, it is not possible to provide all the requested information. The Act contains a number of exemptions that allow public authorities to withhold certain information from release. We have applied the following exemptions to part of your request.

Exemption	Reason
s.21(1), Information reasonably accessible to applicant by other means	Data on the number of students with disabilities and mental health problems can be obtained from the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA)
s.22(1), Information intended for future publication	Some of the requested information is in preparation for later publication

Section 21(1) exemption

We have established that some of the requested information is reasonably accessible by other means and so has been exempted under section 21(1) of the Act. The section 21 exemption confirms there is no right of access under the Act to information that is held by a public authority if that information is reasonably available to the applicant by another route, whether through commercial publication or publicly-funded provision.

We have indicated where s.21(1) applies in our response below, and have suggested a route of access to that information.

Section 22(1) exemption

We believe it is reasonable to withhold data for 2016/17 relevant to questions 3 and 4 of your request prior to publication because the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) will publish this material in between January and March 2018.

It has been a long-standing and consistent practice for the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to gather and publish information regarding the characteristics of students within the higher education system. They have a well-established and robust collection, analysis and publication regime in place.

We believe that to withhold the requested information for 2016/17 until the publication date is sensible, in line with accepted practices, and fair to all concerned. This information is submitted to HESA by all higher education institutions in the United Kingdom and the data as published provides sector-wide data that is consistent in formulation and presentation and is available on their website here:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/key-tables?year=All&by=581>. We feel that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to withhold the information at this time.

When considering the application of this exemption we are required to assess the public interest in withholding or disclosing the requested information. There is no doubt an interest in the number of students in higher education with either disabilities or mental health conditions. The very fact that HESA collects and publishes this information is evidence of that fact.

However, we would argue that this interest is more than satisfied by the publication of this information in the first quarter of every year for the preceding year. We do not believe that the public interest is particularly better served by releasing figures that have not been examined and verified by HESA. Additionally, the publication by HESA includes provision of contextual and explanatory information.

Therefore, on this occasion, we consider the public interest in withholding the requested information clearly outweighs the public interest in providing the requested data at this time.

We hope this response will meet your requirements, 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, or by telephone on 0303 123 1113.

Please note that any material over which UEA has copyright is released on the understanding that you will comply with all relevant copyright rules regarding reproduction and/or transmission of the information provided.

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

Yours sincerely

Dave Palmer
Information Policy and Compliance Manager
University of East Anglia

Response to Freedom of Information Act 2000 request (FOI_17-085)

I would like to obtain the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.

1. How many students have accessed the university's hardship fund between 2012-17.

Our response is within the table below. Please note that we are presenting the data by academic year which is the format in which it is held. The figure for 2016/17 represents awards to date.

Year	Number of students
2012/13	154
2013/14	153
2014/15	183
2015/16	122
2016/17	66
Total	678

2. How many students have stated medical reasons or paying for medication as a reason for accessing the hardship fund between 2012-17.

[Question withdrawn by requester on 12 April 2017]

3. How much money has been claimed by students identified in question 2.

[Question withdrawn by requester on 12 April 2017]

4. How many students at your institution identify as having a disability.

[Information exempted pursuant to s.21(1) & s.22(1), Freedom of Information Act]

This information for all requested years to 2015/16 is readily accessible from the Higher Education Statistics Agency which collects and freely publishes this information on an annual basis from each and every higher education institution located within the United Kingdom. It can be ordered directly from HESA in Excel format by contacting them directly via their website here:

<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/services/custom/data>

The data for 2016/17 will be available between January and March 2018 by HESA.

5. How many students at your institution identify as having mental health problems.

[Information exempted pursuant to s.21(1) & s.22(1), Freedom of Information Act]

Please see response to question 4 above.