

██████████

11 July 2019

Dear ██████████

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_19-185)

We have now considered your request of 03 July 2019 and clarification dated 04 July 2019 for information relating to bereavement services available to students.

Our response is on page 2 to 4 of this letter, together with a copy of your request.

On this occasion it is not possible to provide all the requested information. In line with your rights under section 1(1)(a) of the Act to be informed whether information is held, we confirm that the University does not hold information regarding policies specifically relating to bereavement and guidance on caring for students following a bereavement.

Our mental health policy¹ outlines ongoing care of students in more generic terms, and our counsellors and mental health advisors include bereavement within their remit to fully support students affected.

We also confirm that we do not allocate budget specially to counselling for bereavement and that we are not in a position to offer a response the last question of your request. Further information is provided on page 4 of this letter.

We hope this information 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 40 working days of the date of this letter. In line with section 5.3 of the UK Government's Freedom of Information Act Code of Practice, we are not obliged to accept internal reviews after this date.

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.

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<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/6680306/UEA+Mental+Health+and+Wellbeing+Policy+for+Students+April+2017.pdf>

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty McDonald
Information Compliance Assistant
University of East Anglia

Response to Freedom of Information Act 2000 request (FOI_19-185)

I'm looking for information regarding the bereavement services which are available in your university or college. Please could you answer the following:

Do you offer special provisions for counselling services for students specific to bereavement? Y/N

No. Bereavement would be covered within counselling services, there is no such specific counselling provisions solely for dealing with a bereavement.

Do you offer any support or counselling services for students? Y/N

Yes.

Do you have an institution wide policy/guidance regarding caring for students following a bereavement? Y/N

Clarified on 04 July 2019:

'Wish to receive a copy of any '...policy/guidance regarding caring for students following a bereavement' and not just confirmation that such a policy/guidance does, or does not exist'

[Information not held - s.1(1)(a), Freedom of Information Act]

Please see our response regarding our mental health and wellbeing policy in the main body of this letter.

Do your policies or practices exclusively relate to support for students who have lost parents or does your support factor in other forms of bereavement, such as losing a sibling?

[Information not held - s.1(1)(a), Freedom of Information Act]

Please see our response to the above question.

Can you tell me what special provision you have for offering extensions and academic breaks in study after a bereavement?

Students can appeal for extenuating circumstances following a bereavement. A supporting statement relaying the effect a bereavement has had on the student will be issued to the student's school/department of study. Each circumstance is taken into consideration by the school and the appeals panel. Assistance such as an extension or academic break may be offered, as well as support from student wellbeing services. Further information on extenuating circumstances can be found on our website:

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching/students/advice-on-difficulties/extenuating-circumstances>

How much money did you allocate to counselling and support services for bereavement per year (Jan 2016-Jan 2019)?

[Information not held - s.1(1)(a), Freedom of Information Act]

The University does not allocate money specifically to counselling and support services for bereavement.

If you feel you would like to offer an opinion, would you say your institution feels you are offered enough from the Government in order to support students who have experienced bereavement while studying?

[Information not held - s.1(1)(a), Freedom of Information Act]

The University has no recorded information on its position regarding the sufficiency of Government funding and support for students who have experienced bereavement.

We should also note that the Freedom of Information Act does not obligate institutions to offer opinions or personal views unless they exist in recorded format.