



University of East Anglia

Information Compliance (ITCS)

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[REDACTED]

17 September 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_19-284)

We have now considered your request of 30 August 2019 for the following information:

'I wonder if it is possible to get information on numbers of PhD students, particularly in SCI, that have dropped out, transferred supervisory teams or downgraded to an MPhil (or MRes) and the (recorded) reasons why?

[Clarified on 30 August to request data for past 5 academic years]

Unfortunately, on this occasion it is not possible to provide any of the requested information. We have determined that the cost of finding and assembling some of the 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 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 provide any of the information.

Specifically, it would require in excess of the appropriate limit to locate and extract the number of students that have transferred supervisory teams. At UEA, each PhD student has at least 2 supervisors and in some circumstances as many as 5 supervisors. We read your question as requesting the number of students that have changed all members of a supervisory team, regardless of their number.

In order to determine if a PhD student has changed all members of their advisory team, we would need to manually examine the student file. For the period specified, we have had approximately 1500 unique students undertaking a PhD. We have determined that roughly 50% of these students have a supervisory change indicated on their student record. Each one of these files would have to be manually examined to determine how many supervisors had been changed since the commencement of the student's programme.

We estimate that a minimum of 3 minutes per file would be required to identify all supervisory changes and this would amount to over 37 hours effort which is clearly in excess of the appropriate limit.

If you wished to submit a revised request to the University, we would be able to respond to the entirety of your request absent the request for the number of students who had transferred supervisory teams.

In the alternative, we could give the number of students who had changed at least one member of their supervisory team without any indication of the number of supervisors that had been changed. Should you restrict this question to cover the Faculty of Science only, we estimate that we would be able to provide information for any 3 years.

If you wish to retain the scope of your question as being the number of students who transferred the entirety of their supervisory teams, we estimate, given an average of 300 PhD admissions per year, we would be able to give data for one year only.

We should point out that any revised request you submit will be treated as a new FOI request, and the 20 working day time limit will begin again.

We are sorry we cannot provide the data you requested, but trust this letter explains our position. If you are unhappy with our response, you have the right of appeal against this decision. 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.

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

Yours sincerely

Dave Palmer
Information Compliance Manager
University of East Anglia