

IT Services
Information Compliance team

University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7TJ
United Kingdom

Email: foi@uea.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1603 593523
Fax: +44 (0) 1603 591010

Web: www.uea.ac.uk

[REDACTED]

14 November 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_19-340)

Thank you for your request of 19 October 2019 for information relating to students involved in initiation ceremonies or 'hazing'. For your convenience we have provided a copy of your request on page 3 of this letter.

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.

Incidents and investigations relating to students can be recorded in a number of ways and by several University departments, for example via our Student Services (STS) or Security teams. However, when details of an incident or investigation are recorded they are not categorised or identified explicitly as being related to either initiation ceremonies or hazing.

In relation to the records held by STS, in order to determine that an investigation had occurred we would need to manually examine all individual student case files that might be related to initiation ceremonies or hazing. This is necessary because the department does not maintain a separate record of all investigations; all records relating to any investigation would be held on an individual student file. It therefore would be necessary to first determine if an investigation occurred, and then to ascertain if the incident related in any way to initiation ceremonies or hazing.

To help us estimate how long it would take to provide the information you seek, we have considered which of the existing categorisations used by STS could be used to filter potentially relevant cases. While this is an inexact way to identify any relevant records, we have established 428 case files would need to be reviewed. Please note that we have no reason to believe that hazing or initiation ceremonies were a feature of any of these cases, just that they have been categorised in such a way that we couldn't immediately exclude them.

We estimate, given the complexity of the files and the nature of the information sought, that it would require approximately 10 minutes per file to locate and extract any relevant information, or confirm that it does not exist. This would result in over 70 hours of work 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 provide an estimate of the number of incidents of hazing and initiation ceremonies within our Security incident reporting system based on a simple word search. Given the number of appointments per annum with STS that

could potentially involve such behaviour, we do not believe it possible to provide even one full year's worth of data.

We would also add that any data we could provide would include a level of subjectivity, as we would not always be able to decide with certainty that a case did or did not involve hazing or initiation ceremonies where it was not explicitly stated as being so.

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

Information Act 2000 request (FOI_19-340)

'Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information:

- 1) The number of incidents investigated which involved initiation ceremonies or "hazing" over the past 3 years (Sept 2016 to Aug 2017, Sept 2017 to Aug 2018, then Sept 2018 to Aug 2019)*
- 2) If possible, please could you set how many students were involved and whether the events were linked to a student union society – and if so, which one? As much detail would be appreciated.*
- 3) What action was taken against the student (s) after the ceremonies came to light – for example were they expelled/banned and how long for? Were there sanctions?*
- 4) I would like a monthly breakdown of the information ideally
I would prefer to receive the information electronically*