



18 September 2015

Dear 

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_15-160)

We have now considered your request of 20 August 2015 for information relating to the University's student services department (known at UEA as the Dean of Students' Office). Our response is on page 3 of this letter, together with a copy of your request, and in the accompanying documents 'FOI_15-160 Appendix A' and 'FOI_15-160 Appendix B'.

On this occasion it is not possible to provide all the requested information. Firstly, 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 a description of the student feedback and input that is used to develop the services (your sixth question).

Secondly, we have determined that the cost of finding and assembling some of the requested information – specifically 'the average and maximum wait for an appointment with a counsellor faced by students in the year 2014-15' – 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, relates to a request in its entirety. 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. However, on this occasion we are happy to provide information in response to the remainder of your request where possible, and hope this meets your requirements.

You have the right of appeal against this response. 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

Ellen Paterson
Information Policy and Compliance Manager
University of East Anglia

Response to Freedom of Information Act 2000 request (FOI_15-160)

The total budget for your University's Student Services Department¹

The 2015-16 budget is £1,530,614.

A description of the services it undertakes

See:

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/6816233/Statement%2Bof%2BService.pdf/3d7cd759-dedf-4332-b8c5-882d5579bcfe>

The number of Full Time Equivalent staff it employs

38.67 FTE on indefinite contracts. The service employs additional sessional staff on fixed term contract to meet seasonal need so this varies from year to year and throughout the year.

A copy of the departmental/service strategy/plan

See FOI_15-160 Appendix A.

The performance indicators or standards that it is held to by the central University

See FOI_15-160 Appendix B.

A description of the student feedback and input that is used to develop the services

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

While the University has many ways of using student feedback and input, we do not have a single summary or description of what this comprises in total. Reference to feedback is made in the accompanying documents.

The total budget for your University's counselling function

The 2015-16 budget for the University's counselling function is £254,329.

The number of FTE counsellors employed by the University

Clarification received on 24 August: *it would be helpful if you could break out the numbers between formally trained counselling/counsellors and wider help/support*

The number of counselling staff currently employed is as follows:

- Staff counsellor 0.17 FTE
- Head of Wellbeing / Counsellor 1 FTE
- Senior Counsellor (post currently vacant but is advertised at 1 FTE)
- Student Counsellors x 3: 0.60; 0.36; 0.36 FTE

Additionally the service provides voluntary supervised part-time placement opportunities to 12 – 20 trainees and post-qualification volunteers.

¹ As clarified on 24 August, our response covers: *'the services described at this page of your website <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/dos>, i.e. money advice, international students, learning enhancement etc'*

Additional wellbeing staff include:

- 2 x Mental health Advisers: 2 FTE
- Sessional mental health advisers (c.0.4 FTE)

Wider help/support is offered by all Dean of Students' staff, all of whom have had relevant training or experience.

The average and maximum wait for an appointment with a counsellor faced by students in the year 2014-15

[Information withheld pursuant to s.12(1), Freedom of Information Act]

Since the beginning of the 2014/5 academic year the University has changed the way in which it collects this information. With the current system, in order to answer this question we would have to look at the record for every individual student who accessed counselling last year and work out when they were first seen for an assessment (we don't record the date of the first contact but they are usually seen for an initial appointment within a few days of this) and then their first following appointment in order to calculate the average and maximum waits. Over 600 students were seen, therefore at least 600 files would need to be reviewed. We estimate that it would take at least 5 minutes per student, equating to approximately 50 hours of work to answer this question.