

[REDACTED]

23 September 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_15-165)

We have now considered your request of 01 September 2015 for information relating to the monitoring and assessment of student progress.

Our response is on page 3 of this letter, together with a copy of your request, and we hope this will meet your requirements. However 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 exemption to those parts of your request that refer to an individual student (name removed from original request on page 3).

Exemption	Reason
s.40(2), Personal information	Disclosure of information would contravene one of the data protection principles

We believe that information on the progress and monitoring of an individual student's studies represents their 'personal data', as defined by section 1(1) of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA).

When a request is made under FOIA for information that includes personal data we are required to consider whether disclosing those data would breach the data protection principles contained within the DPA.

In considering a disclosure under FOIA, the University must also take into account that any information released under the Act will be placed in the public domain, through our own disclosure log or by other means.

We believe that public disclosure of the requested information would breach the first data protection principle under the DPA; namely that information must be fairly and lawfully processed, and that the processing also meets one of the conditions set out in Schedule 2 of that Act.

We have followed the Information Commissioner's guidance¹ in assessing whether it is fair to disclose this information under FOIA. This involves considering the nature of the information, the expectations of and potential harm (of disclosure) to the data

¹ <https://ico.org.uk/media/1213/personal-information-section-40-and-regulation-13-foia-and-eir-guidance.pdf>

subject, and how any legitimate public interest in this information is balanced against the rights and freedoms of the data subject.

We note that none of the requested information is publicly available, and believe the data subject would not have had a reasonable expectation that this information would be made public. We do not think there is a legitimate interest in disclosing this specific information to the public, and have therefore concluded that disclosure of this information would not be fair.

The Information Commissioner's guidance (see footnote 1) notes that if a public authority has determined disclosure would not be fair then it must not release the information under FOIA. In such circumstances there is no need to consider the conditions in Schedule 2 of the DPA. We can however confirm that we do not have consent of the data subject for the release of this information, and do not consider public disclosure of the data to be necessary under any of the other conditions listed in Schedule 2.

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_15-165)

Year 2 processes:

- (1) Are student Y2 exams formally marked to what level of degree or is it simply "Pass" or "Fail"?

Most assessments are awarded a mark; see the Regulations

<http://portal.uea.ac.uk/documents/6207125/8551351/cc-regulations-booklet.pdf/7faf2851-a31d-475b-9866-eeb7a6fea736>

- (2) Where you have students who have good "A" levels and within 2 years are scoring lower 2nd class or lower, do you have a process for targeting such students and having a candid discussion with them on how it is going, any problems, any learning to apply in Y3 and any additional support that may be useful/available ?

No.

Attendance at lectures & practicals:

- (1) Do you officially monitor attendance at lectures and practicals? How do you do this?
- (2) What level of attendance do you set as guidelines to students for lectures & practicals
- (3) What level of attendance triggers a "cause for concern" and what processes do you have in place to address this with a student?
- (4) If you talk to a student about his attendance, do you monitor any improvement in the future?
- (5) What steps do you take if there is not the required improvement?
- (6) Do you keeps records of individual student's attendance?

For questions 1-6 please see the University's regulations on attendance engagement and progress, which can be found on our website: <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching/documents/attendance-engagement-progress>.

- (7) Do you have records for [name of student removed] attendance last year? (Yes/No)

[Information exempted pursuant to s.40(2), Freedom of Information Act]

While we cannot answer specific questions about this student for the reasons explained in the above letter, we can confirm that the University does keep records of student attendance.

Attendance at Final Year (Y3) Exams:

- (1) What are the steps in place when you have "cause for concern" about a student based on their non-attendance at exams?

Where a student does not attend an exam, the Learning and Teaching Service (LTS) team responsible for the course the student is on will normally try to contact the student.

When students are thought to be 'missing' and they do not respond to initial contact from LTS or their School, the Dean of Students' Office (DOS) is usually informed (see next question).

(2) *What steps do you take to contact them?*

The student is sent an email by the LTS team. If appropriate DOS may also follow their missing student procedure², when concerns are raised by staff about the absence of a student, and there is a concern that the student may be at risk.

Action will always depend on the particular circumstances, but DOS will try all reasonable means of contact available. Once they are reassured that the student does not appear to be at immediate risk, no further action is usually taken other than to offer the opportunity to seek confidential advice from DOS.

(3) *If initial responses to engage with them fail, what comes next?*

The LTS team would try again, speak to the student's adviser, and contact the support services at the University to see if the student was known to them. The DOS actions would be as described in our response to question 2.

(4) *If that student does not respond and subsequently misses his further two exams what do you do at that stage?*

As above. Subsequent actions will vary dependent on the individual circumstances of the student.

(5) *At what stage do you have a "serious cause for concern" – at this stage who do you contact within UEA? What do they do to contact the student at this stage?*

Missing exams in themselves will not trigger a 'serious cause for concern'. Where LTS staff have concerns about a student they will work with DOS, as appropriate to the individual circumstances of the student.

(6) *Do students provide details of relatives or friends that should be contacted in the event of an accident or "serious cause for concern"?*

Yes.

(7) *Do you keep a record of student "next of kin" or "key person" details and request that students update these details at the start of each year?*

Yes.

(8) *Under what conditions would UEA decide to contact next of kin or key contact?*

When the absence suggested that there was clear risk of serious harm to self or others.

² https://www.uea.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.113490!Missing%20students.pdf

- (9) *Would non-attendance at final year exams and no response from UEA efforts to contact a student be sufficient grounds to contact a relative or key person?*

Not necessarily. As indicated above, it would depend on the particular circumstances and past behaviour of the student, but if the University felt that there was clear risk of serious harm we would make contact with the next of kin, or the statutory authorities such as the police.

Discussions within the Department last year

- (1) *Did you discuss [name of student removed] in any staff meetings in Y3? (Yes/No)*

[Information exempted pursuant to s.40(2), Freedom of Information Act]

- (2) *At any stage, did the department raise concerns about [name of student removed] to those concerned with Student Wellbeing? (Yes/No)*

[Information exempted pursuant to s.40(2), Freedom of Information Act]

- (3) *Did anyone inform Student Wellbeing when [name of student removed] did not attend his final exams and attempts to contact him had failed? (Yes/No)*

[Information exempted pursuant to s.40(2), Freedom of Information Act]

Support in this coming Year:

- (1) *Can you provide details on the process you carry out, and who is involved, in deciding what support is provided to a student who has had a mental health issue?*

If a mental health issue has been declared at the point of admission, or following arrival at UEA, the student will be automatically contacted by the Wellbeing services to make them aware of the support on offer and to invite to an initial assessment.

For a previous but not current mental health issue, i.e. a period of depression that has since been overcome and does not affect the student's health, proactive approaches may or may not be made depending on the particular circumstances.

- (2) *What would happen to such a student on day 1 and over subsequent weeks? (You advised me that [name of student removed] should contact his Academic Supervisor for a meeting on Day 1 – what would be discussed initially and over coming weeks?)*

General information on the academic advisor role can be found here:

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching/students/getting-started/adviser> (for students)

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching/staff/teaching/advising> (for staff)

We would be unable to provide specific records of discussions without consent of the students involved.

- (3) *We understand from limited discussion with Dean of Students' Office that UEA has more demand for such services than they have supporting staff and that prioritisation of counselling is not initiated until students are back and is not actually implemented until November? Can you provide more detail on your processes and timings?*

All students who present for counselling or mental health advice are offered a preliminary wellbeing assessment, usually within a few days of their first contact.

Any waiting list is managed in date order (based on the date of the initial Wellbeing Assessment) together with the level of risk assessed, for example self-harm, suicide or withdrawal from the University. Students considered 'at risk' are allocated priority appointments.

- (4) *Would it be right to assume that [name of student removed] will be discussed in this process?*

[Information exempted pursuant to s.40(2), Freedom of Information Act]

How would you keep a student informed on the process from mid-Sept to the end of November?

No further specific discussions regarding students not considered 'at risk' take place. All students are contacted at regular intervals (termly) to confirm that they still wish to take up counselling. No additional routine communication to students on the waiting list takes place until an appointment is available to offer them, but if they contact DOS they will be given relevant information. In the interim, students may be referred to self-help resources on the web, or to other DOS advisory staff if there were other concerns (for example, financial, practical or study) that might be exacerbating their psychological difficulties.