



Information Assurance and Governance
Office of the Principal

14 March, 2018

Dear Ms Kelly,

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
Our Ref: 61-18

I refer to your request for information dated 14 February, 2018 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 ("the FOISA"). I confirm the University does not hold all the information requested. The information that is held is being released to you in full.

1. *How many students have used the student counselling services between each of the four academic years of 2012/13 and 2015/16?*
2. *Please send a breakdown by gender for each year.*

Please find below, the number of students who have been in contact with a Counsellor via any method i.e. phone, email, letter, text message or video call during the specified reporting period:

Table 1: Number of Students in Contact (all methods) with a Counsellor by Gender

Academic Year	Female	Male	Total
2012/3	324	180	504
2013/4	385	185	570
2014/5	502	221	723
2015/6	637	246	883
2016/7	719	273	992

Students may also see an adviser in our Student Life and Wellbeing team, Disability team or the Mental Health Co-ordinator.

3./

Information Assurance and Governance
01334 462776
foi@st-andrews.ac.uk

3. Please send a breakdown by year of study for each year.

Table 2: Number of Students in Contact (all methods) with a Counsellor by Degree Level and Year of Programme

Academic Year	Undergraduate					Postgraduate Taught	Postgraduate Research	Other
	1	2	3	4	5			
2012/3	71	122	99	117	13	27	39	16
2013/4	88	140	124	106	5	45	48	14
2014/5	144	156	145	130	15	59	63	11
2015/6	129	224	169	158	18	94	72	19
2016/7	157	226	219	181	14	81	92	22

Figures for postgraduate students are only available at the grouped level given above. This is because the standard reporting mechanisms currently in operation does not include a breakdown for postgraduate students by year of programme. To provide an answer to this part of your enquiry requires a level of data-analysis and intellectual input that goes beyond the simple retrieval and collation of information resulting in new information being created. This is out-with the provisions of the FOISA. This view is consistent with that of the Scottish Information Commissioner in Decision Notice 036/2005 *Mr George Munro and Inverclyde Council*, when the question as to what constitutes the creation of information was considered.

Section 17 of the FOISA requires that a Scottish public authority confirms in writing where information requested of it is not held and notice is therefore given in this regard.

4. Please send statistics as to how many students have sought help through the university for the following issues between each of the four specified academic years:
- Self-harm*
 - Eating Disorders*
 - Depression and anxiety disorders*
 - Substance Abuse (drug/alcohol)*
 - Other Mental Health Issues*

Appendix A to this letter provides data in relation to students who have been in contact with Student Services broken down by category considered to be relevant to your enquiry.

The following is highlighted for noting:

- Students may have been in contact with counsellors via any method (in person, by phone, email, letter, text message or video call).
- Totals by academic year in Table 1 are not equal to those presented in Table 2 as students may discuss more than one thing with Student Services staff and so may be counted in more than one sub-category presented in Table 1.
- Categorisation of contact types changed in January 2015 and January 2016. In particular, in 2015/16 category K experienced a change of name and category S was introduced – so a single student may have been counted in both versions of these categories in this year.

It should also be noted that some of the issues students seek assistance and support with concern matters that arose outwith the University community or indeed before the person came to St Andrews to study.

The rise in numbers over the reporting period reflects an increase of approximately 15% in the overall number of students studying here at the University of St Andrews as well as a healthy rise in awareness of mental health issues – not just within universities but in society as a whole.

5. *If you have a record of how many students received student counselling in calendar year 2016/17 then please provide this information.*

Please refer to the data presented in Table 1 above.

6. *Please send a breakdown by gender for the calendar year 2016/17 if this is available.*

Please refer to the data presented in Table 1 above.

7. *Please send a breakdown by year of study for the calendar year 2016/17 if this is available.*

Please refer to the answer provided at question 3 and the data presented in Table 2 above.

8. *Please send statistics as to how many students sought help through the university for the following issues for calendar year 2016/17:*

- a. *Self-harm*
- b. *Eating Disorder*
- c. *Depression and anxiety disorders*
- d. *Substance Abuse (drug/alcohol)*
- e. *Other Mental Health issues*

This information can be found in Appendix A and I would refer you to the answer provided at question 4 above.

9. *Lastly, please tell me what suicide prevention strategy the university currently has in place, if any.*

Whilst there is no specific suicide prevention strategy, there are a number of working practices that seek to prevent harm to members of the community as noted below.

- a) We provide a range of services responding to people in distress – students can make an appointment with a Life and Wellbeing Adviser, a Counsellor or a Mental Health Coordinator to talk about their distress. They can do this directly online <http://universitystandrewsstudentservices.simplybook.me/v2/#book> or email for an appointment.
- b) We have a 24-hours contact point for students in crisis.

- c) Student Services staff train other University staff in mental health awareness, using a bespoke Mental Health toolkit. This training includes discussion around suicide prevention.
- d) We provide a programme of Wellbeing workshops some of which explore issues related to low mood and seeking to help a friend with mental health problems.
- e) University webpages host information about Nightline, Breathing Space and Samaritans as well as details on how to access internal and external emergency services and <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/counselling/incrisis/> . Nightline is also promoted on other University webpages.
- f) We support ad hoc events raising awareness around suicide and suicide prevention. The most current event is being organised by University Hall, sponsoring over 20 people to run a marathon up a mountain and raising funds for CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

Your right to seek a review of how your information request was managed

If you are not satisfied with the University's response and/or our reasoning set-out above, you have the right to request a review of our decision. The time lines in which this right is available are set out in section 20(5)(a) and (b) FOISA. In broad terms the right to seek a review must be exercised within 40 working days of receiving this response.

Any request for review should be put in writing or some other permanent form e.g. an e-mail and should be sent to the University of St Andrews, through the contact details provided below.

A request for a Review should:

- a) state your name and address;
- b) describe the nature of your original request; and
- c) explain the reasons why you are dissatisfied with our response.

Freedom of Information / Environmental Information

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Fife

KY16 9AJ

Email foi@st-andrews.ac.uk

Telephone +44(0)1334 462776

If you remain dissatisfied with how your request for information has been dealt with following Review, you also have the right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) for a decision. In the event of an appeal to the SIC, the Commissioner will generally only be able to investigate the matters raised in the request for review.

Details on how to make an appeal online to the SIC can be found on their website: <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Unhappywiththeresponse/AppealingtoCommissioner.aspx>

Alternatively, you can contact the SIC by post, telephone or email at:

Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
Fife KY16 9DS

Telephone: 01334 464610

E-mail: enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

Website: www.itspublicknowledge.info

This concludes the University's response.

Yours sincerely

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Information Assurance and Governance Officer

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