

Information Assurance and Governance
Office of the Principal

19 July 2019

Dear Poppy

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
Our Ref: 267-19

I refer to your enquiry dated 3 July 2019 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 ("the FOISA") asking to be supplied with information in relation to bereavement services offered by the University.

1. Do you offer special provisions for counselling services for students?

The University provides care and support to its students in all aspects of their life. Student Services offer a confidential and professional service which includes the provision of general support, support for students with disabilities, counselling services and signposting students to NHS Services where appropriate. Full details of the type of support Student Services provide can be found on our website at: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/> and [Wellbeing, Counselling and Mental Health](#).

2. Do you offer any support or counselling specific to bereavement?

Yes

Please refer to our website for details on the support provided for [Bereavement and loss](#). The Chaplains also provide pastoral care for any member of staff or student relating to bereavement www.st-andrews.ac.uk/chaplaincy/pastoralcare/.

3. Do you have institution wide services for students?

Yes

4. Do your policies or practices exclusively relate to support for students who have lost parents or does your support factor in other forms of bereavement, such as losing a sibling?

There are no specific policies or practices relating to bereavement. Our practices and policies relate to the range of personal issues that a student may experience whilst at University.

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01334 462776
foi@st-andrews.ac.uk

5. *Can you tell me what special provision you have for offering extensions and academic breaks in study after a bereavement?*

The University has a range of policies and provisions to support students when they are experiencing difficult situations such as bereavement. These include:

- Taking a short break from studies - https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/teaching-and-learning/policies/student_absence.pdf;
- Taking a longer break from studies - <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/teaching-and-learning/policies/leave-of-absence.pdf>; and
- Requesting Academic adjustments such as extensions - <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/teaching-and-learning/policies/app.pdf> .

6. *How much money did you allocate to counselling and support services for bereavement per year (Jan 2016 – Jan 2019)?*

Wellbeing, counselling and mental health support for students is part of a larger unit i.e. Student Services, sharing accommodation, central budgets and administrative staff. The Student Services budget is structured to present costs for staff, accommodation, ICT and other resources used to develop, maintain and run the range of services provided, for the unit as a whole. It is not possible to attribute funding and expenditure for provision of counselling and support specifically for bereavement. The University does not hold the information requested in its records.

7. *If you feel you would like to offer an opinion, would you say your institution feels you are offered enough from the Government in order to support students who have experienced bereavement while studying?*

No recorded information is held relevant to this part of your enquiry.

Information otherwise accessible

As part of the University's response to parts 1 and 5 of your enquiry, direction is provided as to where information can be accessed through our website. Section 25(1), *Information otherwise accessible* of the FOISA is being applied in this respect. The University has responsibilities to the taxpayer and other stakeholders to provide value for money. Where the University has expended resource to proactively make information available from its Freedom of Information publication scheme and the public interest is best served by referring an applicant to that alternative source, then it will do so. Please note that this exemption is absolute and does not require validation through application of the public interest test.

Information not held

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 given to this effect in relation to parts 4, 6 and 7 of your enquiry for the reasons outlined above.

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

University of St Andrews

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St Andrews

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KY16 9AJ

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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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