



Information Assurance and Governance  
Office of the Principal

12 January 2018

Dear Mr/Ms Crozier,

**Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002**  
**Our Ref: 355-17**

I refer to your request for information received by the University on 11 December, 2017 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 ("the FOISA"). You have asked to be supplied with the following information for the past five academic years i.e. 2013/14 to 2017/18 for Undergraduate (first degree) students and Postgraduate (Taught) students:

- Total applications;
- Total offers;
- Total enrolments (new entrants);
- Registration targets;
- Applications per place;
- Offer rate (offers/applications)%;
- Enrolment rate (enrolments/offer)%.

The information requested held by the University can be found in the attached Appendix A in the form of an excel spreadsheet as requested. You are being supplied with all the information requested apart from target information which is being withheld under section 33(1)(b), *Commercial Interests* of the FOISA.

The University operates in a competitive environment and it is believed that disclosure of this information would be likely to prejudice substantially the commercial interests of the University.

The target information held by the University does not tend to fluctuate significantly from year to year therefore disclosure of this information would enable a pattern and trend to be identified giving an insight into the University's direction of travel and future strategy in relation to recruitment and admission levels. In the hands of our competitors, it is believed that this information would provide them with an insight that could be highly beneficial to their own strategic planning processes, allowing plans to be revised to match or exceed the expectations of our own. This would have the effect of weakening our current position within the Higher Education sector.

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

The application of this exemption is subject to the public interest test. The University accepts that there is a public interest in transparency in terms of understanding the level of students enrolling at university. This has to be balanced however, against a public interest in the University being able to operate as effectively and efficiently as possible. To do this, the University must be able to protect its own business interests to enable it to maintain its place within the Higher Education market place. In the circumstances, the University is of the view that the public interest lies in the information being withheld.

#### Advice and Assistance

To assist you in your enquiry, I can advise that the University's recruitment process has resulted in entrant numbers being within the margins set by the institution with the caveat that in academic year 2014/15, we took in undergraduate Home students in excess of what was planned but even with this, we only exceeded our funded numbers by around 4%.

The funded and clinical places are regulated and controlled externally to the University by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Penalties apply if institutions do not keep within these number controls. Information is made available by the SFC which may be of interest to you and can be found on their website at: <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/outcome-agreements/outcome-agreements.aspx>

#### 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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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](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info)  
Website: [www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info)

This concludes the University's response.

Yours sincerely

**JUNE WEIR**  
Information Assurance and Governance Officer

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