

By email only.

7 May 2020

Dear Max Copeman,

**Freedom of Information Act 2000**

**Request for information: Response**

**Date of request: 31 December 2019**

**Due date: 29 January 2020**

**Ref: RITM0252295**

We refer to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act").

Below is your question with the University's corresponding response.

**Question**

Dear University of Southampton,

I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act. In order to assist you with this request, I am outlining my query as specifically as possible. If you need any clarification then please do not hesitate to contact me. Under Section 16 it is your duty to provide advice and assistance and so I would expect you to contact me if you find this request unmanageable in any way.

I am looking for information regarding mental health issues among students, specifically:

- a) Since the beginning of the 2009-10 academic year, how many of the students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) who formally requested concessions from the university (i.e. submitted an Extenuating Circumstances form), cited mental health issues as their reason for the request?
- b) How many of these mental health-related appeals have been deemed legitimate enough by the university/department for the concessions to be granted?
- c) Which mental health issues in particular have been those most cited (e.g. anxiety, depression etc.) in the forms.

To be clear, I recognise that the sensitivity of mental health issues involves a level of confidentiality, but given that I am asking for the data and not the identities of students, I see no reason why this information can not be shared.

I request access to the information in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format, where each of the 10 full academic years show all of the Extenuating Circumstances forms submitted with those relating to mental health clearly flagged and detailed with the specific issues/illness cited.

I understand that you are required to respond to my request within the 20 working days after you receive this letter. I would be grateful if you could confirm in writing that you have received this request.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,  
Max Copeman

**Response:**

In accordance with [section 1\(a\)](#) of the Act, we confirm that the University holds information of the description specified in your request. The answers to your questions are as follows:

The University does not record fields for types of Special Concession requests. Each School has boards that consider individual requests for special considerations. We would therefore have to access individual case files to extract data as to which students has special considerations.

Accordingly the data requested is exempt from disclosure by virtue of [Section 40\(2\)](#) of the Act.

The information requested constitutes an individual's personal data as defined under [Section 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018](#). To release the information would breach the first data protection principle of the Data Protection Principles concerning fairness.

Section 40(2) of the Act confers an absolute exemption.

The University provides Regulations which outline the policy and procedure to be followed when students apply for Special Considerations.

Please view the following link :

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/~assets/doc/calendar/Special%20Considerations%20Regulations.pdf>

However, the special considerations regulations state

"These regulations do not:

apply to students who are already receiving support or reasonable adjustments from the University's Enabling Services for the specific exceptional circumstances raised. It should be noted that despite a student receiving support for a long-term condition, they may not be receiving support for a specific flare up of that condition. The University's Enabling Services can provide advice and support relating to long term conditions, details of the support offered can be found at:

[https://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/disability\\_support/index.page](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/disability_support/index.page)"

Students therefore suffering from a long-term mental health problem are pointed towards Enabling regarding reasonable adjustments.

If you do not feel that we have dealt with your request in accordance with the requirements of [Part I](#) of the Act, you may request a review. Your request for a review should specify in what respect you consider that the requirements of [Part I](#) have not been met. Please address your request to the Chief Operating Officer at the following address: [foi@soton.ac.uk](mailto:foi@soton.ac.uk).

In accordance with section 5.3 of the [Code of Practice](#), a request for a review must sent within 40 working days of the date of this email. The University is not obliged to accept any requests for a review beyond 40 working days.

We will endeavour to respond to your request for a review within 20 working days of receipt.

The Information Commissioner is responsible for enforcing rights of access to information and the operation of the publication scheme. You may apply to the Information Commissioner in writing (FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution, Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF)

or [electronically](#) for a decision whether, in any specified respect, your request for information has been dealt with by the University in accordance with the requirements of [Part I](#) of the Act. The Information Commissioner will not normally take action unless they are satisfied that the University's review procedure has been exhausted.

Yours sincerely,

*foi*

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 | LEGAL SERVICES – FOI@SOTON.AC.UK  
REF: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON