



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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23 June 2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0437-15

Thank you for your email of 5 May asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- 1. Could you please provide me with the information that shows the length of time (in working days) it took to the department to employ every new member of staff from outside the Civil Service in the most recent financial year (2014/15)? This length of time should cover the number of working days from the initial external advertisement of the post until the first working day of the new employee. If you do not hold information on the number of working days for every external hire, then the next best alternative would be an estimate of the average number of working days.*
- 2. Could you please also tell me the number of people who joined the department in every one of the five financial years since 2010/11 without undergoing a competency-based interview?*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested. I am sorry it has taken longer than expected to respond.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

The Civil Service-wide recruitment freeze introduced in May 2010 limits new appointments to frontline and business-critical jobs only. This has restricted FCO recruitment permitted under the freeze to the Civil Service Fast Stream and short term and permanent specialist roles. However, because of shortages at several grades, in October and November 2014 we were given permission to recruit a number of Apprentices, Administrative Officers and

Executive Officers into our Home Civil Service. The length of time it took in working days to employ the 47 new members of staff, both permanent and on fixed term contract, from outside the Civil Service who started their employment at the FCO in financial year 2014/15 varied from 66 to 440 working days. The time taken was dependent on a range of factors relevant to each recruitment competition, which in the case of new entrant Diplomatic Service Fast Stream officers includes days worked by Civil Service Resourcing on the Civil Service-wide elements of Fast Stream recruitment, and days worked by the FCO on the Final Selection Board for the Diplomatic Fast Stream.

Holding competency based interviews is standard practice for recruitment, by competition, into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. However, our Diplomatic Service Fast Stream recruitment process is different. Candidates who reach the final selection stage of this competition undergo, in addition, a series of competency based assessments based on role play exercises. The number of Fast Stream officers we recruited since 2010/11 is:

2010	16
2011	22
2012	40
2013	34
2014	26

We also recruit staff under exceptions to the Civil Service Recruitment Principles, i.e. without the fair and open competition otherwise required, into specialist or business critical roles on short term contracts. Recruitment is conducted by the Hiring Manager and they are responsible for the selection process, which may include a competency interview. The number of staff recruited under exceptions to the Civil Service Recruitment Principles during this period is:

FY 14/15	28
FY 13/14	25
FY 12/13	14
FY 11/12	Information no longer available
FY 10/11	Information no longer available

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Yours sincerely,

Business Management and Programmes Team



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