



## Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Engagement and Communications Directorate  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

02 January 2014

Dear

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request Ref 1126-13**

Thank you for your e-mail of 2 December 2013 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*'I would like to know:*

- 1. The amount the Department has spent annually since 2010 (including so far in 2013) on media training*
- 2. The name of the training recipient for each training*
- 3. The name of the training provider for each training*
- 4. The type of training provided in each case, for example social media training, broadcast training, etc*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested. I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold some information relevant to your request.

The FCO does not centrally retain records of the names of all course participants. As you will be aware, the FCO works in nearly 270 British Embassies, High Commissions, Consulates and other offices (Missions) in over 160 countries and to collate this information for all of those posts can only be done at a disproportionate cost.

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. For central government the appropriate limit is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 3 ½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. Your request as presently formulated is widely-framed and I estimate that it will take more than 3 ½ working days to locate, retrieve and extract this information. In these circumstances we are not obliged under the Act to comply with your request. You may therefore wish to refine your request to narrow its scope to bring it within the appropriate limit, for example, by asking for the names of attendees from a specific Post.

It is important that HMG's workforce receives the right training to carry out their duties. Being skilled in a range of communications techniques, including working with the media is essential to explain and promote British prosperity, security and the interests and welfare of UK nationals across the world.

Between January 2010 and October 2013 the FCO has spent the following amounts on media training for staff from FCO and Other Government Departments working in UK Missions overseas (by calendar, not financial year).

	2010	2011	2012	2013 (until October)
Media Training	£136,176	£114,621	£101,799	£98,977

The following numbers of people have received media training in the period from January 2010 to October 2013 (calendar, not financial year):

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Media Training	128*	237	183	146

\*We do not hold a record of how many people attended the International Communication Skills course in 2010, but the figures for 2011 to 2013 include participants on both the courses detailed below.

Media training courses are regularly reviewed to ensure the content is relevant and up to date. The FCO has provided two key elements of media training in the period of your enquiry:

- Strategic Media Skills and Techniques (SMST) (renamed Strategic Communication and Media Skills (SCMS in 2011). The course is aimed at Ambassadors and Deputy Heads of Mission – the senior representatives of HMG overseas, to give them the skills they need to act as the senior spokesperson for HMG in their country. This has been provided by Group K Broadcasting Ltd.
- International Communication Skills (ICS). The course is aimed at members working in our communications teams overseas and in the UK, and it covers the basic skills needed to work as a press or campaigns officer, in an international context, and overseas. This has been provided by Caroline Black Associates.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research you are doing and for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder. Most documents supplied by the FCO will have been produced by government officials and will be protected by Crown Copyright. You can find details on the arrangements for re-using Crown Copyright on the Office of Public Sector Information website.

Information you receive which is not subject to Crown Copyright continues to be protected by the copyright of the person, or organisation, from which the information originated. You must ensure that you gain their permission before reproducing any third party (non-Crown Copyright) information.

Yours sincerely

Engagement and Communications Directorate



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.