



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Royal, Ceremonial and Honours Unit
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

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

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0490-16

Thank you for your email of 11 May asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

Could you please advise me of the steps taken by the FCO when considering the appointment to the UK of a foreign or commonwealth ambassador or high commissioner. How long does the process of 'Agrément' take and who are the UK agencies and bodies approached in this regard. Are all embassy diplomats and staff assessed in the same manner as the head of mission?

We are writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

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

We hope the information below answers your question.

Under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961, the sending State must make certain that the agreement (agrément) of the receiving State has been given for the person it proposes to accredit as its head of mission.

On receiving the request for agrément from the sending State, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) prepares a submission for the Foreign Secretary recommending whether or not agrément should be granted. If the Foreign Secretary recommends agrément, he forwards a submission to Her Majesty The Queen to seek Her approval of the appointment. Once Her Majesty has given Her approval, the FCO informs the sending State. Timescales for this process vary.

If the Foreign Secretary does not recommend agrément, the FCO informs the sending State. The receiving State is not obliged to give reasons to the sending State for a refusal of agrément (Article 4).

Agrément is not required for the appointment of other staff at missions apart from military, naval and air attaches. Under the [Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961](#), subject to provisions of articles 5, 8, 9 and 11, the sending State may freely appoint the members of the staff of the mission. In the case of military, naval and air attaches, the UK requires the sending State to send the names of these officers to the FCO for approval before they take up their positions (Article 7). Diplomatic missions are required to notify the receiving State of the arrival and departure of all members of the mission and their accompanying family members (Article 10).

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Yours sincerely,

Royal, Ceremonial and Honours Unit
Protocol Directorate



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