



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Human Resources Directorate**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
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**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0544-17**

Thank you for your email of 6 June 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

In relation to your most recent (i.e. this year's) recruitment round for the Diplomatic Service Fast Stream, could you please inform me of the following:

- 1) How many places did you have available for your general Diplomatic Service Fast Stream (please exclude the European and Economist routes)?*
- 2) How many Final Selection Boards did you hold?*
- 3) How many offers were made per Final Selection Board? If you have any privacy concerns around this, please provide me this information in a way that addresses any such privacy concerns (e.g. a figure for every month - 3 Final Selection Boards in March, 5 offers).*
- 4) How does selection of candidates take place at the Final Selection Board? Please provide with details. Please consider the following in your answer: whether there is a pass mark, and what this was; how much weight is given to each exercise, and what exercises are there; how are offer decisions considered/made; 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 information relevant to your request.

- (1) How many places did you have available for your general Diplomatic Service Fast Stream (please exclude the European and Economist routes)?**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) had agreement to recruit 55 Diplomatic Service Fast Streamers in 2017. This figure increased during the recruitment campaign from 40 to address wider FCO workforce planning needs.

**(2) How many Final Selection Boards did you hold?**

We held Final Selection boards (FSBs) over 17 days between March and May 2017. We assessed up to 8 candidates per day.

**(3) How many offers were made per Final Selection Board? If you have any privacy concerns around this, please provide me this information in a way that addresses any such privacy concerns (e.g. a figure for every month - 3 Final Selection Boards in March, 5 offers).**

We do not offer places per FSB. Instead all the 105 Diplomatic Service Fast Streamers candidates who sat the FSBs were assessed against each other. The highest ranked 55 were offered places out of these 105 candidates.

**(4) How does selection of candidates take place at the Final Selection Board? Please provide with details. Please consider the following in your answer: whether there is a pass mark, and what this was; how much weight is given to each exercise, and what exercises are there; how are offer decisions considered/made; etc**

The Final Selection Board (FSB) consists of three different components:

- Motivation interview
- Management themed role-play exercise
- Stakeholder themed role-play exercise

We do not have a set pass mark at the FSB. It varies from year to year. It is dependent on the number of Fast Stream positions available per year and the standard of candidates coming through the system. We would generally expect candidates to:

- Meet the standard in the Motivation interview; and
- Pass the majority of the key competences assessed during the role-play exercises. In 2017, this meant passing 4 of the 7 competence groupings. Civil Service Competency Framework can be found [here](#).

In 2017, candidates were also required to complete the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) alongside the FSB. MLAT attainment levels are indicators of an individual's future potential achievement in any language. Language capability is a priority criterion for FCO Fast Stream policy entrants given the global nature of our operations. A strong performance in the MLAT was taken into account when assessing a candidate's overall performance.

Yours sincerely,

Human Resources 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.