

Ref: FOI2020/02110

10 March 2020

Dear

Thank you for your further email of 13 February to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), seeking information about the criteria for the Accumulated Cumulative Service Medal (ACSM).

You requested the following information:

*"I have read both the emails and the letter from DBS concerning the reason why a persons application for the ACS11 was turned down. But the emails were dated Feb 18 and Dec 14 with the letter dated June 2018, this hasn't answered my original request as stated below:*

*'a. The internal MOD Medal Office email dated 14 December 2014 instructing staff to deduct the initial qualifying time form the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal, and'*

*'b. The correspondence from the policy owners that reaffirms that this was the interpretation from the policy owners themselves that the initial qualifying time was to be deducted.'*

*The email (dated Dec 14) supplied isn't instructing staff to deduct qualifying time because as quoted 'Below are some draft LTT regarding the ACSM as a starter for 10 and your comments:'. I have read it a number of times and it doesn't answer my request as you have not provided me with the internal MODMO email that 'instructed' personnel to deduct qualifying days, instead I have an email that asks for comments on the matter.*

*The policy holders correspondence (letter and email) are 3 to 3 1/2 years after the email dated Dec 14 and it points to two or possibly three individuals challenging a decision by the MODMO et al. However, I believe my second request wasn't fully answered by your response as for one the email was barely readable and I couldn't make out which Policy owner answered the enquiry; was the reply reaffirming an email that had asked for comments concerning a universally unwritten 'adopted' policy in Dec 14 and was under impression that it was People ACDS (Pers&Trg) / DS Sec that are the policy writers?*

*Who are the UK Operational and Service medal policy, as no mention in JSP 761?*

*When will the new JSP 761 be released i.e. version 6.0 as one of the emails points to the ambiguity being cleared up with the re-write of JSP 761?"*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the MOD and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

Section 1 of the FOIA gives an applicant the right to access recorded information held by public authorities at the time the request is made and does not require public authorities to answer questions, provide explanations or give opinions, unless this is recorded information held.

Regarding the wording of the e-mail of 14 December 2014, no other recorded information has been located.

Under s16 of the Act (advice and assistance) I can confirm that, although this e-mail was not a direct instruction and invited comment, it provided the approach that was adopted to standardise the Medal Office administration process; it was therefore considered to be in scope of your request and released. Where staff are advised of a new process verbally in meetings, it may be that this is not formally noted as an instruction and therefore recorded information may not always exist.

There is no recorded information available to address your concerns about the time between the Medal Office e-mail and the policy correspondence provided. The details of the individuals concerned have been withheld under Section 40(2) of the FOIA (Personal Information), in accordance with Data Protection legislation. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

The policy owner that answered the enquiry was People-DS Sec-CECT, although the post has now been renamed as People-DS Sec Hons Policy & Casework. This e-mail was in relation to a query from 71 Engineer Regiment and the Medal Office seeking further clarity following additional policy documentation that questioned the ACSM policy. This email was considered to be in scope of your request and a copy of the e-mail trail is enclosed with this letter.

To confirm the policy writers are the Defence Services Secretary team who develop policy for MOD medallic recognition, in conjunction with colleagues representing the single Services. The UK Operational and Service medal policy is a post title in the Defence Service Secretary team.

Regarding the date issue of a new JSP 761, there is no recorded information that would provide a date however under s16 (advice and assistance), I can confirm that this is kept under review and subject to amendment as required. There is no current target date to issue a significantly revised version; however, any significant changes to the regulations for any medals may be notified by issuing a Defence Information Notice.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

Defence Business Services Secretariat