

FOI DOF/2026-0314

Request

Re: Competition IRC324218 – Grade 5, Director of Communications.

1. The dates of interviews, including any rescheduled dates
2. The number of candidates deemed successful and their overall scores.
3. A copy of the presentation topics and interview questions and supplementary questions for each criteria and presentation.
4. Can I also request a breakdown of the % marks allocated for each element including the conversation, presentation and each of the 4 competence questions.

DoF response

I can confirm the department holds some of the information requested.

1. Interviews were held between 22-27 May, however there was one reschedule which took place on 5 June.
2. There were 5 successful candidates.

Some of the information you have requested is being withheld because it is exempt under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles of the Data Protection Act.

In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed lawfully and fairly.

Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test – lawful, fairness and transparency test (attached as a separate document – Annex C), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject

3. This information is being withheld because it is exempt under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 43(2) protects information which

would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it). The disclosure of this information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interest of the tenderer in this commercial activity. The application of Section 43(2) in this case requires a Public Interest Test (PIT) to be carried out, which can be found attached separately (Annex D). In carrying out the PIT the department contends that disclosure of the requested material would not be in the public interest.

4. The conversation on motivation and experience was not scored. The presentation and 4 competence questions were each scored equally with a maximum score of 20 for each and a minimum score of 12 for each. The overall pass mark was 60.

Annex B - Internal Reviews

An Internal Review request examines the response based on applied exemptions, search adequacy, or response timeliness.

It is not the following, which will be treated as specified:

- Questions asking for clarification on information provided: Will be treated as part of the original FOI request.
- Additional questions about the information in the response: Will be treated as a new FOI request.
- Questions about the subject not related to the original request: Will be treated as new FOI request.
- Questions regarding how a service operates or why a decision was made: Will be treated as normal business and responded to accordingly.
- Complaints or concerns raised in response to information provided: Will be treated in line with relevant complaints procedure.

To make an Internal Review request:

- **Clearly state:** That you want an internal review of a previous FOI response and provide the necessary details.
- **Follow the timeline:** Be sure to submit your request within 40 working days of receiving the original response. If the Department has not responded at all, you have 40 working days after the original 20-day response period has passed.
- **Wait for a response:** The review is typically completed within 20 working days but can take up to 40 working days in exceptional circumstances. The Department should inform you of any delays.

What the review includes

- A fresh decision based on a reconsideration of all relevant factors.
- An assessment of whether the request was handled correctly and if exemptions were applied appropriately.
- The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, please email foi@finance-ni.gov.uk or write to FOI/EIR Team, Department of Finance, 2nd Floor, Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast, BT4 3SX.