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8 March 2022

Mr James Noble-Rogers

Our reference: CAS-462832-GVTC8L

Sent by email to:

J.Noble-Rogers@ucet.ac.uk

Dear Mr Noble-Rogers

Your request for information

Thank you for your email of 8 February 2022 in which you requested the following:

- “1. Please provide details of the content, delivery and duration of the training for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections that OFSTED ITE inspectors receive prior to carrying out ITE inspections.
2. Please provide a list of all documentation used in the training of OFSTED ITE inspectors.
3. How many individuals are involved in the training for ITE inspections of OFSTED ITE inspectors, and of these how many have had direct experience of being employed to deliver ITE programmes within the last 5 years?
4. How many OfSTED inspectors were engaged in ITE inspections between May 2021 and July 2021 and, of these, how many had previously been employed to deliver ITE programmes in the previous 5 years?”

We have dealt with your request in accordance with the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000.

The first requirement of the Act is that we should confirm whether we hold information of the description set out in your request. Under the FOI Act, we must provide you with all the information we hold which falls within the scope of your request, unless it is ‘exempt’ information.

I can confirm we hold information relating to part 1 and 2 of your request.

Ofsted provides HMI with a comprehensive training programme which prepares them to carry out inspections in all remits. This is supplemented with annual updates. The training is carried out in a variety of ways including face to face, pre-reading, webinars, and online training.

We are not providing you with the content of the training as we believe it is exempt from disclosure at this time under section 33 of the Act as the training is still currently active and we believe disclosure would prejudice our audit functions. This is explained in more detail in Annex A.

In relation to part 3 of your request, the ITE training is delivered as part of the wider training package provided to HMI. We therefore do not hold details of how many people are involved in the training of HMI to carry out ITE inspections.

We also do not hold information about the experience of inspectors. This information is collected as part of the recruitment process but is not kept on file past the confirmation of appointment. All HMI are recruited to the same criteria, further information about the requirements can be found [here](#). Following their recruitment they undergo comprehensive training and each inspection team is selected based on their relevant expertise.

With regards to part 4 of your request, the number of inspectors who carried out ITE visits between May 2021 and July 2021 can be found from information available on the Ofsted website. As the information is available to you from the website, section 21 of the FOI Act provides that we are not obliged to further disclose this information or to present it in an alternative way.

Management information about ITE inspections can be found [here](#). The third document down, titled "Initial teacher education inspection statistics as at 31 July 2021 charts, tables and data ODS", contains a tab (D1) that shows the inspections that took place during the period you are interested in. The individual reports can then be found from our reports site [here](#) and they show the names and numbers of inspectors who took part in each visit.

As explained above, we do not hold details about their experience before joining Ofsted.

I trust that this letter clearly explains our position. If you have any queries about our response, please contact me at 0300 0131 108 and I will do my best to address them.

If you are dissatisfied with our response or the handling of your request, you may request a formal internal review. Details of how to do this are set out in Annex B at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry McTear
Information Access Officer
Information Rights and Access Team

Annex A - Exempt Information

The FOI Act describes circumstances in which information is 'exempt' and therefore does not have to be provided in response to a request. On this occasion, we have concluded that the exemption at section 33¹ of the Act applies to Ofsted's training material.

Section 33(2) of the Act can be used when one public authority audits or inspects other public authorities. The exemption applies if disclosing the information might harm any activity related to such inspections. Our inspection work falls within the definition of an 'audit function' as set out in section 33(1). This position is supported by the Information Commissioner's guidance on the application of this exemption.

We consider that the disclosure of ITE training materials would be likely to prejudice our audit functions for a number of reasons.

In the case of your request, the training materials are still currently being used and continue to influence current inspection activities. We consider that, whilst such information is still actively being delivered in training and used as a basis to form an assessment whilst carrying out live inspections, disclosure of this information to the public is likely to prejudice our inspection and audit functions.

Publicly sharing training materials would impact on our inspection work as individuals and providers may use this to try to artificially present themselves to inspectors, based on their interpretation of how inspectors have been trained and what they consider inspectors are looking for. This would make it more difficult for inspectors to accurately assess the performance of providers as they truly are, particularly when not all providers may have accessed the materials.

In addition; specific messages within certain training sessions are intended to promote professional discussion amongst inspectors during sessions. The delivery of those messages, usually by specially trained HMI in face-to-face sessions, is key, along with facilitation and direction of the resulting discussions. Disclosure of the documents alone is likely to be misleading.

For the reasons set out above, we believe that the exemption at section 33 of the Act applies.

The balance of the public interest

¹ [Section 33 of The Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)

As section 33 is a qualified exemption we are required to consider whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs that in release of the information.

It could be argued that there is some public interest in Ofsted publishing its training materials as it would allow the public to gain a better understanding of how our work is carried out.

However, we believe that there is a clear public interest in education providers being held to account through our inspection and audit work; the findings of which are published, giving the public an accurate picture of a provider's education provision. This is further supported by the handbooks and guidance documents published on our website.

We consider that disclosure of training material would likely result in the core messages being lost by the material being delivered without proper understanding. We also consider that it would be likely that the training material would be used by individuals and providers to prepare for inspection allowing them to present and artificial environment to inspectors during inspection. Any disclosure of information that would reduce the impact of inspections, in securing the necessary improvement for pupils and parents, would clearly be against the public interest.

Consequently, we believe that the exemption at section 33 of the FOI Act applies to the information you have requested, and we will not be making a disclosure in response to this request.

Annex B - Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with our response or the handling of your request, you may request a formal internal review. To do this, please write to the following address, setting out the area(s) of the response you are unhappy with:

Email: Richard McGowan at: informationrequest@ofsted.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision as to whether we have complied with our obligations under the FOI Act with respect to your request. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>