

PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATE IN FOISA

The qualification for Scottish FOI practitioners

2017



*"A very good trainer,
clear and insightful."*

**CF, Golden Jubilee
National Hospital**

*"Excellent course, well
structured and delivered."*

JW, St Andrews University

*"I commend Act Now for their
investment in FOI in Scotland."*

FR, NHS Education for Scotland

*"Excellent course. Well designed,
presented and delivered. Must
for anyone involved with FOISA."*

AG, Scottish Prison Service



Endorsed by

Centre for **Freedom of Information**

The Act Now Practitioner Certificate in Freedom of Information (Scotland) is the only qualification for those who work with FOI and the EIRs in Scotland.

Ibrahim Hasan, Paul Simpkins & Frank Rankin

Our key personnel are very well known trainers and writers in information law. All have extensive experience of training in Scotland and know all the issues facing the Scottish public sector. All have been examiners (and are currently trainers) for the BCS certificated courses in Data Protection and Freedom of Information.



"The FOISA practitioner course greatly improved my understanding of the Act and how to apply it in the course of my work." KM, Creative Scotland

EXAM BOARD

We have recognised experts from across the Scottish public sector who sit on our Exam Board. The Board acts as our "critical friend" to ensure that our syllabus reflects the needs of the Scottish public sector, to suggest improvements to our course and to ensure that delegate feedback is taken on board by the course tutors. Our Exam Board consists of:



- **Professor Kevin Dunion** (Chair)
- **Allan Graham** (Elected Member for North Lanarkshire Council)
- **Rhoda Davidson** (Scottish Natural Heritage)
- **David Goldberg** (Campaign for FOI in Scotland)

We aim to achieve a 100% pass rate. With this in mind candidates will receive exclusive access to the Act Now Resource Lab which contains lots of extra resources to help candidates pass the exam including:

ONLINE RESOURCE LAB

- ✓ Online quizzes
- ✓ Briefing notes on key elements of the syllabus
- ✓ Links to relevant SIC and (other agencies') guides
- ✓ Revision videos



"The course helped me immensely in my job: in terms of added knowledge, procedural aspects, and confidence that decisions and replies would bear scrutiny if examined or challenged."

DM, Perth College UHI

DATES AND STRUCTURE 2017

The course takes place over four days (one day per week) and involves lectures, assessments and exercises. This is followed by some online sessions and a written exam. Candidates are then required to complete a short project to achieve the certificate.

VENUE	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	EXAM
EDINBURGH	6 Feb	13 Feb	20 Feb	27 Feb	6 Mar
EDINBURGH [Intensive]	21 Aug	22 Aug	23 Aug	24 Aug	25 Aug
GLASGOW	6 Sep	13 Sep	20 Sep	27 Sep	4 Oct

DAY 1

FOISA Essentials and Process

What is information?

Applicants and Requests

Clarifying Requests and Finding Information

Dealing with Requests & Complaints

Differences between FOISA and EI(S)Rs

DAY 2

Key Themes

Transparency

Environmental information

Public Interest

Prejudice

DP and Privacy

Confidentiality

DAY 3

Exemptions and Exceptions

FOISA Absolute Exemptions

EIR Exceptions

Wider Process and Procedures

Publication schemes and proactive disclosure

DAY 4

Information Management

FOISA Qualified Exemptions

Records Management and Public Records

Copyright and Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations

GRADING

PASS - 50%

MERIT - 65%

DISTINCTION - 80%

ASSESSMENT

2 HOUR CLOSED BOOK EXAM (50 Marks)

OPEN BOOK PROJECT (50 Marks)

THIS COURSE IS ENDORSED BY THE CENTRE FOR FOI



Centre for Freedom of Information

A joint venture between the School of Law, University of Dundee and the Scottish Information Commissioner

The course syllabus has been drafted in consultation with the Scottish Information Commissioner

Pass	Merit	Distinction	Average Mark
11%	52%	37%	76%



"I'm pleased to be able to continue to participate in the review of this now established course designed specifically for Scottish FOI practitioners. Having reviewed the syllabus, the examination process and the results I am happy to continue to endorse Act Now's Practitioner Certificate in FOISA. The quality of the delegates, as evidenced by the high grades, augurs well for FOI in Scotland. In particular, I am pleased at Act Now's initiative to include practical elements in the course. This clearly provides direct benefits for public authorities, by improving the ability of practitioners to deal with complex information requests."

**Kevin Dunion, Director, Centre for FOI, University of Dundee
Former Scottish Information Commissioner**

"I really enjoyed this course. It allowed me to build on my knowledge of FOISA developed 'on the job' and to understand the legislation and its application better."

KF, National Galleries of Scotland

TUTORS COMMENT:

"Freedom of Information training has to be practical and realistic if it is to empower FOI officers in our public sector organisations. I enjoy bringing my experience of local government, central government and the NHS to bear on the issues we discuss and share on the Act Now courses. And I relish learning from the experience and ideas of the delegates. Together we identify cost-effective ways of getting transparency right."

Frank Rankin

Course Fee - £1,650 plus vat - Includes lunch, refreshments, comprehensive delegate materials (including all legislation) and exam fees.

"The most widely used external training provider for FOI in Scotland"

The Scottish Information Commissioner's Learning and Development Survey



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