

CERTIFICATE IN FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

1.5 day course

Day one: 9.30am to 4pm

Day two: 9.30am to 12.30pm

Registration: €950

This course is certified by the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) and is CPD-approved.



ICM

Training can take place in our offices in
25 Mountjoy Square East,
Dublin 1

Check our website for upcoming dates for opening training

or as an in-house within your organisation

This is more practical if you have a large group for training

For more information, or to book:
call us on (01) 819 8500
visit www.pai.ie
or email info@pai.ie

About the course

FOI is now an established and fully accepted feature of all Government departments and offices and many public or publicly-funded bodies in Ireland (now known as "FOI bodies"). The Freedom of Information Act 2014 establishes the following statutory rights for the public:

1. The right to be granted access to records held by FOI bodies, subject to exemptions and exclusions set out in the Act
2. The right to apply to FOI bodies for the amendment of personal information in records held by them, on the grounds that it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading, and
3. A general right to apply to FOI bodies for, and obtain, reasons and underlying material fact-finding in respect of administrative decisions or "acts", subject to certain conditions.

In addition, the Act obliges FOI bodies to publish information about themselves, the information they hold, and the internal guidelines and precedents they use in decision-making, as well as proactively publishing information of relevance or interest to the public which would routinely be accessible by way of FOI request. The Act further obliges FOI bodies to familiarise themselves with, and have regard to, the Code of Practice for FOI which has been drawn up by the Minister for Public Enterprise and Reform.

This programme will provide an introduction to, and grounding in, the main aspects of the legislation as well as the grounds for non-disclosure. As well as sharing an FOI body practitioner's experience, it will include a case study in how to apply the Act in a practical context, and take a look at the role of the Information Commissioner and the courts on appeal. It is designed to be a practical and focused course for any public servant involved in the provision of information to the public.

This course also aims to equip FOI officers with the skills, knowledge and competencies to be able to fulfil their role by taking a pragmatic approach and focusing on practical FOI tasks and essential law, rules and guidelines, as opposed to theory. Participants will have the opportunity to share their own experiences and get a valuable insight into issues highlighted by presenters or other participants, as well as an understanding of best practice.

Learning Outcomes

Following the successful completion of the course, delegates will have acquired a knowledge and developed skills and techniques which will give them the ability to perform better in this complex and demanding role.

On completion of the course participants will know:

- How Freedom of Information legislation applies to their organisation
- The rights of access for members of the public under Freedom of Information legislation, and the exceptions that apply
- How to process requests and applications, and how and when to make decisions and deal with reviews, under the legislation
- The roles, powers and functions of the Office of the Information Commissioner and the courts on appeal

On completion of the course graduates will be able to:

- Identify areas within their organisations that may need attention and remedial action
- Handle requests by individuals for access to information
- Ensure compliance with obligations under the Act
- Provide information, assistance and training to colleagues

Assessment and Certification

This course is externally accredited by the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM). Attendees will receive an ICM Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Certificate upon successful completion of the course, including a single assessment following the taught aspect of the course.

Timetable: Day one

Time	Topic
9.30 - 10.00	<p>Introduction to FOI and the Policy Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles & Objectives of FOI The Principle of Maximum Disclosure Records & Requesters Role of Decision Maker & the Decision Charges
10.00 - 11.00	<p>The Statutory Framework for FOI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative exemptions Public Interest Test and Injury/Harm test TII relevant Subject Matter (Part 4) exemptions Deliberations / Functions and Negotiations Commercially sensitive information/Confidential information Miscellaneous Exemptions Handling Third Party Consultation
11.00 - 11.15	Break
11.15 - 1.30	<p>A Value Added Guide / Exemption Provisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative exemptions Public Interest Test and Injury/Harm test TII relevant Subject Matter (Part 4) exemptions Deliberations / Functions and Negotiations Commercially sensitive information/Confidential information Miscellaneous Exemptions Handling Third Party Consultation
1.30 - 2.15	Lunch
2.15 - 4.00	<p>FOI / DP / Records Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right to Reasons for Decisions and Amendment of Personal Information The Review Process, Internal Review and Court AIE Regulations and Data Protection

Timetable: Day two

Time	Topic
9.30 - 12.30	<p>Processing an FOI request - Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of the Decision Maker Receipt of request - steps involved Timeframes Drafting acknowledgements, responses and schedule of records Useful links, tips and suggestions Sample requests

Trainers



Niall Michel is a partner in the Public and Administrative Law Unit of Mason Hayes & Curran. He is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin and Cambridge University and was formerly qualified as a barrister. He specialises in advising Irish public and regulatory bodies and others in administrative and public law matters. He has particular experience and expertise in advising on a wide range of information-access and disclosure issues, including, in particular, freedom of information, data protection, confidentiality and privilege.

Lisa Joyce is a senior associate, practicing in the public and administrative law unit of the litigation department at Mason Hayes & Curran. Lisa specialises in advising on matters of administrative and public law generally, including freedom of information and data protection. Her clients have included public and regulatory bodies, national industry and professional bodies, and professional disciplinary bodies. Lisa participates in delivering client seminars and training on data protection and freedom of information, and is a contributor to the joint Mason Hayes & Curran/Public Affairs Ireland publication, *The Freedom of Information Sourcebook*.

