

**HOUSE OF LORDS
APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION**

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Ref: HOLAC FOI 2024/2

5 February 2024

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I am replying to your Freedom of Information request, which the House of Lords Appointments Commission (the Commission) received on 19 January 2024.

You asked:

1. How many applicants were there per age within the age range: 21-35?

While I appreciate that the Commission has answered how many individuals between 21 and 35 have applied, I would like a further breakdown by age of the number of applicants.

Additionally, I would like to know:

2. How does the House of Lords Appointments Commission define "a record of significant achievement" which constitutes one of the criteria guiding assessment?

3. Does the House of Lords Appointments Commission assess "achievement" and "merit" commensurate with one's age and career stage?

4. How does the House of Lords Appointments Commission assess the "ability to make an effective and significant contribution to the work of the House of Lords"?

5. Does the House of Lords Appointments Commission consider an applicant's career trajectory and the likelihood of their future merit, achievements, and ability to contribute to the work of the House of Lords?

We are writing to advise you that following a search of our paper and electronic records, we have established that some of the information you requested is held by the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC).

Firstly, it has come to our attention that the information supplied to you in your previous FOI (reference HOLAC FOI 2023/3) was incorrect. In this response we incorrectly stated that of the approximately 5,600 applications received since 2000, the Commission has received 85 applications from individuals aged between 21-35 (inclusive), making up approximately 1.5% of the total applicants. The correct overall statistics, as of the end of 2023, are that of the 6009 applicants, 459 were aged between 21 and 35 (making up 7.6%). We apologise for the error in our original response. If you would like us to re-issue this response with the correct information, please let us know.

In answer to your first question, the age by year breakdown is provided in the table below.

Age	Number of applicants
21	13
22	24
23	16
24	17
25	14
26	27
27	17
28	29
29	44
30	34
31	41
32	34
33	48
34	42

In response to questions 2 - 5, the Commission does not hold information that directly answers this request. The Commission receives applications from people in a wide range of disciplines, and hence there would be no clear way of listing for each type of service specifically what would constitute an applicant's significant achievement or contribution. There is general information on the process at this [link](#), and the Commission encourages potential applicants to consider the achievements of individuals previously appointed through the crossbench process, but we should make clear that this information does not directly answer your questions.

On the points raised in questions 3 and 5, the Commission makes decisions based on the demonstrable achievements of an applicant at the time of their applications. Each case is considered individually. The Commission takes as its starting point the experience of the individual, the contribution they might be able to make to the House of Lords in their particular area(s) of expertise, and their ability to make a wider contribution beyond their own expertise. These assessments are not necessarily correlated to an applicant's age. Unsuccessful applicants may reapply following substantive changes to their relevant experience, which may be expected over the course of their careers.

If you are unhappy with this response to your request, you may write to the Secretary to the Commission, Alison Bennett, to ask for an internal review by another person not involved with this request. Please note that we will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by HOLAC.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Secretariat to the House of Lords Appointments Commission