

Ref: HOLAC FOI 2025/17

12 January 2026

By email [\[REDACTED\]](mailto:[REDACTED]@[REDACTED].uk)

Dear Dr Minh Alexander,

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 22 December 2025.

You requested:

1) Can you confirm if it is your practice to routinely verify individuals' claimed qualifications or not?

If you rely on the agencies to whom you refer for further screening to check qualifications, do you have an explicit understanding with any of them that they will verify an individual's claimed qualifications?

That is to say, within your process, is there someone who takes specific responsibility for checking that an individual's curriculum vitae is honest and accurate?

2) If not, do you plan to take any corrective action with respect to future process?

3) If not, have you made plans to seek retrospective review to assess whether there are past cases where qualifications have not been checked.

4) If the answer to (3) is "no", please give the documented reasons for this decision.

Your request has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) and following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that HOLAC does not hold any information in scope of questions 2,3 and 4 of your request. Freedom of Information requests cannot be used to ask general policy questions, as the Act only grants access to recorded information that a public authority already holds.

The information that you have requested in question 1 falls within section 37(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information Act, which relates to the conferral of honours and dignities. A peerage is a dignity for the purposes of the Act. Section 37 is a qualified

exemption which is subject to a public interest test. In favour of disclosing information, there is a strong public interest in knowing that the appointments process is accountable and transparent, and in maintaining public confidence in the peerage appointments system. In favour of maintaining the exemption, there is a strong public interest in limiting the level of detail about exactly what checks are carried out by the Commission, to ensure individuals are not able to tailor the information they provide once nominated. It would set a dangerous precedent to start providing precise detail of the checks conducted, which could allow individuals to selectively decide what information might be presented to both the Commission and the nominating Party.

Taking all of the relevant factors into consideration, including the fact that the Commission already places a great deal of information about its working practices and the checks it carries out in the public domain to reassure the public that these are sufficiently rigorous, I consider that the balance of the public interest lies in maintaining the section 37(1)(b) exemption in respect to confirming whether the Commission verifies individuals' qualifications.

If you are unhappy with this response to your request, you may write to the Secretary to the Commission 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 the Commission.

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