

DSR 1: Diplomatic Service Code of Ethics

1. The statutory basis for the management of the Diplomatic Service is set out in Part 1 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

2. The Diplomatic Service is an integral and key part of the government of the United Kingdom. It supports the Government of the day in developing and implementing its policies, and in delivering public services. Members of the Diplomatic Service, like all civil servants, are accountable to Ministers, who in turn are accountable to Parliament.

3. As a civil servant, you are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and are expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the Diplomatic Service and its core values: integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. In this Code:

'integrity' is putting the obligations of public service above your own personal interests;
'honesty' is being truthful and open;
'objectivity' is basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence; and
'impartiality' is acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well Governments of different political persuasions.

4. These core values support good government and ensure the achievement of the highest possible standards in all that the Diplomatic Service does. This in turn helps the Diplomatic Service to gain and retain the respect of Ministers, Parliament, the public and its customers.

5. This Code sets out the standards of behaviour expected of you. These are based on the core values which are set out in legislation.

Standards of behaviour

Integrity

6. You must:

fulfil your duties and obligations responsibly;
always act in a way that is professional and that deserves and retains the confidence of all those with whom you have dealings;
carry out your fiduciary obligations responsibly (that is make sure public money and other resources are used properly and efficiently);
deal with the public and their affairs fairly, efficiently, promptly, effectively and sensitively, to the best of your ability
keep accurate official records and handle information as openly as possible within the legal framework;
and
comply with the law and uphold the administration of justice.

7. You must not:

misuse your official position, for example by using information acquired in the course of your official duties to further your private interests or those of others;
accept gifts or hospitality or receive other benefits from anyone which might reasonably be seen to compromise your personal judgement or integrity; or
disclose official information without authority. This duty continues to apply after you leave the Civil Service.

Honesty

8. You must:

set out the facts and relevant issues truthfully, and correct any errors as soon as possible; and
use resources only for the authorised public purposes for which they are provided.

9. You must not:

deceive or knowingly mislead Ministers, Parliament or others; or
be influenced by improper pressures from others or the prospect of personal gain.

Objectivity

10. You must:

provide information and advice, including advice to Ministers, on the basis of the evidence, and accurately present the options and facts;
take decisions on the merits of the case; and
take due account of expert and professional advice.

11. You must not:

ignore inconvenient facts or relevant considerations when providing advice or making decisions; or
frustrate the implementation of policies once decisions are taken by declining to take, or abstaining from, action which flows from those decisions.

Impartiality

12. You must:

carry out your responsibilities in a way that is fair, just and equitable and reflects the Diplomatic Service commitment to equality and diversity.

13. You must not:

act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against particular individuals or interests.

Political Impartiality

14. You must:

serve the Government, whatever its political persuasion, to the best of your ability in a way which maintains political impartiality and is in line with the requirements of this Code, no matter what your own political beliefs are;
act in a way which deserves and retains the confidence of Ministers, while at the same time ensuring that you will be able to establish the same relationship with those whom you may be required to serve in some future Government; and
comply with any restrictions that have been laid down on your political activities.

15. You must not:

act in a way that is determined by party political considerations, or use official resources for party political purposes; or
allow your personal political views to determine any advice you give or your actions.

Rights and responsibilities

16. The FCO has a duty to make you aware of this Code and its values. If you believe that you are being required to act in a way which conflicts with this Code, the FCO must consider your concern, and make sure that you are not penalised for raising it.

17. If you have a concern, you should start by talking to your line manager or someone else in your line management chain. If for any reason you would find this difficult, you should raise the matter with one of the FCO's nominated officers who have been appointed to advise staff on the Code.

18. If you become aware of actions by others which you believe conflict with this Code you should report this to your line manager or someone else in your line management chain; alternatively you may wish to seek advice from your nominated officer. You should report evidence of criminal or unlawful activity to the police or other appropriate regulatory authorities. This Code does not cover HR management

issues.

19. If you have raised a matter covered in paragraphs 16 to 18, in accordance with the relevant procedures in FCO Guidance, HR Volume 1, Chapter 21, Annex 21F (the whistle blowing legislation (the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) may also apply in some circumstances), and do not receive what you consider to be a reasonable response, you may report the matter to the Civil Service Commission. The Commission will also consider taking a complaint direct. Its address is:

3rd Floor,
35 Great Smith Street,
London SW1P 3BQ.
Tel: 020 7276 2613
email: info@civilservicecommission.org.uk
Website: www.civilservicecommission.org.uk

If the matter cannot be resolved using the procedures set out above, and you feel you cannot carry out the instructions you have been given, you will have to resign from the Diplomatic Service.

20. This Code is part of the contractual relationship between you and your employer. It sets out the high standards of behaviour expected of you which follow from your position in public and national life as a civil servant. You can take pride in living up to these values.

DSR 2: General Principles of Conduct

1. You are expected at all times to respect the law. Against that background the following general principles govern your conduct as a member of the Diplomatic Service. They draw on standards expressed in the Diplomatic Service Code of Ethics at [DSR 1](#):

as a servant of the Crown you owe a duty of loyalty to the Crown as your employer. Since constitutionally the Crown acts on the advice of Ministers, who are answerable for their departments and agencies in Parliament, this duty is owed to the duly constituted Government;

you must not seek to frustrate the policies, decisions or actions of the Government. You must not take part in any political or public activity which compromises, or might be seen to compromise, your impartial service to the Government of the day. You must give honest and impartial advice to Ministers and must not deceive or knowingly mislead Ministers, Parliament or the public;

you must give your undivided allegiance to the State on all occasions when the State has a claim on your services;

you must not misuse your official position or information acquired in the course of your official duties to further your private interests or those of others, nor act so as to create a reasonable suspicion that you have done so;

you must not accept benefits of any kind from a third party which might compromise your personal judgement or integrity or give reasonable grounds for others to suppose you had been compromised;

you must ensure the proper, effective and efficient use of public money and ensure the safety of public assets;

you must deal with the affairs of the public sympathetically, efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration;

you must treat your colleagues with respect. You must not subject any member of staff to harassment, bullying or victimisation on any grounds, including sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, philosophical belief, marital status, or age;

you must not subordinate your duty to your private interests. You must not engage in any occupation or undertaking which might conflict with the interests of the Diplomatic Service or be inconsistent with your position as a member of it. Should a potential conflict of interest arise, you must declare your interest to senior management, who will determine how best to proceed;

you must abide by the FCO's security requirements, by health and safety requirements and by the various Codes of Practice that may govern specific areas of your work;

you must not fall short of the professional standard expected of members of the Diplomatic Service nor act in any way which might bring discredit upon it;

your behaviour, action or inaction must not significantly disrupt or damage the performance or reputation of the Diplomatic Service.

2. Guidance governing certain specific activities is contained in individual Diplomatic Service Regulations (e.g. relating to gifts, political activities). It is not possible to cover every activity. In circumstances not specifically mentioned you should use your discretion in accordance with the above principles and follow the guidance set out at paragraphs 13-15 of [DSR 1](#), seeking advice from your managers or HRDirect or FCO Services: HR Policy if you are in doubt.

DSR 14: Performance Management: Appraisals, Core Competence Framework and Assessment

Appraisals

1. Regular appraisal is central to the FCO's management of all its staff, to its system of performance assessment for all staff and to the selection process for jobs. Staff need to know what they are expected to do, how they are doing and how they could do better. All staff are entitled to fair, honest and timely performance appraisals. An individual's appraisal affects his/her pay and career. All staff should read carefully the Guide to Staff Appraisals on the [Appraisals](#) page of FCONet.
2. You must be appraised annually in accordance with the fixed reporting cycle for your Band on the relevant staff appraisal form. Your Reporting Officer is normally the person to whom you work directly. Your Countersigning Officer (often the person to whom your Reporting Officer works directly) is responsible for quality control and monitoring appraisal standards, including making sure your appraisal is completed on time.
3. The appraisal comments on your achievement of objectives, overall performance, core competence profile and development. Each appraisal must be written afresh without reference to earlier reports or appraisals. Your performance must be formally reviewed at least once during the appraisal period and the discussion recorded on the appraisal form.
4. If you are not performing effectively, you and your line manager has a responsibility to tackle this. This is important both to help you improve and to help with team performance and morale. The Performance Improvement Procedure has been separated from the appraisal process to allow for prompt and speedy action. These procedures do not apply to probationers. See FCO Guidance [HR Volume 1, Chapter 2](#) for details.
5. If you are not happy with your appraisal you can appeal on the grounds of non compliance with procedures or against the content. Information on appeals is set out in the [appraisal guidance](#) on FCONet.

Core Competence Framework

6. The FCO reviews its Core Competence Framework regularly to ensure that it reflects the behaviours required by staff to meet the objectives and challenges facing the FCO. In the current Framework there are separate [Core Competences](#) on FCONet for each Band. For each competence there is an overall definition supported by detailed performance indicators designed to help staff to demonstrate the behaviour and standards of performance required at each level.

Assessment

7. The FCO operates a written assessment scheme for progression from A1 to A2 and four promotion schemes based on its Core Competence Framework: the From A to B (FAB) Promotion Scheme, the Band B-C ADC, the Band C-D ADC and the Band D-SMS ADC. See also [DSR 15](#).

Further details of the appraisal process and the assessment systems are set out in [FCO Guidance HR Volume 1, HR Management, Chapters 3 and 4](#).

DSR 27: Misconduct

1. The misconduct procedure, which is set out in full in [FCO Guidance HR Volume 1, HR Management, Chapter 22](#), governs processes to be followed if it is alleged that by your behaviour you have committed a disciplinary offence.
2. [DSR 2](#) sets out the general principles which should govern your conduct as a member of the Diplomatic Service. Failure to follow these principles is likely to lead to disciplinary action. Other Regulations govern conduct in specific matters. More detailed guidance on conduct is set out in [FCO Guidance HR Volume 1, HR Management, Chapter 21](#).
3. Any allegation of misconduct made against you should be investigated as fully as possible by your countersigning officer or by another member of staff appointed for the purpose before disciplinary procedures are invoked. If the investigation shows that there is a case for you to answer, the formal Misconduct Procedure starts at the relevant stage (the stages are set out in [FCO Guidance HR Volume 1, HR Management, Chapter 22](#)). You will be required to attend a disciplinary interview or, in cases of alleged gross misconduct, a hearing before a senior member of staff or a disciplinary panel. You are entitled to appeal against any penalty imposed at any stage of the procedure. You have a statutory right to be accompanied at any disciplinary interview or hearing by a work colleague or a trade union representative.
4. If it appears that a criminal offence may have been committed, HR Directorate will normally seek the advice of the Crown Prosecution Service on whether or not criminal proceedings should be instigated. If a case is referred to the Crown Prosecution Service or if criminal proceedings are already under way, disciplinary proceedings under this Regulation may be suspended but will not necessarily be so, until the criminal proceedings are concluded.