



Ministry of Defence

Headquarters Joint Force Development
Defence Academy of the UK
Shrivenham
Swindon SN6 8LA
United Kingdom

Ref: FOI2021/08195

E-mail: JFD-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk

Holger Loeher
request-777682-fb861a4b@whatdotheyknow.com

13th August 2021

Dear Mr Loeher,

Thank you for your email of 27 July 2021 in which you requested the following information:

"I'm requesting the „staff officers' handbook“ from 1961 if available. PDF would be great."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

I am writing to confirm that the MOD holds information on the subject you have requested. Under the Appropriate Limit and Fees Regulations public authorities are able to aggregate two or more requests where they relate to any extent, to the same or similar information, provided certain conditions are met. These are where the FOI requests:

- are received within any period of 60 consecutive working days; and,
- are made by one person, or by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign.

Under Section 12(4) of the FOI Act, provided these conditions are met, the Department is permitted to regard the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them for the purpose of considering whether complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

Having received two previous requests for editions of the Staff Officer Handbook (FOI2021/04866 and FOI2021/06098) from you in the 60 working days prior to receipt of this request, we are therefore applying exemption 12(4) to your requests for information about editions the Staff Officer Handbook.

It has been estimated that the cost of complying with your requests aggregated under the Fees Regulations, as explained above, would exceed the appropriate limit and therefore under the terms of Section 12 of the Act, we are not obliged to comply. The appropriate limit is specified in regulations and for central government this is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending three and a half working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting it.

The MOD may be able to provide information in response to future requests on this subject, however, I should explain that from 27 July 2021 any new additional requests, for information pertaining to editions of the Staff Officer Handbook, made within 60 working days will also be aggregated with those requests listed in this letter, and MOD would not be obliged to respond. In order to avoid engaging those exemptions provided for at Section 12(4) we would suggest any future requests on this subject are limited to one per 60 working day period. Under Section 16 (advice and assistance) you may find it helpful to note that 60 working days will have elapsed on 20th October 2021.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, if you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

JFD Secretariat