



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: PROFESSOR VERNON GIBSON

The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Professor Gibson, former Chief Scientific Adviser at the Ministry of Defence, who proposes to take up a role with the University of Manchester.

Professor Gibson was the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) at the MOD from 2 July 2012 to 29 June 2016 (which was also his last day in Crown service).

Professor Gibson proposes to become an Adviser to the President and Vice Chancellor of Manchester University, Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell. This role is paid and part-time, with a time commitment of one day per week.

The Committee took into account that Professor Gibson confirmed he had no official contact with his prospective employer whilst he was in office, has no commercial information which could unfairly benefit the University, and that contact with Government is unlikely in his role.

The Committee also considered the MOD's view on this application which had no concerns about this appointment; subject to imposing a ban on lobbying Government.

Taking into account all of the above, the Committee's advice to the Secretary of State is that, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the appointment should be subject to the following conditions:

- he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in Crown service; and
- for two years from his last day in service, he should not become personally involved

in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of the University of Manchester or its students, or make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in Government and/or Crown service to influence policy or secure funding on behalf of the University of Manchester or its students.

By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available. Applicants are also reminded that they may be subject to other duties of confidentiality, whether under the Official Secrets Act, the Civil Service Code, or otherwise.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/Minister "should not engage in communication with Government (Ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a Government decision, policy or contract award/grant in relation to their own interests or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office.

I should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Professor Gibson takes up this position, or if it is announced that he will do so (I enclose a form for this purpose). We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments which have not been taken up or announced, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether he had complied with the Rules.

I should also be grateful if you would ask that Professor Gibson informs us if he proposes to extend or otherwise change the nature of his role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for him to make a fresh application.

Once these appointments have been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website and include the main details of the application, together with the Advisory Committee's advice, in the regularly updated consolidated list on our website and in the next annual report.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Parkington
Committee Secretariat