



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

G/8 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.gov.uk/acoba>

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Dr Philip John Rycroft CB

The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Dr Philip Rycroft CB, former Permanent Secretary at the Department for Exiting the EU (DExEU), on taking up a role with The University of Cambridge

Dr Rycroft's last day in Crown service was 29 March 2019. As Permanent Secretary, he had responsibility for leading the department in all its work on the Government's preparations for Brexit (DExEU is responsible for the negotiations to leave the EU and establishing the future relationship between the UK and EU). Dr Rycroft was previously Second Permanent Secretary at the DExEU from March to October 2017, and in both roles, he has maintained his role as Second Permanent Secretary at the UK Governance Group, Cabinet Office where he led the group, responsible for constitutional and devolution issues; a role he first took up in 2015).

Appointment Details

Dr Rycroft intends to take up a post as a Visiting Fellow at Cambridge University. He described his appointment as a base from which he will pursue his academic interests in constitution and devolution; and will work closely with the Bennett Institute for Public Policy and the Department of Politics and International Studies. This is a part-time and unpaid role set to involve 1 day of work per week.

Dr Rycroft said this post arose through contacts he developed through his knowledge of the field and research he undertook in the UK Governance group. As such he did not apply for an advertised post. He has informed the Committee this appointment is likely to involve contact with his former department or government more widely - through occasional meetings and possible delivery of talks/training to Civil Servants. Further, he expects former colleagues will be interested in the work he does, just as they are interested in the work of other academics in the field. This will be a non-exclusive arrangement; and he is also likely to work closely with academics from other universities.

Dr Rycroft informed the Committee he had previous contact with Cambridge University by way of drawing on the work of academics from their institution and other universities. His contact with them involved occasional meetings and attendance at lectures, however he has not been involved in the award grants to Cambridge, or any other university; neither did he have responsibility for anyone who had. Further, Cambridge University has not been involved in the development of departmental policy or regulatory work.

Dr Rycroft also stated he had contact with competitors of his prospective employer in the course of his duties as head of the UK Governance Group. In addition, he stated he did not have access to any commercially sensitive information about competitors of his prospective employer.

The Director General of Propriety and Ethics at the Cabinet Office countersigned this application. The Department confirmed the information Dr Rycroft provided in his application, including his contact with the university and other universities as Head of the UK Governance Group and highlighted he was not responsible for and was not involved in grant making decisions.

The Department stated he would have been privy to sensitive information on constitution and development issues and highlighted this is something he should be mindful of. The Department also acknowledged that the role is expected to engage with Government, and whilst it noted Dr Rycroft is aware of his obligations, suggested the ban on lobbying government be made clear to him.

The Committee's Consideration

The Committee noted Dr Rycroft had some interaction with Cambridge University by way of occasional meetings and attendance at lectures, however this is considered to be in line with his official responsibilities within the UK Governance group. Additionally, both Dr Rycroft and the department confirmed he had no involvement in any grant making decisions that would have affected the University and this is an unpaid appointment. As such, the Committee considered the risk he was offered the role as a reward is low.

The Committee noted that given his seniority, it could be perceived Dr Rycroft could offer the university an unfair advantage in relation to information gained while in post, specifically in relation to devolution and constitutional matters. However, a number of months have passed since he left office and the usual ban on using privileged information should still appropriately mitigate this.

The Committee noted that given his seniority, he would have had access to privileged information on devolution and constitutional matters which could provide the university with an unfair advantage over competitors. However, a number of months have passed since he left office and he is subject to a ban on the use of privileged information which appropriately mitigates this risk.

The Committee also considered the description of the contact that Dr Rycroft described he might have with government. He noted that dealings might include occasional meetings; possible training and also delivery of talks. The Committee did not consider such contact would be improper in so far as the contact is aligned to his role as a visiting fellow. However, as the conditions below makes it clear, he must not lobby or use his contacts to the unfair advantage of the university.

Under the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Prime Minister accepted the Committee's advice that this appointment with The University of Edinburgh should be subject to the following conditions:

- he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in Crown service;
- for two years from his last day in office he should not undertake any work with The University of Cambridge that involves providing advice on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of a bid with, or contract relating directly to the work of, the UK Government; and
- for two years from his last day of service he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of The University of Cambridge its subsidiaries partners or clients. This would not prevent him from having routine contact with the UK Government on academic matters in line with his role as a Visiting Fellow; but it would prevent him from making use, directly or indirectly, of his Government and/or Crown Service contacts to influence policy or secure business or funding on behalf of The University of Cambridge or any of its institutes or departments

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 inform us as soon as Dr Rycroft takes up employment with this organisation, or if it is announced that Dr Rycroft will do so, either by returning the enclosed form or by emailing the office at the above address. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release

information about appointments that have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether Dr Philip Rycroft CB has complied with the Rules.

Once the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

Tiffany Amusu
Committee Secretariat