



**OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS**  
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**BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Jonathan Slater, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education May 2016 - August 2020**

1. Jonathan Slater, former Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education (DfE) has sought advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the Government's Business Appointments Rules for Former Crown servants (the Rules) on an appointment he wants to take up with Sheffield Hallam University (Sheffield Hallam) as a Governor. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in Annex A.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the Government. Under the Rules, the Committee's remit is to consider the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during time in office, alongside the information and influence a former Minister may offer Sheffield Hallam University.
3. The Rules set out that Crown servants must abide by the Committee's advice. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment. Former Crown servants are expected to uphold the highest standards of propriety and act in accordance with the 7 Principles of Public Life.

The Committee's advice

4. When considering this application, the Committee<sup>1</sup> took into account this role as Governor is unpaid<sup>2</sup>. Generally, the Committee's experience is that the risks related to unpaid roles are limited. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the Government by considering the real and perceived risks associated with former Crown servants using privileged access to contacts and information to the benefit of themselves or those they represent; and to mitigate the risks that individuals may make decisions or take action in office to in expectation of rewards, on leaving government. These risks are significantly limited in unpaid cases due to the lack of

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<sup>1</sup> This application for advice was considered by Jonathan Baume; Andrew Cumpsty; Sarah de Gay; Isabel Doverty; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Richard Thomas; Mike Weir; Lord Larry Whitty. Dr Susan Liautaud was absent.

<sup>2</sup> By unpaid the Committee means that no remuneration of any kind is received for the role. Applicants must declare where it is agreed or anticipated they may receive remuneration or some other compensation at some stage in the future.

financial gain to the individual.

5. The Committee took into account that Mr Slater met with the University while in office, as part of a standard visit to the University to help him understand the sector. He stated there was nothing of a regulatory or grant-awarding nature about the visit and he did not give a speech. The Committee noted he made decisions which would affect the universities sector as a whole, not Sheffield Hallam individually, nor did he make any decisions in awarding this funding to Sheffield Hallam.

6. The Committee noted that this proposed role overlaps with Mr Slater's time in office. Therefore, there could be a perceived risk he had access to relevant privileged information and knowledge, which could unfairly benefit Sheffield Hallam. However, the unpaid nature of this appointment limits the real and perceived risk of Mr Slater making improper use of information they had access to while in office for their personal benefit. Further, 7 months have passed since Mr Slater was in office, and he has an ongoing duty of confidentiality.

7. As above the Committee recognised that the risks in this unpaid appointment are limited. The Committee did not consider this appointment raises any particular proprietary concerns under the Government's Business Appointment Rules. The standard conditions below, preventing him from drawing on his privileged information and using his contacts to the unfair advantage of their new employer, will sufficiently mitigate the risks in this case.

8. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with Sheffield Hallam University 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;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government or its Arms' Length Bodies on behalf of Sheffield Hallam University (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in the Government and/or Crown service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage of the Sheffield Hallam University (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); and
- for two years from his last day in Crown service he should not undertake any work with the Sheffield Hallam University and all its constituent parts (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) 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 or its Arms' Length Bodies.

9. Mr Slater must inform us as soon as he takes up employment with this organisation(s), or if it is announced that he will do so and we will publish this letter on our website.

10. Any failure to do so may lead to a false assumption being made about whether they have complied with the Rules.

11. Mr Slater must inform us if they propose to extend or otherwise change the nature of their role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for them to make a fresh application.

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

Yours sincerely

Sam Lynch  
**Committee Secretariat**  
**Annex A - Material information**

#### The role

1. Mr Slater described this role as joining the Board of Governors for Sheffield Hallam University (Sheffield Hallam). Sheffield Hallam is an English university with currently 33,830 students enrolled. It is the 11th largest in the UK. Jonathan Slater (JS) stated that the Board has overall responsibility for determining the educational character and mission of the University, and for its efficient and effective use of resources, among other things. He stated this role will not involve contact with central government

#### Dealings in office

2. Mr Slater said he was involved in the development of departmental policy on higher education, and in the development of the regulation of higher education. He stated none of this featured Sheffield Hallam in particular, as it was generic policy development for the whole sector.

3. Mr Slater said he visited Sheffield Hallam once as Permanent Secretary. The purpose of his visit was to help him understand the sector, and was once of a large number of such visits to universities and colleges across the country. There was nothing of a regulatory or grant-awarding nature about the visit. He didn't give a speech. He stated he had no access to sensitive commercial information.

#### 4. Department Assessment

5. The Cabinet Office and Department for Education (DfE) stated that Mr Slater's involvement in policy development was for the whole sector rather than being focused on Sheffield Hallam or any of its competitors. The departments noted the applicant is subject to an ongoing duty of confidentiality in relation to his time as a Civil Servant. It stated his contact with Sheffield Hallam was as he described it.

6. The departments had no concerns with regards to this application, noting standard conditions applied that prevent Mr Slater from sharing privileged information or lobbying the Government.