



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

G/08 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

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

June 2020

BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: MR CIARAN MARTIN, CB

1. The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Mr Ciaran Martin, Chief Executive at National Cyber Security Centre, part of GCHQ, on taking up an appointment with Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford.
2. Mr Martin's last day in post and service will be 31 August 2020. He intends to take up this appointment once he has left Crown service.

Application details

3. Mr Martin sought the Committee's advice on taking up a post with the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford as a Senior Fellow/Professor of Practice. The website said Blavatnik School of Government (BSG) mission is to '*...inspire and support better government and public policy around the world*'. It states it is a global school committed to improving the quality of government and public policymaking worldwide, through three routes:
 - Teaching current and future leaders: our education combines deep expertise with practical skills, equipping individuals to tackle this century's most pressing policy challenges.
 - Research with impact: our independent, evidence-based research addresses real-life policy needs, from improving education to reducing corruption.
 - Engagement with governments and practitioners: we use our convening power to bring people together across disciplines and sectors to share knowledge, exchange ideas and create solutions.
4. In this role he will combine teaching (mostly graduate students, of whom a minority are British, as BSG is a graduate college with a global intake, combined with a bit of undergraduate teaching in the wider university), research, and engagement events. It is not in his job description to raise money for the university or college. He will teach and research cyber security and the interaction between technology and public policy more broadly, and a '*...little bit of wider public management*'. He states he will look beyond the UK and have a global focus. He said his role is to:
 - Develop a strand on 'technology and public policy' for the masters of public policy at the school
 - Develop a practical course for students (majority non-British) on what leaders need to know about cyber security

- Teach both course and teach more widely at the University and research and publish on these topics
 - Build up a capability within this world - renowned institute on technology and public policy
5. He does not expect this role to involve contact in government in a commercial sense or lobbying for funding. However, he did say he could envisage asking former colleagues to speak at events or asking former colleagues to check some research insofar as it is relevant to HMG.
 6. Mr Martin stated as a leading authority on public policy, the Blavatnik School has occasionally asked him for help and he has happily given it, subject to time constraints, as he would all academic institutes. He can think of 3 meetings he has:
 - 2018, at the request of Calum Miller, he gave a talk to 30 Masters students at the school on cyber security
 - 2019 he gave a phone interview to an academic from Blavatnik School researching 5G cyber security. He stated he has done similar work with other universities and think tanks
 - 2020 he attended a Blavatnik School seminar and dinner in support of Sir Oliver Robbin's work as a Heywood fellow.

He said more generally Oxford University as a whole is one of the 17 UK Universities formally accredited by the NCSC as a centre of excellence in cyber security.

7. He also told the Committee he had no dealings with relevant policy; nor was he involved in awarding grants or contracts to the University of Oxford. He did confirm that he spoke openly to researchers from many academic institutes. He also told the Committee that the NCSC formally accredits universities as 'Academic Centres of Excellence in cyber security'. He stated Oxford is one but attained this accreditation before his hire at GCHQ and he plays no role in the selection assessment process.
8. GCHQ confirmed the above and also said Mr Martin has been central to formulation of the UK's National cyber policy. However it said that this is all a matter of public record and as such it does not think there are concerns of 'unfair advantage' relating to this post. The department also confirmed Blavatnik School is one of a wide range of academic institutes with which GCHQ/NCSC have occasional contact. It said it is scrupulous in making sure all are treated fairly and with transparency. It said there is *'no issues, influence or perception this post is a reward'*

The Committee's Consideration

9. The Committee¹ noted the only interaction Mr Martin had with the University was through occasional talks or interviews and attendance at events, this contact was in line with his official responsibilities. Additionally, the Committee noted he did not make any decisions which affected the university and both Mr Martin and the department confirmed he had no involvement in 'Certificate of Excellence' decisions. There is nothing to suggest he made any decisions whilst in office with the expectation of a future role, as such the risk of this appointment being seen as a reward for decisions taken in office is low.
10. The Committee considered that by virtue of his role, as Chief Executive at National Cyber Security Centre, it could be perceived he could offer the university an unfair

¹ This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Jonathan Baume; Lord Larry Whitty; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Terence Jagger; Dr Susan Liautaud; Richard Thomas and John Wood.

advantage over competitors should, for instance, they use such information in lectures or academic papers. This could give the University an unfair advantage over their competitors should such inside knowledge attract more students or outside business relationships for the university. Therefore, the Committee would draw his attention to the ban on using privileged information.

11. The Committee also noted given his seniority he could be seen to have influence and a network of contacts within Government. This could be perceived to offer an unfair advantage to the University should he become involved in discussions or negotiations on funding, bids and contracts. Therefore, the lobbying ban imposed below makes clear that it would be inappropriate for him to use his contacts across the UK Government to the unfair advantage of Oxford University. The Committee would also like to draw his attention to the ban on providing advice on the terms, a bid or contract relating directly to the work of the UK Government, including with regard to funding. However, the Committee noted this is not Mr Martin's intention as Fellow/Professor of Practice and this restriction is in keeping with his role as described.
12. The Committee considered Mr Martin proposed contact with his former colleagues/department which he describes as asking them to speak at events and to check research insofar as it is relevant to HMG. The Committee recognised that Oxford University's status as a centre of excellence for cyber security, its standing and its known link with HMG, therefore the risk that Mr Martin would provide an unfair advantage through this contact is low. Further it noted the nature of the work is research and aligned with HMG policy, the work is to provide the best possible information for the sector. In the circumstances it did not consider this proposed contact would be improper. However, the Committee would draw Mr Martin's attention to the lobbying ban imposed below, which makes it clear he should not use his contacts in government to the unfair advantage of Oxford University.
13. Under the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Prime Minister accepted the Committee's advice that this application with **Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford** 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 Crown service, he should not provide advice to Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford or its clients on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of, a bid with, or contract relating directly to the work of the Government including the UK Security and Intelligence Agencies; and
 - for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in the Government and/or Ministerial contacts to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).
14. 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 or otherwise.

15. 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."
16. I should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Mr Martin takes up this work, or if it is announced that he will do so. 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 Mr Martin had complied with the Rules.
17. I should also be grateful if you would inform us if Mr Martin proposes to extend or otherwise change the nature of his role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to make a fresh application.
18. Once this 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.

Yours Sincerely,

Isabella Wynn
Committee Secretariat