



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS
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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 Queen's University, Belfast.

2. Mr Martin's last day in post and service was 31 August 2020. He intends to take up this appointment in October 2020.

Application details

3. Mr Martin sought the Committee's advice on taking up a post with Queen's University, Belfast - The Centre for Secure Information Technologies (Queen's University), as a Senior Adviser. Queen's University is a public research Russell Group University in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Mr Martin stated the University '*is one of the UK's best for cyber security and probably the best for the cyber security of hardware*'. It is also one of 17 British Universities accredited by GCHQ as an academic centre of excellence and one of four research institutes.

4. Mr Martin stated this is a part-time role, involving 6-10 days of work per year. As a Senior Adviser, his role will be to:

- Provide seminars and teaching
- Chair the university's annual conference
- Sit on the strategy board

5. He does not expect this role to involve contact with the government.

6. Mr Martin stated that the university was accredited by GCHQ's academic centre of excellence in 2012, prior to joining the department. As it is accredited by GCHQ, he has met with the centre on '*several occasions and has championed its groundbreaking work*', adding that as head of the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) he dealt with a range of British universities, particularly the 17 centres of excellence.

7. Mr Martin confirmed he had no involvement in policy decisions or developments affecting the university and highlighted that with regard to the 17 centres of excellence, the department dealt with them '*objectively and without favour*' and confirmed that ongoing assessments and new applications for centres of excellence status are assessed objectively.

Further this would have been carried out by one of his teams, adding he has '*never personally adjudicated or reviewed any application*'. He also stated no involvement in commercial or contractual decisions regarding the university.

8. GCHQ confirmed the above, stated it sees no risk of perception of unfair advantage amongst competitors or commercial partners or as a reward for any decisions made and stated no issue with this application.

The Committee's Consideration

9. The Committee¹ noted Mr Martin had official contact with the University by way of visits, in line with his official responsibilities. Additionally, the Committee noted he did not make any decisions with regard to the university, as he and the department confirmed. 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 noted 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 advantage over competitors should, in relation to access to information not in the public domain within lectures or meetings. The department had no concerns in this regard and the Committee would draw his attention to the conditions below which prevent him from using privileged information.

11. The Committee also noted his network of contacts within Government could be perceived to offer an unfair advantage to the university should he become involved in discussions or negotiations on funding, bids and contracts. The lobbying ban below makes clear that it would be inappropriate for him to use his contacts across the UK Government to the unfair advantage of Queen's 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 Senior Adviser and this restriction is in keeping with his role as described.

12. Under the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Prime Minister accepted the Committee's advice that this application with **Queen's University, Belfast** 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 Queen's University, Belfast 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 Queen's University, Belfast (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in the Government and/or Whitehall contacts

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

to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Queen's University, Belfast (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).

13. 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.

14. 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."

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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,

Andrea Benjamin
Committee Secretariat