



## **OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS**

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**BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS APPLICATION FOR ADVICE: The Rt Hon Chloe Smith MP, former Secretary of State for the Department of Science, Innovation, and Technology and previously Secretary of State and Minister of State for the Department for Work and Pensions. Unpaid appointment with the University of East Anglia.**

1. You sought advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the Government's Business Appointments Rules for former Ministers (the Rules) on an unpaid role you wish to take up with the University of East Anglia (UEA) as an Honorary Fellow.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. The Committee has considered the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during your time in office, alongside the information and influence you may offer UEA. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex.
3. The Committee's advice is not an endorsement of the appointment - it imposes a number of conditions to mitigate the potential risks to the government associated with the appointment under the Rules.
4. The Ministerial Code sets out that ministers must abide by the Committee's advice. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment. Former ministers of the Crown, and Members of Parliament, are expected to uphold the highest standards of propriety and act in accordance with the 7 Principles of Public Life.

## The Committee's advice

5. When considering this application, the Committee<sup>1</sup> took into account this role as a Honorary Fellow of UEA 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 ministers joining outside organisations. Those risks include: using privileged access to contacts and information to the benefit of themselves or those they represent. The Rules also seek 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 financial gain to the individual.
6. While you did meet with the university while in office and DWP said UEA received Access to Work payments<sup>3</sup>. DSIT, DWP, and the Cabinet Office, and confirmed you had no involvement in decisions specifically affecting UEA. Your former departments had no concerns about you taking up this appointment.
7. Though your role at the university will not involve any lobbying of government, you noted the university may be relevant to your constituency work. As a Member of Parliament your activity and any representations is governed by the House of Commons Code of Conduct. This includes transparency around your interests, including as an honorary fellow at the university.
8. The Committee did not consider this appointment raises any particular proprietary concerns under the government's Business Appointment Rules. While there are inherent risks associated with your access to sensitive information and contacts, the standard conditions below will sufficiently mitigate this case.
9. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with the **University of East Anglia** be subject to the following conditions:

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<sup>1</sup> This application for advice was considered by: Sarah de Gay; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Mike Weir; Andrew Cumpsty; and Isabel Doverty. The Baroness Jones of Whitchurch was unavailable.

<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.

<sup>3</sup> Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support programme that aims to help more disabled people start or stay in work.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-factsheet/access-to-work-factsheet-for-customers>

- a waiting period of three months from your last day in ministerial office;
- you should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you from your time in ministerial office;
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK government or its arms' length bodies on behalf of University of East Anglia (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should you make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in the government and/or Crown service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage University of East Anglia (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); and
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office you should not undertake any work with University of East Anglia (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.

10. The advice and the conditions under the government's Business Appointment Rules relate to your previous roles in government only; they are separate to rules administered by other bodies such as the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists or the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to understand any other rules and regulations they may be subject to in parallel with this Committee's advice.

11. 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.

12. 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." This Rule is separate and not a replacement for the Rules in the House.

13. You must inform us as soon as you take up employment with this organisation(s), or if it is announced that you will do so. Please also inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change the nature of your role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to make a fresh application.
14. 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.

The Rt Hon Lord Eric Pickles

## **Annex - Material information**

### The role

1. You seek to join the University of East Anglia in an unpaid, part-time role as a Honorary Fellow.
2. You said this is a non-paid honorary role. The role includes primarily delivering guest lectures to university students. She said it may also involve some networking with staff at the university. This role involves no contact with government. Separately, as a constituency MP you may have contact with the government in respect of the University of East Anglia.

### Dealings in office

3. You said while Secretary of State for DSIT (maternity cover), you agreed with the permanent secretary on appropriate barriers to the department's work-regarding the University of East Anglia.
4. You said while Secretary of State for Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) she gave a guest lecture (October 2021) which drew on support from officials in drafting and logistics. You also said while you were Minister for the Constitution, responsible for electoral policy, you interacted formally from time to time with a professor of political science and public policy at the University.

### Department Assessment

5. The DWP, Cabinet Office, DSIT confirmed the details you provided. DWP said it had given UEA Access to Work payments to help employees into work, but

confirmed you had no involvement in this and there have been no grants or funding.

6. DWP, Cabinet Office, and DSIT said it has no concerns about this appointment.