

Exception Request-Appointment at SCS Pay Band 2 and above

This form should be used where you want to make an appointment to the Civil Service using an exception in the Recruitment Principles at Senior Civil Service Pay Band 2 or above.



1. Department Making the Request

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

2. Department Contact Details

Name: Helen Mills

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

3. Full Name, Title of Role and Grade of the Individual

Name: Emily Middleton

Title of Role: Director General - Digital Centre

Grade: SCS PB3

4. a) Which exception are you applying for (1-10)?
b) If a secondment is requested, please provide details of the employer.

a) Exception 4: Highly specialist skills - Departments may appoint people with specialist skills not available within the Civil Service for up to two years where a full open competition is judged unlikely to secure suitable appointees within the required timescale.

5. a) How long is the exception required for (years and months)?
b) What are the proposed start and end dates?

a) Up to 2 years from the date of the appointment or until we have greater certainty on the overall scope and strategy for the digital centre of government. At which point we will compete the role via fair and open competition.

b) Subject to approvals, July 2024 – July 2026

6. Why is this exception required?

This is a new priority role within the department, created/required off the back of Machinery of Government changes, and needs to be filled immediately. The expectations for the role now are likely to look different from the expectations from the role in 2 years. The recruitment exception is therefore required so the department can fill the role quickly and with the required specialist skills to meet government priorities.

The role is large and complex, and expectations are high. The remit and content is

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ambitious and the post holder will be expected to take a revolutionary approach to designing the digital centre. The role remit will extend across existing organisational boundaries and be focused on maximising impact for citizens, in line with DSITs focus on delivery. The role should also look to establish a practical, deliverable plan with clear early milestones and actionable plans for money and resourcing, not just a long-term vision or a set of ambitions identified.

It is considered unlikely that this role fits within the standard Civil Service skill set at the level of Director General, the rationale for this is further detailed in section 9.

7. How did you find and select them for this role?

Emily currently works for Public Digital as Partner having been recruited by the former leaders of the UK's Government Digital Service to their consultancy.

Emily won the mandate to establish and scale an international practice. Within this role Emily has enabled national and subnational governments in Europe, Africa, Asia and Central America to set up and scale transformative digital units, collaborate across departmental silos, prioritise, accelerate delivery, attract and retain tech talent and reform public procurement of IT.

Having the scope of skill and expertise in this field makes Emily the ideal individual to develop the scope and strategy for the Digital Centre of Government.

Internal discussions have identified Emily and her skill set to be a strong fit for the role and its early requirements. Emily has also undertaken an informal discussion with SoS and Perm Sec to ensure her skills and experience are the right fit.

8. Please provide a brief description of the person's proposed role.

The full remit and scope of the requirement for the new Director General is being worked on at pace, we therefore expect the role to mould and flex to the needs of the departmental priorities, the full scope of this will gain clarity as the Machinery of Government progresses and conversations with the new government continue.

Early discussions indicate the role will be expected to achieve the following:

Developing the overall scope and strategy for the digital centre of government. Within this, a key element to work on will be delineating what parts of the public sector are in and out of the digital remit's scope.

The role will decide what projects should be prioritised for the digital centre and what the roadmap looks like over the first few years. Importantly and linked to this, the role will lead on the funding required to deliver our digital ambition, ensuring

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this is linked into already existing spending review preparation activities? How much should we define now vs how much should we wait to know more?

In addition, the role will be leading decisions regarding what functions and authorities the digital centre of government needs to have ownership and/or oversight over. For example, digital procurement, appointment of digital professionals, and potential working with HMT on digital expenditure across government.

This role will also lead the work which needs to be undertaken on how the digital centre measures its effectiveness. For example, should measures of simplification of the technology landscape and environmental impact be added to those for legacy risk and digital intensity of public services.

The role will be required to determine what organisational structure will best serve the digital centre of government. Linked to this, decisions will be made by this role on how the key functions and disciplines across government should be organised to support the mission, in recognition of the boundaries between data, digital and AI.

The Director General position will be a key figure in deciding what capabilities are needed and how they should be sourced, in recognition of VfM and Civil Service recruitment principles.

This role will be key to building relationships within and outside of the civil service, specifically with other departments and suppliers. The role should seek to engage, energise and excite colleagues across DSIT and the wider government as well as the full range of external stakeholders. On this basis the role requires an individual with strong digital capability to engage leaders in our vision and get buy-in and commitment so that the organisation can secure the necessary approvals and funding quickly, and launch into a supportive environment

9. a) Why can't you appoint someone permanently or on a fixed term contract, on merit on the basis of fair and open competition to fill this role?
b) Why can't you fill this role with an existing member of staff?
c) What succession plans are in place for when the exception comes to an end?

- a) It will be very difficult to successfully recruit externally at this point because potential candidates are likely to be deterred by the immaturity and uncertainty of the digital portfolio, which is a newly created/transferred unit within the department. In addition, DG pay levels even at the highest end of spectrum are significantly lower than typical Digital Industry remuneration.
- b) In addition to attraction, we do not consider that the role fits with the usual Civil Service skillset. The role requires a leader who can immediately lead within a key

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and complex organisational structure post Machinery of Government. The area will have a great deal of attention from senior stakeholders, already being badged as a key No10 priority.

- c) Once the new Digital Centre for government is scoped, designed and implemented we would seek to advertise through fair and open competition. It is likely that the ability to attract the caliber of candidate required to continue this work will be possible once the centre is established.

Please submit completed forms to info@csc.gov.uk clearly stating in the subject line that is a exception request. Please note that the Commission aims to respond to requests within 5 working days once all information required has been received.