



Department  
for Education

## Commercial Practitioner – Category Manager

**Closing date:** 21 March 2019

**Department for Education**

**Business Area:** Commercial Directorate, Operations Group

**Grade:** SEO

**Salary:** 35,497 - 39,114

**Working pattern:** Flexible working, Full-time, Job share, Part-time

**Contract type:** Permanent

**Number of posts:** Multiple

**Hours:** 37

**Location:**

Sheffield, Darlington, Manchester, Coventry

### About the job:

At the Department for Education, we're responsible for providing children and young people with the lifelong learning they deserve. It's a passion that's fuelling positive change as we aim to build a world-class commercial directorate and enhance our workforce with fresh talent. With a commercial category spend of £6.4bn, we're working on complex, high-value contracts that will create tangible results for schools, colleges, universities and young people across the country. Perhaps you'll have the skills and ambition we need to join us.

### Who we are

The Department for Education is responsible for education, children's services, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England, and equalities. We work to achieve a highly educated society in which opportunity is equal for all, no matter what their background or family circumstances.

Operations Group is responsible for the main corporate functions of the department including: analysis, commercial, data, estates and security, finance, human resources, international education, Operations and Delivery Unit, technology and the governance and relationship standards with the DfE's public bodies. Its role is to support the business to deliver ministerial priorities by ensuring that:

- the department is sufficiently resourced (people, data / information, finance, IT) and organised right to deliver its business objectives; and
- efficient and effective systems and processes, driven by customer needs, underpin our services.

**Commercial Directorate**



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This leadership position is based within the Department's commercial function, which has a crucial role in delivering the Departmental priority of making every pound of our funding count. Approximately £23.5bn of the Department's expenditure is through commercial arrangements so we have a great responsibility to achieve best value, choice and efficiency.

We have a bold ambition to be the best commercial function in government. To achieve this we are transforming the way in which we deliver a commercial service, moving to direct leadership and delivery of the Department's most complex and strategic commercial projects through the implementation of end-to-end Category Management. This will deliver improved commercial outcomes, drive value for money, embed a stronger commercial focus, reduce commercial risk and improve commercial capability across the Department.

To be the best commercial function in government we need to recruit the best people.

The commercial function operates five key categories with responsibility for a broad portfolio of activity spanning policy development and operational delivery. You could be placed in any one of these categories.

The Social Care, Mobility and Disadvantage category manages multi million pound contracts with a range of specialist children's services providers and charities in the areas of social work reform, adoption, fostering, child protection, Local Authority children's services interventions, special educational needs and supporting disadvantaged children.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is responsible for £58 billion of funding for the education and training sector for children, young people and adults. The ESFA also regulates academies, FE colleges, employers and training providers, intervening where there is risk of failure or where there is evidence of mismanagement of public funds.

The ESFA category team are responsible for the delivery of major projects and operate key services in the education and skills sector, such as the National Careers Service and the National Apprenticeship Service. The significant scale and value of these projects presents unique commercial challenges to ensure that children, young people, adults receive world leading education, apprenticeships and training.

The Higher Education and Further Education category brings together the key policy areas of post-Sixteen education including the delivery of technical education reform and reform of apprenticeships. Recently the commercial team have supported the delivery of the National Careers Service, European Social Fund and Institutes of Technology exercises.

The Early Years and Schools category supports the delivery of curriculum development, school workforce capacity and capability, and other measures to grow system capacity, leadership and governance. The category team are currently working with the Standards and Testing Agency to secure the development and operational delivery of national statutory testing and assessment.

The Operations category is responsible for the main corporate functions within the department including ICT Hardware, Software (Support & Solutions), Digital Services and professional services. Recently, the team have completed the delivery of the department's Technology Modernisation programme – leading the way across government.

### **The Role:**



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As a Commercial Practitioner Category Manager you will lead the end-to-end procurement process and manage projects for some of the department's most complex, sensitive and high-risk commercial projects, delivering the best possible commercial outcomes for children, young people and the education system.

This is an exciting time to join Commercial at the Department for Education as we are transforming the way we deliver a commercial service, moving to direct leadership and delivery of the Department's most complex and strategic commercial projects through the implementation of end-to-end Category Management.

You will use your expertise and knowledge to influence and shape the category management process as part of this growing commercial function.

You will need to work collaboratively, building and managing effective professional relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including suppliers and internal customers, to ensure that category management is implemented, and that commercial is central to the Department's decision-making.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

Reporting to the Commercial Lead – Category Manager, the post holder will be responsible for:

- All aspects of the commercial lifecycle, including pre-market engagement, contract award and contract management for complex, sensitive and high value commercial projects
- Proactively lead, support and challenge customers throughout the commercial lifecycle of allocated commercial requirements to ensure best commercial outcomes are achieved
- Maintaining a category pipeline to allow commercial support to start in good time to ensure a full range of commercial options can be considered
- Quickly gaining a deep understanding of the supply market, category, and business context and using this knowledge to inform and deliver commercial strategy
- Championing commercial capability throughout the Department and across wider stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of category management
- Contributing to the development of the category savings plan and ensuring savings are realised and tracked.
- Using an e-procurement system to effectively manage and track end to end category management activity
- Complying fully with EU procurement law, DFE commercial procedure, policy, and assurance processes.

### **Essential:**

- Evidence of taking the lead on securing value for money in a complex commercial environment
- Experience of analysing complex information to make informed commercial decisions
- Evidence of influencing key stakeholders towards commercial solutions which balance optimal commercial performance with delivering business strategy



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- Evidence of applying effective communication skills to influence customers at all levels
- Experience of the successful delivery of holistic end-to-end strategic category plans and commercial strategies
- Evidence of leading teams or projects to manage and deliver competing business priorities in large-scale complex organisations

### **Desirable:**

- MCIPS qualified with evidence of putting theoretical knowledge into practice.
- Alternatively, you will have a minimum of two years experience in a procurement and commercial role (if you do not have MCIPS you will be expected to work towards it upon starting your post).
- A track record of achieving strong results through successfully building capability of yourself and others in a commercial function
- Evidence of successfully managing risk, mitigations and trade offs

### **Additional Info:**

To find out more about our ambition and the opportunities available, please visit [www.makingcommercialmatterdfe.co.uk](http://www.makingcommercialmatterdfe.co.uk)

The role will involve regular travel to other DfE sites.

### **Benefits:**

As a member of the DfE, you will be entitled to join the highly competitive Civil Service Pension Scheme, which many experts agree is one of the most generous in the UK.

You will have 25 days leave, increasing by 1 day every year to a maximum of 30 days after five years' service. In addition, all staff receive the Queen's Birthday privilege holiday and 8 days' bank and public holidays.

We offer flexible working arrangements, such as job sharing, term-time working, flexi-time and compressed hours, along with excellent childcare benefits.

As an organisation that exists to support education and lifelong learning, we offer our staff excellent professional development opportunities including 5 paid days per year for learning activities.

You will also have access to an employee discounts scheme covering healthcare, retail, and recreational activities.

Applicants currently holding a permanent post in the Civil Service should note that, if successful, their salary on appointment would be determined by the Department's transfer / promotion policies.

To find out more about the benefits of becoming a member of the DfE, visit [www.makingcommercialmatterdfe.co.uk](http://www.makingcommercialmatterdfe.co.uk)

### **Allowances:**



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This post may attract a procurement allowance of £1,500 per annum for successful applicants holding the CIPS foundation qualification OR £4,000 per annum for successful applicants holding the full MCIPS qualification.

Successful candidates will need to supply evidence of CIPS qualifications in order to receive the allowance once in post.

Alternatively, the successful candidate will need to complete their study to achieve the qualification within an agreed reasonable timeframe.

### **Things you need to know:**

#### **Security**

Successful candidates must pass basic security checks.

#### **Nationality statement**

Candidates will be subject to UK immigration requirements as well as Civil Service nationality rules.

If you're applying for a role requiring security clearance please be aware that foreign or dual nationality is not an automatic bar. However certain posts may have restrictions which could affect those who do not have sole British nationality or who have personal connections with certain countries outside the UK.

#### **Nationality requirements**

Open to UK, Commonwealth and European Economic Area (EEA) and certain non EEA nationals. Further information on whether you are able to apply is available [here](#).

#### **Eligibility**

Candidates in their probationary period are eligible to apply for vacancies within this department.

#### **Working for the Civil Service**

The Civil Service Code sets out the standards of behaviour expected of civil servants. We recruit by merit on the basis of fair and open competition, as outlined in the Civil Service Commission's recruitment principles. The Civil Service embraces diversity and promotes equality of opportunity. There is a guaranteed interview scheme (GIS) for candidates with disabilities who meet the minimum selection criteria.

#### **Terms & Conditions**

Please see attachment below for the DfE's terms & conditions.

#### **Selection Process Details:**

This vacancy is using [Success Profiles](#) and will assess your Behaviours, Experience and Technical skills.

#### **Stage 1 – Application & Sift**



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As part of the application process, you will be asked to complete a CV and a personal statement.

Your CV should cover details of education and professional qualifications, employment history, as well as giving details of relevant skills and experience.

Your personal statement (maximum 1,000 words) should include details of how you meet the essential criteria as detailed in the job description and person specification, including examples of evidence.

The first selection stage will be a paper sift of your CV and Personal Statement. You will be assessed based on your demonstration of the essential criteria for this role.

Candidates who pass the paper sift will be invited to a telephone screening. This is an opportunity for our recruitment team to better understand your suitability to the role to which you're applying. Please note this is a sifting stage of your application and you will need to pass this stage before progressing to the next stage. You will be asked to demonstrate your core experience against the principle criteria of the role to which you're applying. Please note your communication skills will also be assessed. This will also be an opportunity for you to ask any questions about the role, DfE and the process.

## **Stage 2 - Interview**

Candidates that successfully pass the sift will be invited to interview. At interview, you will be assessed using the following Success Profile Behaviours:

- Delivering at Pace
- Working Together

In addition, we will assess you against the following technical skills:

- Understanding commercial needs and sourcing options
- End to end procurement process

See the [Government Commercial Function People Standards](#) for further information.

In cases where there are a high number of applications the sift pass mark may be adjusted and candidates will be invited to interview in merit order, i.e. those scoring the highest.

For more information on how to develop a CV and personal statement, please refer to the Candidate Pack attached.

Feedback will only be provided at interview stage.

### **Sift/Interview dates and location:**

**Sift scheduled:** end March

**Interviews scheduled:** WC 15/04 and WC 22/04

**Interview Location:** Sheffield, Darlington, Manchester, Coventry



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Whilst we will endeavour to meet the dates set out in the advert there may be occasions when these dates will change. Those candidates invited to assessment will be provided with sufficient notice of confirmed dates.

### Apply and further information:

#### Contact point for applicants

For further information on this vacancy please email: [dfepenna.com](mailto:dfepenna.com) or call 0800 049 6798

#### Further information

For more information regarding our roles, please visit our website at [www.makingcommercialmatter.co.uk](http://www.makingcommercialmatter.co.uk)

A reserve list may be held for a period of 12 months from which further appointments can be made.

Applicants who are successful at interview will be, as part of pre-employment screening subject to a check on the Internal Fraud Database (IFD). This check will provide information about employees who have been dismissed for fraud or dishonesty offences. This check also applies to employees who resign or otherwise leave before being dismissed for fraud or dishonesty had their employment continued. Any applicant's details held on the IFD will be refused employment.

Terms and conditions of candidates transferring from ALBs and NDPBs;

1. Bodies that are not accredited by the Civil Service Commission and are not able to advertise on Civil Service jobs will be treated as external new starters and will come into DfE on modernised terms and conditions with a salary at the band minimum.
2. Bodies that are accredited by the Civil Service Commission but do not have civil service status will be offered modernised terms and will not have continuous service recognised for leave or sickness benefits. Salaries will be offered at band minima, but there is some flexibility where this would cause a detriment to the individual.
3. Bodies that are accredited by the Civil Service Commission and do have Civil Service status will be treated as OGD transfers. Staff appointed on lateral transfer will move on to pre-modernised DfE terms and staff appointed on promotion will move on to modernised DfE terms. Salaries will transfer over, but be capped at the DfE band maximum.

#### Reasonable adjustment

If a person with disabilities is put at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person, we have a duty to make reasonable changes to our processes.

If you need a change to be made so that you can make your application, you should:

- Contact Government Recruitment Service via [dferecruitment.grs@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:dferecruitment.grs@cabinetoffice.gov.uk) soon as possible before the closing date to discuss your needs
- Complete the "Assistance required" section in the "Additional requirements" page of your application form to tell us what changes or help you might need further on in the recruitment process. For instance, you may need wheelchair access at interview, or if you're deaf, a Language Service Professional

DfE currently offer both a Salary Sacrifice and an enhanced "Salary Plus" childcare voucher scheme to support employees with childcare costs. "Salary Plus" will be open to employees who join DfE prior to 2 May 2018, but will close to new entrants who haven't made an application to the scheme by this date. Salary sacrifice will be open to



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staff until October 2018. Any move across the Civil Service on or after October 2018 may have implications on an employee's ability to carry on claiming childcare vouchers.

The Department for Education's recruitment processes are underpinned by the Civil Service Commissioner's Recruitment Principles, which outlines that selection for appointment is made on merit based on fair and open competition. If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the values in the Civil Service Code and/or if you feel the recruitment has been conducted in such a way that conflicts with the Civil Service Commissioner's Recruitment Principles, you may make a complaint, by contacting the Central Recruitment Team at the following address [CentralRecruitment.Operations@education.gov.uk](mailto:CentralRecruitment.Operations@education.gov.uk) If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint you have the right to complain to the Civil Service Commissioners.

Department for Education do not cover the cost of travel to your interview/assessment unless otherwise stated.

For more information regarding our roles, please visit our website at [www.makingcommercialmatter.co.uk](http://www.makingcommercialmatter.co.uk)