



Department
for Education

Head of Commercial Assurance

Closing date: 21 March 2019

Department for Education

Business Area: Commercial Directorate, Operations Group

Grade: Grade 7

Salary: £47,894 - £55,259, GRADE 7 National

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

Contract type: Permanent

Number of posts: 1

Hours: 37

Location:

Sheffield, Darlington, Manchester

About the job:

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

- The purpose of the commercial function within the Department for Education is to ensure that all commercial and procurement activity supports the Department's priorities and delivers outstanding value for money. It also exists to proactively develop commercial solutions for the wider education sector that reduce waste in procurement and release funds for the front line.
- The commercial function manages a large and diverse set of activities across the Department with many high profile and complex contracts and grants as well as



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running a highly successful Risk Protection Arrangement for academies and a schools buying strategy

- Commercial Group is currently engaged in an exciting growth and transformation programme and has investment commitment to become a world class public sector Commercial Organisation by 2021.

The Commercial Policy and Assurance Team sits within the Commercial Operations Directorate and is responsible for Commercial Policy; Scrutiny and Assurance activity. We work closely with colleagues both within Commercial and the wider Business Areas of the Department as well as across Government.

The Role:

The Commercial Division (responsible for securing goods and services to deliver the Department's policies) is undergoing a four-year transformation programme to substantially develop its commercial capability. You will lead the development of the commercial assurance team, having an opportunity to shape and define the role of the team to compliment our new commercial delivery model. This is to enable the Department to deliver its priorities, secure quality and value for money across its procurement and grant activity.

Reporting to the Head of Commercial Policy and Assurance, who also has responsibility for the Department's Commercial Policy team, you will have the opportunity to work across the wider function. This will enable you to become involved in areas such as developing commercial policy, identifying commercial risks and improving commercial capability. You will also work closely with colleagues from across the wider Commercial Division, Finance, Policy Areas and across Government.

The Assurance Team is an enabling function with responsibility to lead on setting standards for: processes and behaviours; for building awareness and skills and ensuring that these are deployed appropriately to ensure sound decision making; compliance with rules and controls, providing challenge in a positive way and collaboratively develop mitigations to reduce commercial risk. Also working strategically with colleagues in HMT and Cabinet Office in setting the control framework and negotiating adaptations, delegations and exemptions to support the efficient operation of DfE commercial activity.

Key Responsibilities:

Development and maintenance of the Commercial Assurance Function

- Leading on identified aspects of the transformation programme if required, through development and refreshing of the Department's approach to commercial assurance/scrutiny and accountability.
- Working closely with the wider commercial division ensure supporting policies, tools and templates enable informed decision making within appropriate delegation levels.
- Developing capability within delivery and other teams across the Department through knowledge sharing and training sessions
- Embedding knowledge and good practice within delivery teams and elsewhere
- Represent DfE on any relevant cross-government working groups.
- Leading other post-holders within the Commercial Assurance team



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Providing support, advice and challenge to delivery teams on commercial matters.

- Acting as a “critical friend” provide commercial scrutiny and challenge on the commercial business case, Invitation to Tender, Evaluations Reports and other commercial processes.
- Alongside Commercial Policy engage with delivery colleagues to ensure they are knowledgeable about public procurement regulations, Government policy and guidance, departmental commercial policy and effective practice.
- Supporting senior leaders where required to develop effective mitigations for commercial risks, supporting negotiations and avoiding disputes.
- Provide commercial assurance input to key-holder reports for Investment Committee and the Performance, Risk and Resourcing Committee (PRRC) as and when required.

Ensure compliance with Cabinet Office Standards and External Controls

- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with Cabinet Office and across Government to ensure ongoing awareness of and input to updates to any external controls.
- Keep colleagues informed as to changes in external rules and guidance – most notably cabinet office efficiency controls, programme management of Major Projects and business case guidance.
- Conduct compliance checks to ensure adherence to all control measures.
- Maintain dialogue with Cabinet Office to ensure compliance with the controls remains proportionate to the requirement, re-negotiating compliance measures where appropriate.

Lead development, implementation and management of an annual programme of commercial assurance/scrutiny activity.

- Develop a programme of commercial scrutiny activity to ensure compliance with internal and external controls, legislation and best practice.
- Produce a detailed outcome report, identifying both best practice and areas for improvement.
- Work with the Commercial Senior Leadership to develop improvement initiatives across commercial delivery teams.
- Work closely with Internal Audit and the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) to ensure unnecessary duplication of audit/scrutiny activity and build on findings following any external audit of the commercial function.

Essential Skills:

- Minimum 3 years relevant experience (‘relevant’ in this context is a commercial assurance, policy or delivery role);
- Should hold or be willing to work towards MCIPs qualification;
- Detailed knowledge of procurement law and process;

Preferred Skills/Qualifications

- Should hold or be willing to work towards MCIPS qualification.
- Experience acting for public sector organisations
- Detailed knowledge of the Public Contract Regulations 2015



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Knowledge and best practice sharing

- Attend local and national team, programme and project meetings
- Share lessons learned across programmes and promote best practice in procurement
- Present at external events

Additional Info:

This is an exciting time to join the Department for Education, with lots of great opportunities for staff at all levels to develop and grow. This role forms part of a large recruitment drive to transform the delivery of commercial activity. If you want a new challenge and to be part of a busy and innovative team, we want to hear from you.

To find out more about our ambition and the opportunities available, please visit 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

Allowances:

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.



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Alternatively, the successful candidate will need to complete their study to achieve the qualification within an agreed reasonable timeframe. On achievement of the qualification, the procurement allowance will be paid at the above rates.

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

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.



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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 sift of your CV and Personal Statement. You will be assessed based on your demonstration of the essential criteria for this role.

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:

- Leadership
- Seeing the Big Picture
- Making Effective Decisions

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

- 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: mid-April

Interview Location: Darlington and/or Sheffield

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 or call 0800 049 6798

Further information

For more information regarding our roles, please visit our website at www.makingcommercialmatter.co.uk

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



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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 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 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 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.



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For more information regarding our roles, please visit our website at www.makingcommercialmatter.co.uk