



## Policy Expert on Higher Education Financial Sustainability

Department for Education

**Closing date: Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

### Reference number

#### Salary

£48,493 - £60,113

#### Grade

Grade 7

#### Contract type

Permanent

#### Business area

Higher and Further Education

#### Type of role

Finance  
Policy

#### Working pattern

Flexible working, Full-time, Homeworking, Job share, Part-time

#### Hours

37

#### Number of posts

1

### UG7 Policy Expert

Department for Education

#### Location

- London
- Sheffield, Yorkshire and the Humber



## About the job

### Job description

This is an exciting time to join the Higher Education, STEM, and Tertiary Providers Directorate, with the Higher Education and Research Act having gained Royal Assent last year, and a new Office for Students (OfS) and Regulatory Framework having been established in April 2018. Alongside the OfS, we are going through a transitional year, with the new HE system coming fully into operation in 2019. This post is in the Higher Education Regulatory and Provider Policy Unit, working on the increasingly important and high-profile policy area of the financial sustainability of HE providers. There is a considerable range of income and cost pressures and risks facing the HE provider sector currently and over the coming years. The OfS has responsibilities in the new HE regulatory regime for monitoring HE financial sustainability and for protecting students' interests against risks such as course, campus or provider closure.

In our unit, we are working closely alongside the OfS, as it settles into its functions as the new regulator, so that we can understand and influence the approach it is taking and identify scope for collaboration and sharing information. We are also seeking to develop our own comprehensive understanding of HE provider financial sustainability issues, differentiated across a heterogeneous provider base. This will enable us to ensure that the Department's policy development takes into account potential financial sustainability implications, and to advise Ministers accordingly. This insight into financial sustainability will be very significant in a policy context that currently involves a major Government review of post-18 education and funding and is likely soon to involve a full Government Spending Review.

### Role

- Deepening and maintaining the Department's differentiated understanding of the financial health of the diverse HE provider sector
  - o understanding the OfS approach to its functions
  - o considering whether the Department's concerns about risks might vary from the regulator's
  - o appreciating stakeholder perspectives, in the sector and across Government
- Working with OfS and DfE analysts to ensure the timely development of monitoring and reporting on financial health and sustainability factors across all types of HE providers regulated by the OfS
- Developing an understanding of OfS's use of financial metrics in its work, and working with DfE analysts on the use of appropriate metrics (e.g. linked to performance across a range of policy priorities) in assessing the potential impact of policy options and changes
- Developing the Departmental policy position in relation to potential intervention in face of the risk of provider financial failure (where OfS as regulator is the primary actor)
- Developing the Department's understanding of the financial sector's view of HE providers and how this applies to different categories of providers in respect of raising private finance
- Leading the Directorate's input into wider Government policy development on funding infrastructural projects after Brexit (e.g. successor arrangements to European Investment Bank)
- Leading for the Directorate on how insolvency arrangements work for HE providers, working with the OfS and the Student Loans Company

### Person Specification

This role will require someone with good collaborative working skills, as there will be significant amounts of joint working with policy, analytical and finance colleagues in the Department and the OfS, as well as engagement with sector stakeholders.

The post-holder will have a pivotal role in ensuring that detailed/complex financial sustainability issues are properly taken account of in policy work and are communicated to other policy colleagues and Ministers as appropriate. This will require the successful candidate to have strong skills in interpreting



information, drawing conclusions and conveying arguments in a clear, easily comprehensible way. The post provides an excellent opportunity for a person with an analytical or financial background to gain experience in a policy environment and to work with a regulator.

From the perspective of experience, we are looking for candidates with some grounding in a discipline which will add to our capacity to understand financial sustainability issues – for example economics, or financial and accounting.

## Competencies

We'll assess you against these competencies during the selection process:

- Communicating & Influencing
- Working Together
- Seeing the Big Picture
- Changing & Improving

## Benefits

### Pensions

Civil Service pension schemes may be available for successful candidates.

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.

### Selection process details

An initial sift of your CV will be conducted against the job description. The CV needs to demonstrate the strongest evidence of experience which will then be progressed to the next stage and you will be contacted to arrange a telephone based screen.

The telephone screen will further assess your experience and will be carried out by Robertson Bell at a time to be agreed with you. The candidates that present the strongest evidence during the telephone screening will be progressed to the next stage. The applicants with the best skills and experience will be invited to interview, where you will be required to provide evidence as to how you meet the above criteria.

Interviews may include an additional assessment exercise or video/presentation exercise, details to be provided prior to interview.

Feedback will only be provided if you attend an interview or assessment.

### 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.



Department  
for Education

**Robertson Bell**  
recruiting excellence

### **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.

## **Apply and further information**

### **Contact point for applicants**

Robertson Bell are exclusively partnering with the Department for Education in a multi vacancy campaign. For further information on the role please contact Michael Swinburn or Jack White at Robertson Bell on 0203 824 7100 or via email [DFE@robertsonbell.co.uk](mailto:DFE@robertsonbell.co.uk)

### **Sift/interview dates and location**

Sift and interview dates to be confirmed.

Interview location to be confirmed.