

Civil Service Commission Board Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) was established in its current form by the [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act \(2010\)](#) (CRaG). The Commission exists to provide assurance that civil servants are selected on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and to help safeguard an impartial Civil Service.
2. The purpose of the Civil Service Commission Board (the “Board”) is to set strategic direction and monitor the delivery and impact of the CSC. It ensures that the Commission is fulfilling its statutory role effectively. Its scope therefore includes: the role of Commissioners in chairing senior recruitment competitions, the Recruitment Principles and application of the Principles, the Commission’s compliance and audit function, the Commission’s role in relation to the promotion of the Civil Service Code, and data and themes from the Commission’s responses to recruitment and Code complaints.
3. The CSC Board operates in parallel to the Independent Offices’ Joint Operations Committee. Neither is responsible for the local governance arrangements put in place by the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA) and the Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPA).

Core objectives

4. The Board takes responsibility for:
 - a. Maintaining the mission of the CSC and monitoring its impact;
 - b. Safeguarding the appropriate independence of the CSC with respect to the Civil Service and Government;
 - c. Developing and agreeing the CSC’s strategy and delivery plan;
 - d. Oversight of the fulfilment of the statutory roles of the CSC as required by CRaG;
 - e. Oversight of the CSC’s policy and operations functions, including recruitment, audit moderations, compliance, and complaints;
 - f. Considering any developments to the role and practice of the CSC which it or the Cabinet Office or others may suggest;
 - g. Synthesising insight to contribute to policy making, including within the Cabinet Office and Government People Group;
 - h. Taking the most important formal decisions, such as the approval of revisions to the Recruitment Principles; and

- i. Making the final decision on sign-off of the Annual Report & Accounts following a recommendation from ARC.
5. The Board may establish further subcommittees and delegate any of its work to those subcommittees with the approval of the First Civil Service Commissioner.
6. The Board will receive data and information from the secretariat as defined by its membership to inform the execution of these functions.
7. The Board will receive updates from the Joint Operations Committee (JOC) on the shared corporate functions of the 'Independent Offices', and its shared secretariat.
8. The Board will be supported by an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). The ARC will be chaired by a Commissioner and will be responsible for scrutinising the systems of internal control, risk management and corporate governance. The Board will be updated by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee at each meeting.

Membership

9. The Civil Service Commission Board membership is comprised of:
 - a. the First Civil Service Commissioner, who is the Chair of the Board;
 - b. All Commissioners (a minimum of six, as set out in CRaG); and
 - c. the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Accounting Officer.
10. The Board will be quorate if at least half the number of current members are present.
11. Should there be challenges or contention within the Board, then the Board is the place to reach resolution at least in the first instance, under the leadership of the FCSC as chair.
12. Board members are required to attend Board meetings in person (virtually by exception) and fully and actively participate in discussions. As per the Act a Commissioner can be removed from office if they are absent from three successive meetings of the Commission without the First Civil Service Commissioner's approval.

Meetings

13. The Board will meet quarterly following meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee. Meetings will be scheduled in December for the following full calendar year. While any Board member may request that an item is included on the agenda, the final agenda is approved by the Chair. The First Commissioner may convene additional meetings as they deem necessary.

14. A summary of the activity of the Board will be published on the Commission's website.
15. New or changed conflicts or potential conflicts of interest must be declared to the Chair at the beginning of each meeting and shall be recorded in the minutes.
16. The First Civil Service Commissioner and Commissioners will also meet regularly for a 'Meeting of the Commissioners' to discuss and collaborate on current competitions, share experiences, and undertake Continuous Professional Development. In these meetings, the Commissioners do not formally meet as a Board.

Secretariat

17. The secretariat is responsible for meeting logistics, preparing and distributing papers and data reports at least five working days in advance of a meeting, taking and circulating minutes and actions, and paying reasonable travel expenses in line with the expenses policy incurred as a result of attending the Board.

Review

18. The current arrangements will be reviewed in 12 months, with Terms of Reference updated as appropriate.
19. The Terms of Reference will also be reviewed when a new First Civil Service Commissioner is appointed.

Last updated: October 2024