



Registers of Scotland

Audit Report

January 2025

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Executive Summary

The Civil Service Commission audits organisations to drive greater innovation and improvement in departmental practice, while ensuring the important principle of recruitment on merit, after fair and open competition remains the cornerstone of an effective and impartial Civil Service.

The new audit programme better reflects the differences in scale and the challenge of recruitment within the different departments and organisations that the CSC regulates.

For each audit the Commission requests evidence on six campaigns, with each to include records related to:

- o the job advert;
- o the candidate pack;
- o the sift records (with scores);
- o the interview questions;
- o the interview scores (with feedback);
- o the appointment; and
- o the chair / panel report.

and:

- requests evidence on six exceptions;
- issues a questionnaire related to diversity, innovation and SCS recruitment;
- identifies areas of concern; potential breaches to the Recruitment Principles; and clarifying evidence from the organisation required for the interim audit;
- discusses the above with each organisation at an audit meeting;
- moderates the final report with Civil Service Commissioners including, where appropriate, the department's Link Commissioner;
- issues the Final Audit Report with the audit rating to the organisation; and
- follows up recommendations with the organisation to ensure the actions have been addressed.

Profile

The Registers of Scotland (RoS) is directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament. Its role is to keep public registers of land, property and other legal documents in Scotland.

- **Headcount:** 1,155 (June 2024)
- **Appointments:** 26 (last four quarters)
- **Exceptions:** 0 (last four quarters)
- **SCS1+2 / Commissioner led competitions:** 1/0 (last four quarters)

The RoS audit meeting was in June 2024, with a follow up meeting in August 2024.

The RoS Complexity Score is 1. This reflects a standard score for the smallest departments with a focused remit. The department was content with this score.

RoS for was engaged throughout the audit process and audit meetings, and has attended the CSC Recruitment Principles training.

Audit Findings

The audit reviewed six campaigns and zero exceptions.

Good Practice

RoS follow Scottish Government recruitment rules. However, as a new team, this audit has provided the opportunity to review recruitment processes and seek training from the Commission to strengthen their understanding for best practice. RoS requires all panel chairs and panellists to undergo training, with materials included on the recruitment techniques and sample questions.

Areas for Improvement

RoS should clearly outline the assessment criteria for each stage of the application process (sift/interview) in their campaigns. In addition, RoS should record when candidates withdraw or do not attend when completing the sift/interview records to ensure a clear and transparent process and improve record keeping.

RoS should clearly define working patterns offered for each job. This will ensure a wider pool of candidates. RoS will update their template to ensure the correct working patterns are advertised.

Queries Raised

- Four campaigns audited noted the omission of the Recruitment Principles, the Civil Service Code and the Complaints Procedure from the job adverts.

RoS explained these were available under 'additional information' in the job pack. However, RoS now includes this in all job adverts.

- One campaign was run by a recruitment agency that was not sufficiently briefed on the requirements/standards expected by CSC. This would have resulted in a number of breaches. CSC revisited two campaigns, following additional information from RoS.

RoS now reviews all campaigns run by recruitment agencies to ensure accuracy, and these are advertised on CS Jobs going forward.

Breaches of the Recruitment Principles

Four Technical breaches were recorded relating to omitting the Recruitment Principles, the Civil Service Code and Complaints process in their campaigns.

A further Technical breach was recorded relating to an advertised lead behaviour that was not assessed as the lead behaviour.

Exceptions

RoS have made no appointments by exception since 2019.

Exception 1 usage

- **Total (last 4 quarters): 0**

RoS use an internal audit trail of exceptions to track which exceptions are used and why.

Diversity, Innovation and SCS Recruitment

Diversity

RoS has reviewed the language used in job adverts by scanning for gender bias and complexity.

RoS have a dedicated dashboard provided by their HR data team to help them monitor diversity and inclusion within recruitment and across the organisation. RoS has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead with the primary goal of moving towards a team that represents Scotland's diverse population.

RoS have a specific focus on the recruitment of disabled people, ethnic minorities, and those aged between 16 to 24 through incentives such as Career Ready (a paid internship and mentorship programme).

Innovation

RoS have increased the exposure of their adverts by posting on external career sites such as LinkedIn and Totaljobs to access a wider applicant pool.

RoS uses feedback forms issued to managers and candidates who participate in the assessment process to drive continuous improvement.

RoS utilises a LinkedIn Recruiter to improve their direct sourcing capability, reduce reliance on contractors, improve their success rates, and enable a move from reactive to proactive resourcing.

SCS Recruitment (including External by Default)

There was one SCS recruitment round, which followed a fair and open process.

Conclusions and Recommendations

RoS recorded five breaches. There was no Exception 1 usage. There was some evidence of positive approaches to diversity and innovation. There were no concerns on their SCS recruitment.

Management Action Plan

The audit identified two recommendations:

	Recommendations	Priority	Implementation Date
1	Registers of Scotland should take steps to ensure that candidates are provided with greater clarity in relation to expectations at application, sift, and interview stages.	High	June 2025
2	The Registers of Scotland should take steps to reduce errors in job adverts, particularly when working with external recruitment agencies.	Medium	June 2025

The Civil Service Commission will follow up with the organisation to ensure actions have been taken to address the recommendations.

Moderation Meeting

The Moderation Meeting, held on 29 October 2024, noted the five breaches and agreed both the recommendations and the audit rating.

Audit Rating

The audit rating is determined by compliance (breaches and Exception 1 usage); positive actions (diversity and innovation) and SCS recruitment (including external by default and Commissioner insight). The weighting will also be determined by the department size – for example, larger departments will have more SCS staff than smaller departments who may not have any SCS staff.

	Breaches	Exception 1 Usage	Diversity	Innovation	SCS Recruitment
Scale: 1-5	1	5	3	2	4
Weight (100%)	40%	25%	10%	10%	15%
Sub Score	8	25	6	4	12
Total Score			55		
Rating	Fair				

Our Classification Systems

Complexity Score

- 5** **Most Complex** – largest, most varied or currently most high-profile departments
- 4** **Complex** – large, varied or a high-profile department
- 3** **Average Complexity** – small, more focused departments, medium range and public profile
- 2** **Less Complex** – small department, low range and public profile
- 1** **Least Complex** – smallest departments with a focused remit

Considerations Informing Audit Rating

Compliance, Breaches, Exception 1 Usage, Diversity, Innovation, and SCS Recruitment.

Audit Ratings

Good	70-100
Fair	50-69
Needs Improvement	30-49
Needs Regulatory Intervention	20-29

Recommendations

Priority	Definition	Action Required
High	Non-compliance with the Recruitment Principles.	Remedial action must be taken taken urgently within an agreed timescale.
Medium	Impact on the legal requirement of the Recruitment Principles related to fair, open, and based on merit.	Remedial action should be prioritised within an agreed timetable.
Low	No, or minimal, impact on the legal Requirement of the Recruitment Principles related to fair, open, and based on merit.	Remedial action should be taken at earliest opportunity within an agreed timetable.