

**Baroness Stuart of Edgbaston
First Civil Service Commissioner
Civil Service Commission**

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Cabinet Office

25 November 2025

Paid appointment with the Royal Academy of Engineering: Application under the Business Appointment Rules from Dame Tamara Finkelstein DCB, former Permanent Secretary at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Thank you for submitting an application for advice under the Business Appointment Rules¹ (the Rules) to the Civil Service Commission (the Commission) on behalf of **Dame Tamara Finkelstein DCB**, formerly Permanent Secretary at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The application is for a full time, paid role as a Chief Executive with the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng). Further detail on the content of the application is in the Annex. The Commission's advice is required as Dame Tamara is a former civil servant at SCS Pay Band 4. Her last day of service was 30 June 2025.

The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. They aim to avoid any reasonable concerns that: a civil servant may be influenced in their official duties by the risk of reward; a civil servant may improperly exploit access to information; and an organisation may gain an improper influence through the employment of a civil servant.

The Commission's² advice is that this application should be subject to the following conditions:

1. Privileged information – Dame Tamara should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of herself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information³ available to her from her time in office.
2. Lobbying – For two years from her last day in office, until 30 June 2027,

¹ See the [Business appointment rules for Crown servants](#).

² Elizabeth Hambley, Panel member, was recused from the consideration of this application.

³ Meaning official information to which a civil servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available.

Dame Tamara should not become personally involved in lobbying⁴ the UK government or its arm's length bodies on behalf of RAEng (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should Dame Tamara make use, directly or indirectly, of her contacts in the government and/or civil service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage the RAEng (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).

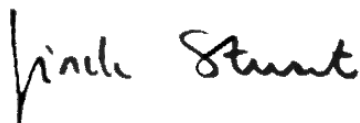
3. Bids and contracts – For two years from her last day in office, until 30 June 2027, Dame Tamara should not provide advice to RAEng on a bid or contract relating to the UK government or its arm's length bodies.

Dame Tamara and RAEng confirmed to the Commission her intention to fully comply with the lobbying ban that applies. RAEng also confirmed its understanding of, and adherence to the remaining conditions that apply to Dame Tamara's role.

The Rules set out that civil servants must abide by the Commission's advice. It is Dame Tamara's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment and to understand any other rules and regulations they may be subject to in parallel with the Commission's advice.

Dame Tamara must seek advice if she proposes to extend or otherwise change his role with the organisation. Once this appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, the letter will be published on the Civil Service Commission's website.

Yours sincerely,



Gisela Stuart
First Civil Service Commissioner

⁴ As defined in the rules.

Annex A: The application

Applicant assessment

1. As Permanent Secretary of Defra, Dame Tamara was responsible for the overall management of the department. She was Principal Accounting Officer for Defra, member of both the Defra Board and Civil Service Board, and Head of the Policy Profession.
2. According to its website, the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng) is the United Kingdom's national academy of engineering. It is an independent, chartered charitable organisation that brings together the country's most distinguished engineers from all disciplines. RAEng also provides independent advice to policymakers in the UK and internationally on engineering-related issues like infrastructure, energy, and climate change. Dame Tamara stated that the RAEng has a role to provide government with expertise from its fellows when needed.
3. As Chief Executive, Dame Tamara stated her role will involve:
 - Leading the Academy and working with the President and Board of Trustees to fulfil the role of a national academy enabling government to access expertise of engineering fellows.
 - Supporting professional engineers in a range of ways, including through an entrepreneurship hub supporting start ups to attract funding, fellowships for research and prizes to encourage innovation.
 - Leading international work to build relationships with similar bodies worldwide and support the profession in developing countries.
 - Promoting engineering as a career and improving diversity.
4. Dame Tamara stated she applied for an openly advertised position.
5. Dame Tamara stated as Head of the Policy Profession she had contact with RAEng and spoke at some of their events to support the building of connections between policy makers and scientists and engineers. She had no involvement in any contractual dealings.

Correspondence with RAEng

6. RAEng confirmed its understanding of, and adherence to the conditions that apply to Dame Tamara's role, stating:

- It will support her in upholding the conditions and will not ask her to undertake any duties that would amount to a breach of them.
- Her role will not involve lobbying on behalf of RAEng.
- It will ensure that all relevant parties connected to the leadership and management of the RAEng including, but not limited to, the Trustee Board and the Executive Leadership Team, are made aware of and ensure that the Commission's conditions are upheld whilst she is subject to the Rules.

Departmental assessment

7. The Cabinet Office and Defra confirmed Dame Tamara's previous interactions with RAEng as noted by the applicant, and that she was not involved in decisions specific to RAEng, commercial or otherwise.
8. The departments noted that RAEng has a relationship with Defra and broadly across government, including with the Department for Transport, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). The departments stated that the RAEng's government funding comes primarily from DSIT.
9. Defra noted that its relationship with the RAEng is limited, though RAEng has responded to consultations that have been carried out by government departments broadly, including by Defra. Defra added that the Environment Agency, an arm's length body of the department, has an established relationship with RAEng, pertaining to recruitment and training. Defra stated that related procurement decisions have been taken at pre junior levels and would not have involved the Permanent Secretary.
10. The departments stated that Dame Tamara would have been exposed to a range of privileged information about the inner processes of government and the particular remit of her department. However, the departments noted that RAEng does not have competitors in the traditional sense considering the nature of the organisation. They also did not consider Dame Tamara to possess any particular access to information that would be likely to provide RAEng an unfair advantage.
11. The Cabinet Office stated that Dame Tamara would have developed a range of contacts within government that could be leveraged in order to advocate on behalf of her prospective employer. RAEng has an interest in government policy, and has responded to consultations provided by Dame Tamara's former department and will continue to do so after her proposed appointment. It is relevant that the departments noted that Defra operates a transparent consultation process to help improve public services in the public interest.

12. The Cabinet Office recommended the standard conditions.

CSC analysis

13. *Risk of reward.* Dame Tamara had contact with RAEng in the context of her role as Head of the Policy Profession, and spoke at some of their events. The departments confirmed she had no involvement in any decisions or contracts with the organisation. The risk of reward for decisions or actions taken in office is likely to be low.

14. *Access to information.* It is likely that as Permanent Secretary, Dame Tamara had access to a wide range of information that may benefit many organisations, though the Cabinet Office and Defra did not note any specific information that presents a risk. Further, the risk relating to her access to information is not specific to the work of RAEng. It has been over four months since she left the civil service, and as an SCS4 official, her three month waiting period from her last date of leaving the civil service has elapsed.

15. *Improper influence.* There are risks associated with a former senior civil servant joining an organisation that has existing relationships across government and may seek to further expand its influence. Given the lobbying ban that applies to all former senior civil servants, Dame Tamara must be careful not to have any contact with ministers or officials that could reasonably be seen as seeking to influence government. The Commission noted that government may wish to contact Dame Tamara in her role as Chief Executive and any contact initiated by government would be entirely in keeping with the lobbying ban.