

Ministry of Defence

23 July 2026

Unpaid appointment with the University of Cumbria: Application under the Business Appointment Rules from Dr Rebecca Weston, FREng, FInstP, FNucl, MBA, former Director General, Warhead Group at the Ministry of Defence.

The Civil Service Commission (the Commission) has considered an application for advice under the Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) from **Dr Rebecca Weston, FREng, FInstP, FNucl, MBA**, formerly Director General, Warhead Group at the Ministry of Defence. The application is for an unpaid, part-time role as a **Professor of Practice** at the **University of Cumbria**. Further detail on the content of the application is in the Annex. The Commission's advice is required as Dr Weston is a former civil servant at SCS Pay Band 3. Her last day of service was 24 October 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's advice¹ is that the appointment with the University of Cumbria should be made subject to the following conditions:

1. Privileged information – Dr Weston should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of herself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to her from her time in the civil service.
2. Lobbying – For two years from her last day in the civil service, until 24 October 2027, Dr Weston should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government or its arm's length bodies on behalf of the University of Cumbria (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients). She should also not use, directly or indirectly, her contacts in the government and/or civil service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage the University of Cumbria (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).

¹ See [Advice under the Business Appointment Rules](#) for details applying to all advice issued by the Civil Service Commission.

3. Bids and contracts – For two years from her last day in the civil service, until 24 October 2027, Dr Weston should not provide advice to the University of Cumbria on a bid or contract relating to the UK government or its arm's length bodies.

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

Dr Weston must seek advice if she proposes to extend or otherwise change her 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,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "S. K. Owen." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Kate Owen
Chief Executive

Annex A: The application

1. The University of Cumbria is a public research university.

Applicant assessment

2. As Professor of Practice, Dr Weston stated her role involves:
 - Shaping the Institute of Engineering, Computing and Advanced Manufacturing by drawing on her perspective across defence and nuclear industries.
 - Advising on bridging between civil and defence nuclear, where there are opportunities for shared skills, curriculum and a regional proposition, given her experience in what works in practice in university-industry partnerships and what meaningful co-ownership from industry should look like.
3. Dr Weston confirmed her role will not involve contact with, or lobbying of, government.
4. As Director General, Warhead Group, Dr Weston was accountable for the lifecycle production, safety, and performance of the UK's nuclear weapons, overseeing a complex portfolio of major projects and programmes valued at approximately £40 billion over 30 years. In this role, she defined the strategy for the Atomic Weapons Establishment to deliver current and future nuclear warhead systems. Additionally, she led the Warhead Group - comprising approximately 350 civil servants, including those in Nuclear Transport Operations within the Defence Nuclear Organisation - and served as a member of the Defence Nuclear Enterprise Leadership Team.
5. Dr Weston stated she has not been responsible for regulatory, funding or any other decisions affecting the University of Cumbria at any time in her last two years in the civil service.

The Commission's analysis

6. *Application level.* As a Level 1 application for an unpaid role, the Commission's analysis applies the principle that this category of appointment is generally recognised as posing a lower risk to government integrity.
7. *Risk of reward.* The role as Professor of Practice is unpaid. Dr Weston stated she had no involvement in policy development or contractual or commercial decisions affecting the University of Cumbria while at the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Therefore, the risk that the offer was made as a reward for decisions made during her time in office is low.

8. *Access to information.* Dr Weston would have had access to a wide range of information from her former role. This risk is mitigated by the fact that the MoD has recently published its Defence Investment Plan², which highlights its strategic priorities, including nuclear. Furthermore, more than eight months have passed since she left the civil service, which reduces the currency of any information she may still hold. The standard condition regarding privileged information covers any remaining risk.
9. *Improper influence.* As a former senior official, Dr Weston would have a network of contacts in government that could provide an unfair advantage to the University of Cumbria. She has stated there will be no contact with government in her proposed role. The risk of the perception of lobbying the government is mitigated by the standard conditions.

² The Ministry of Defence, 'Defence Investment Plan'
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a44e989167a99cf0018da38/The_Defence_Investment_Plan.pdf