ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
NATIONAL RECORDS AND ARCHIVES

PERSON SPECIFICATION: Member, Advisory Council on National Records and Archives

Essential skills and experience

All candidates for the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives should meet the following core skills:

- Ability to weigh up the balance of arguments
- Ability to engage in and facilitate strategic thinking
- Ability to scrutinise and influence policy
- Ability to work with, negotiate with and influence key opinion formers
- Ability to be confidential and to work with information of a restricted nature

Specialist knowledge

Candidates must demonstrate specialist knowledge in at least one of the following areas:

- **Archives policy and information management**, i.e. representatives of the archives, library, records and information management communities, digital information management experts, IT experts and information rights experts.

- **Users of archives,** including:

    - Academics and independent researchers, including historians
    - Researchers in local and/or family history
    - Researchers in popular history
    - Journalists and other media professionals

- **Public policy and government** – experience of offering advice and undertaking scrutiny within the national political and administrative framework of government.

Personal Qualities

- Drive and determination
- Independence
- Objectivity
- Discretion

Regulated by
The Commissioner for
Public Appointments

ROLE SPECIFICATION: Member, Advisory Council on National Records and Archives

Title

Member of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives

Reports to

Chair of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives, Lord Dyson, the Master of the Rolls

Remuneration

The post is not remunerated. Actual reasonable travel and other expenses will be met in accordance with current policy for Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

Location

Most meetings are held at the National Archives, Kew, with occasional meetings in central London.

Term

3 years initially with possibility of reappointment at the end of the term, in line with a successful performance assessment.

Time Commitment

- 4 meetings a year of 1 day each.
- Preparation/reading of papers before meetings.
- Participate on approximately 6-7 FOI Panels a year*.
- Outside the Advisory Council's quarterly meetings, members may be asked to participate in small working groups and to contribute to responses on strategy and policy.

Role

- Play full role in assessing all schedules for the closure and retention of public records and communicating your perspective to the Advisory Council.
- Play a full role on FOI Panels by assessing all evidence for the proposed closure of records and providing recommendations.
- Welcome and consider the views of other members of the Advisory Council.

Key Duties

Participating at meetings and on FOI Panels.
Reading and responding to papers.
Influencing the decisions for disclosure or non-disclosure of public records.
Presenting papers on an occasional basis when invited by the Secretary to do so.

*Note: Three members are asked to form a panel and to advise on behalf of the whole Council, consulting one another as necessary (normally by telephone, e-mail and post).

Guidance for applicants to the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council on National Records and Archives

The Work of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives

The National Archives reports to the Lord Chancellor. On policy matters concerning The National Archives and public and other records, the Lord Chancellor relies on advice from the Chief Executive of The National Archives, and from officials in the Ministry of Justice. For independent advice on questions relating to access to public records he refers to the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives.

The Advisory Council's role

- The Council advises the Lord Chancellor on issues relating to public records that are over thirty years old, including public access to them, at the point of transfer to The National Archives.
- The Advisory Council advises on requests by government departments to keep their records.
- The Advisory Council also advises the Lord Chancellor on the public interest when departments want to keep historical records closed under certain exemptions.
- The Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research, a subcommittee of the Advisory Council considers and provides advice to the Lord Chancellor on matters relating to historical manuscripts, records and archives, other than the public records.

Further information about the Advisory Council's role and function can be found at:
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/advisorycouncil/default.htm

The Council's terms of reference are available at:
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/advisorycouncil/tor.htm

The Advisory Council reports to the Lord Chancellor every year. This is published with the annual report of The National Archives. Read the Advisory Council Report 2012-13.

Triennial review

In line with Cabinet Office requirements, the Advisory Council has recently been subject to a triennial review. The report concluded there remains a need for the Advisory Council to continue its current functions, in its current form, and made a number of recommendations regarding its operational arrangements. Read the Triennial review report.

Advisory Council membership

The Lord Chancellor appoints the members of the Advisory Council. Members are appointed because they have skills and experience relevant to the work of the Council. They are not paid. As an advisory Non Departmental Public Body, the Advisory Council adheres to the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice. Read the Code of Practice for public appointments for further details.

The Advisory Council is chaired by the Master of the Rolls, and is currently made up of 17 unpaid experts with knowledge and experience at senior level in: archives, digital archives, academic research, information management, social and cultural history, parliament and the civil service including international, diplomatic and security experience. Members are reimbursed travel expenses to meetings, which are held in central London and Kew.

Role of Advisory Council members

Meetings

The Council meets quarterly mainly to advise on cases where government departments are proposing to close information that has been transferred to The National Archives or to advise on files to be retained by departments. A summary of each meeting is posted on the Council's web pages at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/advisorycouncil/meetings/summaries.htm. Meeting dates are confirmed a year in advance and posted on the Advisory Council web pages at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/advisorycouncil/meetings.htm

FOI Panels

The time limits set by the Freedom of Information Act for the release of information are such that the Council must consider cases outside its regular meetings. Therefore, three members are asked to form an 'FOI Panel' and to advise on behalf of the whole Council, consulting one another as necessary (normally by telephone, e-mail and post). Members are likely to be asked to act on such panels at most five times each year.

Propriety

All members are appointed on a personal basis and are not expected to speak as representatives of special interest bodies or groups. Once appointed, members may be approached by individuals or bodies wishing them to present particular issues or problems to the Council. They are free to raise issues at meetings or to ask the Secretary to place matters on the agenda, either on their own initiative or in response to such commissions, but they should make clear to the Council whether they are expressing their own views or those of some other individual or body.

The proceedings and much of the business of the Council are sensitive, often because it concerns information about named individuals (for instance questions of access to files or because it relates to national security and similar matters. Members must understand that they receive information in strict confidence and that they must treat marked papers and related discussions as confidential. Advice in particular cases is available to members from the Secretary. The Secretary will also arrange for the destruction as confidential waste of papers no longer required.

Members of the Forum are required to conform to the code of conduct known as the S*even Principles of Public Life* which is available at: http://www.public-standards.gov.uk/ . They are also required to complete a form for the Register of Members' Interests, which is made available on the Advisory Council web pages at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/advisorycouncil/ac-register-of-interests.htm.

The Appointments Process

The Council wishes to provide advice to the Lord Chancellor from all kinds of people, without consideration of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or employment or social status, and is committed to the principle of public appointment on merit, with independent assessment of the appointment process and an open appointments procedure. The Government seeks to increase the proportion of women involved in public life, with a target, where possible, of equality with men, and to increase the proportion of members of ethnic minorities in public life. The Council therefore is keen to encourage women and members of ethnic minorities to apply.

You are invited to apply for membership using the enclosed application form, to be received by 12 noon on 12 May 2014. **Applications received after this time will not be considered and we cannot accept a CV without a completed application form.** Thereafter, the appointments process is as follows:

- Candidates will be assessed by a sift panel comprising a representative from the Advisory Council, amember of The National Archives' Executive Team, and an independent academic, and according to the criteria set out in the Person and Role Specification and on the information provided on the application form.

- Those candidates successful at the sift stage will be invited to an interview in central London in early June. The interview panel will comprise the same individuals as the sift Panel.
- Recommendations for appointments and details of all candidates will be submitted to the Lord Chancellor for his decision in mid June.
- We expect to be able to notify all candidates of the Lord Chancellor's decision by the end of June 2014.
- Appointments are expected to commence on 1 July 2014; a press notice will be issued by Ministry of Justice.

The appointment process is subject to the principles and guidance laid down by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and may be scrutinised by his office. Appointments to the Advisory Council are therefore based on merit and no applicant is guaranteed appointment by the Lord Chancellor without fulfilling the requirements of the public appointments criteria.

The application form, once completed, will contain personal information. If you are appointed, it will be kept on a confidential file and in a computerised information system for administrative and potentially for historical purposes; you will be entitled to have access to these records about you on request. If you are not appointed, the form will be destroyed as confidential waste on completion of the appointments process.

If you are appointed, your name and a description of you will be published in a press release and will appear on published lists of members of the Council, and your name and contact details may be supplied as required to members of staff in The National Archives or to other members of the Council so that they may communicate with you on relevant matters. You should keep a copy of the completed form.

The National Archives will reimburse travel expenses to the interview. A form for claiming travel expenses can be provided by the Advisory Council Secretary.

You are required to give details of any interests or personal connections which could conflict with your work as a member of the Advisory Council. These could include financial, personal or professional interests, share ownership, membership of societies, activities, associations or employment of a partner or friend in the particular field in which the public body operates. Any potential conflicts of interest detailed here will not prevent your application going forward but may, if appropriate, be explored if you are successful to interview stage. If you have any question or queries relating to actual or potential conflicts of interest, please contact the Advisory Council Secretary either by email: advisorycouncilsecretary@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 020 8392 5337.

Government departments are required to follow the Commissioner's Code of Practice when processing public appointments. If you feel you have reason to complain you should first direct your concerns to the Advisory Council Secretary. If after receiving a comprehensive response you are still concerned, you can write to the Commissioner. For further details of the Commissioner's complaints process go to: *http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/contact-us/*

Beth Watson
Advisory Council Secretary

April 2014