

Role Description – Head of Geography - Government Science and Engineering (GSE) Profession

Eligibility – All Senior Civil Service Grades

Closing date - Monday 18th September

Overview

A new Head of Geography role is being established within the Government Science and Engineering (GSE) profession. We seek applications from individuals within the SCS who can demonstrate geographical understanding and relevant professional experience. They will be committed to advancing geography and the role of geographers in government.

The Head of Geography will act as a leader and ambassador, working closely with geographers, the wider Government Science and Engineering (GSE) profession, and the Royal Geographical Society (RGS with IBG) - the learned society and professional body for geography and geographers.

The role is offered on a part-time voluntary basis, to be incorporated into the applicant's present objectives with agreement from line management.

Background

In 2014, DEFRA formed the Central Government Geographers Group (CGGG), bringing together geographers representing a wide range of government departments and agencies. This group has since worked on a range of matters relating to improving the application of geography and geographical skills across government.

A key area that the group has progressed is the professionalisation of geography in government. This is to benefit geographers in terms of learning, strengthening career families and pathways, and gaining greater recognition for the discipline and its value to government science, analysis and policy. The RGS provides continuing strong support to the Group.

Scoping work on how best to professionalise geography and geographers in government led to an agreement between the Chair of the Central Government Geographers Group and the Head of GSE Profession and Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Mark Walport, to advertise a Head of Geography within GSE, working across central government and its agencies in support of geography and geographers. The Central Government Geographers Group is keen to support the Head of Geography in developing this work.

Activities

Head of Geography will represent and raise the profile of the broad range of the geographical discipline, representing members and ambitions from across policy, analysis and scientific roles in the both the natural and social science aspects of the discipline. Although only open to senior civil servants, the role will provide a leadership function for geography and geographers across central government departments and their agencies.

As an ambassador and leader for the discipline, the Head of Geography will drive forward the strategy for professionalising geography within GSE, developed in collaboration with the CGGG and approved by the GSE. This fits closely with the wider GSE Strategy.

The range and depth of work is exciting but challenging and significant support for the postholder is already being developed. This encompasses having a draft geography strategy already agreed by GSE, significant groupings of organised geographers in several government departments, and the CGGG is ready to provide support, as is the RGS in an external context.

An early activity should be to commence working with the CGGG, leading and evolving this group to set-up a range of responsibilities that ensure an effective geography network e.g. agreeing departmental and cross-cutting responsibilities e.g. policy, analysis, data, science, learning and development, events. This will provide the capability and capacity to deliver in this leadership role.

The Head of Geography will lead this network of champions to:

1) *Work within the GSE profession*

- The Head of Geography will work with departmental Heads of Science and Engineering Profession (HoSEPs), including attending GSE Profession board - responsible for oversight of the profession. The Head of Geography is a distinctive role. Other HoSEPs represent the professional interests of their Department, whilst the Head of Geography will represent geography and geographers across government.
- Grow GSE membership amongst government geographers
- Develop an action plan for driving forward and evolving the strategy for geography in government within GSE

2) Support the development of geography in government

- Act as an ambassador for the GSE profession, geography and the roles geographers play
- Engagement with senior geographers in government and other CS professions
- Work with the RGS externally to form a mutually symbiotic relationship with industry and other external bodies

3) Support the development of geographers in government

- Promote geography as an inclusive discipline and its value to diversity
- Promote learning and development, including engaging with GSE, Civil Service Learning and other relevant bodies on the incorporation of geographic skills and geospatial approaches in the core curriculum
- With GSE, develop job families and open-up career pathways to geographers, including via the use of Chartered Geographer status, the professional accreditation.
- Promote Chartered Geographer status as a benchmark of professional standing to geographers, other civil service professions, and across Whitehall.

Time Commitment

- To be agreed locally with your Departmental management but expected to be in the region of 2 days a month, much of which can be worked flexibly

Required skills and experience

We would expect the postholder to possess or gain Chartered Geographer status. Applicants should therefore meet the qualifying criteria for Chartered Geographer Status as shown on the RGS website

<http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/CharteredGeographer/Application+criteria.htm>

To apply

Please send your CV and a supporting statement - no more than two sides of A4 each.

The supporting statement should:

- Provide an explicit statement on why you wish to be Head of Geography and your ambitions for the role
- Describe relevant geographical experience and knowledge and how you have applied this in professional roles

Please send these to: jonathan.pickstone@trade.gsi.gov.uk by the closing date of Monday 18th September.

(Chair of the CGGG, 020 7215 6663)

Contact for further information on GSE: GSE@go-science.gsi.gov.uk

Interview Process: 45 minute interview in a central London location – likely at the Royal Geographical Society in South Kensington.

Interviews will be arranged for mutually convenient times in September.

Likely Panel: representatives from the GSE, CGGG, and RGS.