

Job Spec

**Strategic Finance - In-year budget Management – SEO SALARY FROM £37,295
+ qualification allowance from £3,107**

We are recruiting these positions in Birmingham, Bristol, Exeter, Leeds, London, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Peterborough, Reading, Warrington, Worcester, Worthing, York on a Blended/flexible basis

About the job

Job summary

DEFRA is the UK government department responsible for safeguarding our natural environment, supporting our world-leading food and farming industry, and sustaining a thriving rural economy. Our broad remit means we play a major role in people's day-to-day life, from the food we eat, and the air we breathe, to the water we drink.

This vacancy is in our Strategic Finance Team. Strategic Finance sits at the heart of departmental decision making. We straddle the policy and finance communities. Our team advise the Secretary of State and Permanent Secretary on the department's financial position and the policy and operational choices open to them in order to manage it. We own the institutional relationship with HMT, engaging frequently with our HMT spending team. We lead fiscal events including Spending Reviews and the Budget. We work across the department in all stages of policy and delivery, and oversee annual and medium term financial and policy planning. We have a role in commercial assessment and investment approval, and oversee mains and supplementary estimates. We have specific policy responsibilities alongside the finance role, and a role in the formal policy development and decision making process at all levels. We produce and communicate, at senior levels, strategic level management information, supported by analysis functions.

Job description

SEOs in Strategic Finance are responsible for building strong relationships and leading key processes and products across the Department. They aim to communicate requirements and expectations clearly and provide valuable advice, challenge and support, and strategic insight to deliver quality outputs to time, often with tight deadlines for delivery.

Strategic Finance SEOs are expected to own the leadership of processes and products to support Financial Planning, Fiscal Events and build and maintain the single point of contact relationship with their counter parts in the HMT Spending Team.

They often have project management type roles to lead the delivery of set pieces, commissioning work, leading the collation of responses / outputs and resolving issues presented.

They are required to understand the big picture of the delivery for their team and commission and collate with confidence, often asking senior stakeholders (including the Executive Team or someone on their behalf) in the Department to complete delivery, sometimes on short deadlines.

Key responsibilities will include but not be limited to:

- Developing a strategic understanding of the business, its stakeholders and deliverables.
- Building and maintaining relationships across the Department and with HMT
- Leading on areas of ownership for preparation and delivery of Spending Review and Fiscal Events
- Own strategic product development and leadership
- Leading the translation and adding insight to financial data to support key discussions across the Department and with HMT

- Providing guidance and coordination with other finance functions on HMT priorities and requirements
- Leading the drafting for briefing to seniors (Senior Civil Servants) and Ministers
- Providing ad-hoc analysis and presentations to the business and across finance functions
- Leading responses and developing resolutions as required for ad-hoc enquiries including Parliamentary questions (PQs) / freedom of information requests (FOIs)

Person specification

Essential experience and skills:

- Able to work independently, proactively, passionately and confidently on high-profile areas across the Department and lead others to achieve quality and on time delivery of outputs.
- Comfortable and confident in working at pace to manage a full workload with conflicting short and long-term priorities.
- Building positive relationships with partners in other teams, and influencing others through excellent interpersonal and communication skills, tailored to the recipient. This includes the ability to critically consider and confidently challenge stakeholders regarding their delivery or information and translating across functions to obtain a joined up approach.
- Influencing policy development and decisions, using analytical skills and different evidence sources to provide ministers or senior officials with high-quality advice. Transferable experience for providing written and oral briefings to Ministers and/or senior officials.
- Leading collaboratively with structure, by constructing clear timelines and processes, with interdependencies and owners, to lead others to successful delivery with clear products and outcomes for the process.
- Fostering and leading a culture of knowledge sharing and collaboration between policy, programmes, the business, finance and other corporate services.

This post is eligible to be considered for an accountancy allowance up to £3,107 National and up to £4,495 London. The allowance is determined for each level of qualification (part qualified 1, part qualified 2, accountancy qualified). Line managers must see certificates from the professional body to confirm the individual has passed the relevant examinations before awarding the various stages of the allowance. To achieve fully qualified status, the individual must pass the final level examinations and complete the relevant portfolio or logbook which must be certified by the professional body.

Qualifications

Part or Fully Qualified CCAB, CIMA or equivalent

Employees are eligible to receive an accountancy allowance during their professional CCAB, CIMA or ACCA training at the following (non-cumulative) increments:

- 'Part Qualified 1' will receive £796 (National) or £1,281 (London) annually.
- 'Part Qualified 2' will receive £1,590 (National) or £2,553 (London) annually.
- 'Fully Qualified' will receive £3,107(National) or £4,495(London) annually.

Behaviours

We'll assess you against these behaviours during the selection process:

- Communicating and Influencing
- Working Together
- Making Effective Decisions
- Delivering at Pace

Benefits

Alongside your salary of £37,295, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs contributes £10,070 towards you being a member of the Civil Service Defined Benefit Pension scheme. [Find out what benefits a Civil Service Pension provides.](#)

- Learning and development tailored to your role
- An environment with flexible working options
- A culture encouraging inclusion and diversity
- A [Civil Service pension](#) with an average employer contribution of 27%
- Blended Working

Defra operates a blended working policy subject to business need, giving people the flexibility to choose when and where they work and collaborate with others. Individuals are expected to work from one of the office locations stated in the advert to connect with their colleagues, as required by their role and business team needs. There is flexibility to split the working week, spending minimum of 40-60% in the workplace, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Things you need to know

Selection process details

This vacancy is using [Success Profiles \(opens in a new window\)](#), and will assess your Behaviours, Strengths and Experience.

Application

Please submit your CV demonstrating how you meet the criteria above with a 250-word statement which should detail your experience and suitability for the role.

Candidate successful at sift stage will be invited to a video assessment/interview (1 hour 20 mins) that will consist of a blended interview of Behaviours and Strengths and one other exercise (presentation exercise or experience questions).

Location

Please be aware that this role(s) will be contractually based in a Defra group workplace/office. The successful candidate is required to carry out all their duties from a UK location and cannot do so from an overseas location at any time.

Internal (core Defra) employees can apply for this role and choose to remain in their current location or to be based in one of the advertised locations.

All other applicants will be based in one of the advertised locations. Candidates will need to state their location preference on the application form.

If you are successful in your application and your base working location is London, please be aware that Defra's Nobel House Office at 17 Smith Square, London will be closing in December 2023.

This means that Defra new joiners will be located alongside existing colleagues in offices a short distance away from Nobel House in our other office at 2 Marsham St, London.

To work from 2 Marsham Street, you will require the higher level of CTC clearance. Therefore, confirmation of appointment to the advertised post will be dependent upon successful CTC clearance being confirmed as part of pre-employment checks”.

Feedback will only be provided if you attend an interview or assessment.

Security

Successful candidates must undergo a criminal record check.

People working with government assets must complete [baseline personnel security standard \(opens in new window\)](#) checks.

Nationality requirements

This job is broadly open to the following groups:

- UK nationals
- nationals of the Republic of Ireland
- nationals of Commonwealth countries who have the right to work in the UK
- nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities with settled or pre-settled status under the [European Union Settlement Scheme \(EUSS\) \(opens in a new window\)](#)
- nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities who have made a valid application for settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS)
- individuals with limited leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain who were eligible to apply for EUSS on or before 31 December 2020
- Turkish nationals, and certain family members of Turkish nationals, who have accrued the right to work in the Civil Service

[Further information on nationality requirements \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Working for the Civil Service

The [Civil Service Code \(opens in a new window\)](#) sets out the standards of behaviour expected of civil servants.

We recruit by merit on the basis of fair and open competition, as outlined in the Civil Service Commission's [recruitment principles \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The Civil Service embraces diversity and promotes equal opportunities. As such, we run a Disability Confident Scheme (DCS) for candidates with disabilities who meet the minimum selection criteria.

The Civil Service also offers a Redeployment Interview Scheme to civil servants who are at risk of redundancy, and who meet the minimum requirements for the advertised vacancy.