



Department
for Education

Office for Students Board

Information pack for applicants

**All applications must be returned by 23:00 on 09 August 2017 to
ofs.publicappointments@education.gov.uk**

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Foreword

The Secretary of State for Education invites applications for appointment to the Office for Students (OfS), which will come into existence in April 2018.

Creating the OfS is a central tenet of our reforms contained in the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. The OfS will combine the existing regulatory functions of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). It will have the necessary powers to regulate the higher education sector, by attaching initial and ongoing regulatory conditions to providers within the system. Its Board membership will reflect the diversity of the higher education system and the beneficiaries of higher education, including students and employers. The Board will also draw on the expertise of individuals with experience of promoting choice for consumers, managing a regulatory system, and robust financial control.

The OfS will create and oversee a regulatory environment in higher education which puts the interests of students at the heart of the system, focusing on choice and competition. Further detail on the role of the OfS is set out in the Government's White Paper and the Act.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-white-paper>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/contents/enacted/data.htm>

The OfS will consist of the Chair, Chief Executive Officer, the Director for Fair Access and Participation and between 7 and 12 Non-Executive Directors.

Board members will need to be proactive and reactive in helping manage the organisation during a period of transition and work positively with the Government on preparations for implementing reforms.

Board members will be involved in, and responsible for, implementing policies and ensuring that the projects, programmes and activities undertaken by the OfS are consistent with the overall Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and any succeeding statutory provision, following guidance or directions issued by the Secretary of State.

Objectives and duties of the OfS

- The OfS has a number of general duties, including to promote choice and opportunities for students, encourage competition as a means of promoting the student interest, promoting value for money in the provision of higher education and driving equality of opportunity in connection to access and participation in higher education.
- The OfS will have powers to operate a single entry gateway for higher education, supported by a risk-based regulatory framework for all providers. The regulatory framework will impose and monitor regulatory requirements as a condition of registration, including quality assurance and teaching excellence, widening participation, data and information, and the financial sustainability, management and governance of providers.
- It will have powers to impose compliance measures on providers not meeting regulatory requirements. This will include powers to increase monitoring, issue notices and take proportionate action to support improvement, and ultimately, if required, impose monetary penalties or de-register providers. This will provide the OfS with effective measures to regulate the whole sector, replacing the current piecemeal regulation tied to government grant and designation.
- The OfS will also have responsibility for determining the allocation of teaching grant funding to eligible providers in accordance with ministerial priorities and the power to make grant payments. This would include the funding of activities that support widening participation, alongside those delivered through access and participation plans.

The Board will be integral to the success of this new organisation, having overall responsibility for a multi-faceted organisation with an annual budget in excess of £1 billion.

Governance of the OfS

The Higher Education and Research creates a Board of between 10 and 15 members, including the Chair, the Chief Executive and the Director of Fair Access and Participation.

The Secretary of State for Education makes appointments to the Board. The Act places a duty on the Secretary of State when appointing ordinary Board members to have regard to the desirability of them having experience of –

- representing or promoting the interests of individual students, or students generally, on higher education courses provided by higher education providers,
- providing higher education on behalf of an English higher education provider or being responsible for the provision of higher education by such a provider,
- employing graduates of higher education courses provided by higher education providers covering a range of academic and practical disciplines,
- promoting choice for consumers or other service users, and encouraging competition, in industry or another sector of society,
- creating, reviewing, implementing or managing a regulatory system in industry or another sector of society,
- managing or auditing the financial affairs of an organisation, and
- a broad range of the different types of English higher education providers.

The Board will provide leadership and direction, setting strategic aims, values and standards. Sub groups and committees will be established as required. Subject to the will of parliament, the OfS will be established in April 2018 with the organisation operating in shadow form for a period before that.

Diversity and equality of opportunity

The Commissioner for Public Appointments has a legal responsibility to promote diversity and equality of opportunity in the procedures for making public appointments. He is committed to working with Government Department's to ensure they have the capacity to attract the widest field of candidates and to make the best possible appointments. All applicants are asked to complete an anonymised Diversity Monitoring Form used for data gathering information only in order for the Commissioner to check whether Department's are recruiting from the widest possible pool.

The Department for Education is committed to the principle of public appointments on merit with independent assessment, openness and fairness of process and to providing equal opportunities for all.

If you are a disabled applicant (as defined under the Equality Act 2010) you have the option to request a guaranteed interview.

To request a guaranteed interview, you need to make a Guaranteed Interview Scheme declaration. If you meet the minimum criteria for the role, you will be selected for interview.

Making a Guaranteed Interview Scheme declaration both confirms your eligibility for the scheme and your request for a guaranteed interview. You will not be offered a guaranteed interview unless you make a Guaranteed Interview Scheme declaration.

If you have any difficulties completing the Guaranteed Interview Scheme declaration on the form, please include your request for a guaranteed interview in your covering letter. As with the Guaranteed Interview Scheme Declaration on the form, we will take a request for a guaranteed interview in a covering letter as confirmation of your eligibility for the scheme (that is, you are a disabled applicant as defined under the Equality Act 2010)

The Guaranteed Interview Scheme declaration is completely separate from the diversity monitoring form. The diversity monitoring form plays no part in the selection process. Instead, it simply allows the Department to monitor the diversity of the field of applicants responding to this advert.

The Role

It is essential that the Board has the range of skills, knowledge and experience required to be the market regulator of a sector which is of such strategic importance to the UK, including representation of the diversity of the higher education sector.

Non-executive directors will play a key role in shaping OfS strategic direction and supporting the reform programme. The OfS Board members will be responsible for a wide range of activities including oversight for corporate strategy; reviewing risks, benefits and monitoring outcomes against plans; and being responsible for the stewardship of public funds.

It is important to attract the highest quality candidates who have the overall strategic level and wide ranging knowledge, skills and experience to contribute to the work of the Board. Members of the Board will be appointed by the Secretary of State, and will be selected based on suitable background, experience and personal profile to lead the establishment of the OfS and work positively with the Government to implement the reforms.

Key duties/objectives of Board Members

The key responsibilities of Board Members will be to:

1. Play a prominent role in the formation of the OfS, including the transition from current arrangements, working closely with Sir Michael Barber, the Chair of the Board.
2. Work with the Chair, the CEO, the Department for Education and key stakeholders to set a strategic direction for the OfS and oversee the creation of a working model for the new organisation.
3. Work with the Department for Education to set a framework for governance and delegation of responsibilities to deliver the OfS objectives within the overall framework for government policy.
4. Work with the Chair to put in place and operate appropriate assurance processes in line with guidance and best practice for public bodies. This will include:
 - managing the risks relating to OfS' work
 - providing constructive challenge to ensure all functions are carried out efficiently and effectively
 - monitoring the strategic performance and budget spend of the organisation, ensuring that it delivers services in line with the targets set by the Board
5. Help ensure the perspectives of relevant stakeholders are able to inform the strategic leadership of the OfS and ensure that the interests of students are at the core of what the OfS does.

Person Specification

Board members are formally responsible, through the Chair, to the Secretary of State. It is therefore essential that you provide in your application, to the best of your ability, evidence and proven examples in each of the following selection criteria below. These responses will be further developed and discussed with those candidates invited for interview.

Essential Criteria:

- Ability to develop and drive forward a clear and strategic vision for the organisation.
- Genuine interest in contributing to the delivery of the Government's priorities for higher education and effective running of OfS.
- The ability to contribute, influence and inspire confidence with a wide range of stakeholders both in formal environments (such as Board meetings) and in less formal environments (such as one-to-one meetings with Executives).
- Candidates should be able to demonstrate good judgement and high levels of integrity. This as part of a commitment to the seven principles of conduct in public life (<http://www.public-standards.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/the-seven-principles>).
- An engaging and collaborative working style together with adaptability.

Desirable Criteria:

- A successful candidate will demonstrate good strategic thinking and strong intellectual capability.
- An understanding of financial and corporate governance at a strategic level and experience of leading change within an organisation.

As well as the above requirements which would be expected for all OfS Board Members, there are specific roles on the Board that will require additional expertise. We are particularly interested in hearing from applicants who have knowledge of or experience in one or more of the following areas:

- promoting the experience of students
- understanding of the needs of consumers
- market regulation and competition (across all sectors, not limited to HE)
- the higher education sector

We particularly welcome applications from female, disabled, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) or lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) candidates who meet the specifications above.

Terms of Appointment

The role has an expected time commitment of 20 days per annum and a salary of £9,180 per annum.

The appointment will be for an initial period of between 3–5 years, with the option to renew should Ministers agree as a result of the performance of the individual and the needs of the Board and the organisation.

The Department for Education is committed to making appointments on merit by fair and open process, taking account of equal opportunities. This application form is available in alternative formats if required.

Standards in public life

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. The successful candidate will be asked to subscribe to a Code of Conduct for Members of the Board.

Applicants must also confirm that they understand the standards of probity required by public appointees outlined in the “Seven Principles of Public Life” set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (see Appendix 1).

Eligibility

This is a non-executive public appointment by the Secretary of State for Education and is subject to routine security clearance.

Disqualification for appointment

There are circumstances in which an individual will not be considered for appointment. They include:

- People who have received a prison sentence or suspended sentence of 3 months or more in the last 5 years;
- People who are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
- In certain circumstances, those who have had an earlier term of appointment to another public body terminated;
- Anyone who is under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
- Anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity.

Further advice about disqualification for appointment can be given by contacting the Commission on: publicappointments@csc.gov.uk or 020 7271 8938.

Conflicts of Interest

You should note particularly the requirement to declare any conflict of interest that arises in the course of OfS business and the need to declare any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with organisations relevant to the business of OfS. If the selection panel is concerned that such interests may impact on the independence or perceived independence required for this role, they will discuss their concerns with you if you are invited for interview.

Political activity

In accordance with the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee), candidates must declare any significant political activity in the past five years. This information will be used for monitoring purposes. However, if your application is successful the information may be released into the public domain.

The Appointment Process

Applicants should submit a CV and a separate personal statement demonstrating how they meet the key requirements for the role. Your personal statement should be no more than three pages long and contain the names of two referees. Note that we will not approach your referees without your prior consent. Your application must be submitted by email to ofs.publicappointments@education.gov.uk or by post to:

Noreen Rahman
Department for Education
Higher Education Reform Directorate
Great Smith Street
Westminster
London
SW1P 3BT

We also ask that you complete a diversity monitoring form and form relating to declaration of interests, convictions and political activity and submit these along with your application. The forms can be found accompanying this information pack on the Public Appointments website (for completion electronically) and can also be found in Appendices 2 and 3 of this document.

The closing date for applications is **23:00 on 02 August 2017**

We will rely on the information you provide on your CV and supporting statement to assess whether you have the experience required at the appropriate level. **Please ensure that you provide written evidence to support how you meet all of the relevant criteria**, which are identified in the role profile.

The selection panel for this role will consist of but not limited to:

- The Chair of the Office for Students
- The Director of Higher Education Reform Directorate DfE
- Independent Panel Member

Interviews for this role will take place in London in **late August/ early September 2017**. We recognise that you may have commitments over the summer period so please can you note on your application form if there are any days in this period that you would not be available.

Where a candidate is unable to attend an interview on the set date an alternative date will only be offered at the discretion of the panel.

The final appointment will be made by the Secretary of State for Education.

Subject to appropriate checks and the individual circumstances of the successful candidate, we would want the candidate to commence their role as soon as possible after the decision is made.

Indicative timetable

Closing date for applications – 09 August 2017 at 23:00

Panel interviews – August/September 2017

Successful candidate takes up post – September 2017

If you have any queries about the role or the appointment process, please contact Noreen Rahman at Noreen.rahman@education.gov.uk

If you are not completely satisfied, please raise any complaint in the first instance to: Amy Hatt-Ellis at Amy.Hatt-Ellis@education.gov.uk

Regulation by the Commissioner for Public Appointments

The Commissioner for Public Appointments regulates and monitors appointments to public bodies to ensure procedures are fair. More information about the role of the Commissioner and her Code of Practice is available from <http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>.

Appendix 1: The seven principles of public life

All applicants for public appointments are expected to demonstrate a commitment to, and an understanding of, the value and importance of the principles of public service. The seven principles of public life are:

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix 2: Declaration of interests

Forms also available separately (accompanying this information pack on the Public Appointments website) for candidates wishing to complete and submit electronically.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Please complete this form and send with your application to:
ofs.publicappointments@education.gov.uk or by post to:

Noreen Rahman
Department for Education
Higher Education Reform Directorate
Great Smith Street
Westminster
London
SW1P 3BT

POSITION APPLIED FOR: Non-Executive Director			
SURNAME	FIRST NAME	INITIAL(S)	TITLE
ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE			
CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)	EMAIL ADDRESS		
LATEST EMPLOYER (ORGANISATION)	LATEST JOB TITLE	SALARY	

Potential Conflicts of Interest

Please provide details below of any business or other interests or any personal connections which, if you are appointed, could be misconstrued or cause embarrassment to the Department for Education or the Office for Students.

Any particular conflicts of interest detailed here will not prevent you going forward to interview but may, if appropriate, be explored with you during your interview to establish how you would address the issue(s) should you be successful in your application.

Political Activity Questionnaire

All applicants for a public appointment should complete the questionnaire below.

This question is asked as it enables the monitoring of political activity of candidates for a public appointment in so far as it is already in the public domain. Neither activity nor affiliation is a criterion for appointment (except where statute dictates specific representation).

Please indicate which of the following activities you have undertaken during the past five years by ticking the appropriate box and by providing details of your involvement. Name the party or body for which you have been active. If you have been or are an Independent or have sought or obtained office as a representative of a particular interest group, you should state this.

Please tick all relevant categories.

Obtained office as a Local Councillor, MP, MEP etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stood as a candidate for one of the above offices.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spoken on behalf of a party or candidate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acted as a political agent.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Held office such as Chair, Treasurer or Secretary of a local branch of a party.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Canvassed on behalf of a party or helped at election.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Undertaken any political activity which you consider relevant.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made a recordable donation to a political party. ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above activities apply.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Party of which activity undertaken:

Note: this form is for monitoring purposes only and will only be seen by the selection panel prior to interview. However, it is appreciated that such activities may have given you relevant skills, including experience gained from committee work,

¹ The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 requires the Electoral Commission to publish a register of recordable donations (donations from an individual totalling more than £5000 in any calendar year, or more than £1000 if made to a subsidiary accounting unit such as a constituency association, local branch, women's or youth organisations). These provisions became effective from 16 February 2001.

collective decision making, resolving conflict and public speaking. If, therefore, you have had such experience and you consider it relevant to your application for this post, you should include it separately in your personal statement.

GUARANTEED INTERVIEW SCHEME

We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post. By 'minimum criteria' we mean that you must provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you generally meet the level of competence required under each of the six specific qualities and skills sought.

What do we mean by disability?

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and adverse long-term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

How do I apply?

If you want to apply under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme simply complete the declaration below and send it in with your application.

DECLARATION

I consider myself to have a disability as defined above and I would like to apply under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme.

Name:

Date

Signature*

Vacancy reference: **Non-Executive Director**

*There is no need for a signature if you are submitting the form electronically.

Please return the completed form with your application

**ANY FALSE DECLARATION OF DISABILITY TO OBTAIN AN INTERVIEW WILL
SUBSEQUENTLY INVALIDATE ANY OFFER OF A POST**