



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Qualifications Wales

Appointment of Chair

Closing date: 11th March 2019



**The Commissioner for
Public Appointments**

Thank you for your interest in being Chair of the Board for the new body, Qualifications Wales.

This is an exciting opportunity at a defining time that will see the structure of regulation and awarding in Wales both simplified and strengthened. Our learners in Wales will have qualifications that are more relevant and responsive to Wales' needs, both nationally and globally. As Chair you will lead the board in setting the strategic direction and monitor the delivery of the organisation's business strategy, plans and performance objectives.

If you believe you have the knowledge, skills and experience to take on this responsibility and contribute to the good governance of Qualifications Wales I would be delighted if you would take the next step and complete and submit the application form.

Good luck with your application. We look forward to hearing from you.

Kirsty Williams AM
Minister for Education

How to Apply

To make an application please visit the [Welsh Government public appointment website](#).

To apply for this role, click on the vacancy and click on 'Apply' at the bottom left hand corner. The first time you apply for a post, you will need to complete a registration form for the Welsh Government's online application system. You will only need to register once, and you will be able to keep yourself updated on the progress of your application, and any other applications you make, via your registered account.

Once you have registered, you will be able to access the application form. To apply you will need to upload a personal statement and CV to the 'Reasons for applying' section of the online application form.

To apply you will need submit two supporting documents. The first a full CV and the second a cover letter, detailing your experience, how you meet the role description and person specification and how you could contribute to Qualifications Wales. The two documents should be uploaded to the "Attach Supplementary Document" section of the online application form.

Further Information and Queries

For further information on the application process and to apply, contact retained executive search consultants Siân Goodson or Sam Smith at Goodson Thomas on 029 2167 4422.

For further information about Qualifications Wales, visit:
<http://www.qualificationswales.org/>

Organisational Overview

Background

On 29 September 2011, the then Deputy Minister for Skills, Jeff Cuthbert, launched a review of the current qualifications on offer in Wales. The *Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds in Wales* aimed to ensure that Wales has qualifications that are understood and valued and meet the needs of the nation's young people and the Welsh economy.

The review was overseen by an independent project board consisting of external advisers and internal Welsh Government officials, with an external Chair. This ensured that the review was based on impartial views and evidence and was open to ideas and challenges from key stakeholders. The Review Board delivered its final report and recommendations to the Deputy Minister for Skills on 28 November 2012. One of the recommendations was the establishment of Qualifications Wales.

The organisation

Qualifications Wales regulates awarding bodies offering qualifications in Wales. They are an independent body focused on publicly funded qualifications, including GCSEs, A levels and vocational qualifications.

Degrees are not part of their work, but they work with universities and colleges to make sure they understand qualifications so that learners can progress into higher education. Qualifications Wales makes sure that qualifications are the best they can be for learners, teachers and employers, helping people adapt in a rapidly changing world. They work with awarding bodies to extend the availability of qualifications through the Welsh language.

Qualifications Wales has two principal aims:

- ensuring that qualifications, and the Welsh qualification system, are effective for meeting the reasonable needs of learners in Wales;
- promoting public confidence in qualifications and in the Welsh qualification system.

This means that QW places the learner at the heart of their activities.

Qualifications Wales also have a responsibility to look across the qualifications system to check that it is working in the interest of learners, and to act or advise others to do the same, if necessary. Part of their work is to ensure that qualifications within the system are valued, secure and respected internationally. QW has powers and duties to regulate awarding bodies and can make positive interventions to secure improvements to qualifications or the qualifications system.

At Qualifications Wales, they protect the value of qualifications, making sure that standards are maintained, grades are awarded fairly and that qualifications continue to be developed as the needs of learner's change.

As the trusted experts in qualifications, QW provide Welsh Government with advice on relevant issues. QW also consider the needs of employers, the higher education sector and professions.

Regulatory activity

As part of Qualifications Wales' work, it:

- sets regulatory requirements through its regulatory documents;
- exercises controls over entry to the regulated market to ensure that organisations have the expertise, governance, controls and financial capacity in place to deliver valid qualifications;
- takes a risk-based approach to prioritise its work using data, intelligence and expertise;
- monitors regulated qualifications and the compliance of recognised awarding bodies, and undertakes targeted audits;
- monitors the effectiveness of the qualifications system in Wales;
- sets and maintains appropriate standards for qualifications, working with other qualifications regulators to ensure consistency across the UK;
- investigates potential breaches of its rules and, when necessary, take appropriate enforcement action;
- uses research evidence to guide its decisions, actions and advice;
- undertakes sector and thematic reviews;
- undertakes consultations on potential changes to the qualifications system;
- commissions qualifications through an open competitive process where there is a market need;
- runs the QiW database: a comprehensive source of information on approved and designated qualifications awarded in Wales;
- provides grants to support the qualifications system, including support for Welsh-medium assessments

Qualifications Wales' approach is explained more fully in its [Regulatory Framework and Approach](#), a document that summarises the current framework and approach to the regulation of qualifications in Wales.

Regulatory style

As an outward-looking organisation, Qualifications Wales engages, communicates and collaborates to strengthen its ability to promote public confidence in the Welsh qualifications system, and to meet the needs of learners in Wales. To this end, it:

- invites, listens and respond to the views of learners;
- listens and respond to stakeholder feedback, views and concerns appropriately;
- ensures consultations are transparent and meaningful;

- takes a collaborative approach and draws on the knowledge and expertise of stakeholders as appropriate;
- seeks to establish and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders;
- produces clear, informative, targeted and timely communications; it reviews the impact of its communications and seeks to find ways to improve its approach;
- works with other regulators wherever possible, bearing in mind the potential impact on awarding bodies that are regulated by more than one regulator;
- carries out regulatory impact assessments as appropriate to assess the costs, benefits and risks associated with a policy or course of action.

Values

Qualifications Wales' work is underpinned by its values:

- collaborative in the way that it works;
- thoughtful in the approaches it takes;
- positive in its outlook;
- learning from experience and others.

Governance

Qualifications Wales has been established as an independent body accountable to the National Assembly for Wales.

The role of the Board is to provide strong governance and effective leadership, work with the executive to define and develop strategic direction and to set challenging objectives. The board will promote high standards of public accountability and uphold the principles of regularity, propriety and value for money. It will ensure that Qualifications Wales' activities are conducted efficiently and effectively and it will monitor performance to ensure that the body fully meets its aims, objectives and performance targets.

The board has established overarching governance arrangements and has delegated some of its functions to officers through a scheme of delegation covering both financial and non-financial matters.

The appointment process for the Chair and non-executive members is made in accordance with the Commissioner's Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies.

The successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. All successful candidates will be asked to subscribe to the [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#).

The Chief Executive Officer is the accounting Officer for the body. These responsibilities are set out in the Welsh Government's Memorandum 'The Responsibilities of a Welsh Government Sponsored Body (WGSB) Accounting Officer'.

The Board and the Executive

The Board

The Board comprises the Chair, Chief Executive and between eight and ten members. Its role is to:

- provide effective leadership for Qualifications Wales; defining and developing strategic direction, and setting objectives;
- provide effective leadership for the operation of the organisation; holding the Chief Executive to account for ensuring that Qualifications Wales' activities are conducted efficiently and effectively;
- monitor performance to ensure that Qualifications Wales fully meets its aims, objectives and performance targets; and
- promote high standards of public finance; upholding the principles of regularity, propriety and value for money.

Its current membership is as follows:

- Ann Evans, Chair (stepping down in September 2019)
- Angela Maguire-Lewis, Board Member
- Isabel Nisbet, Board Member
- Dr Caroline Burt, Board Member
- Ellen Donovan, Board Member
- Robert Lloyd Griffiths OBE, Board Member
- Rheon Tomos, Board Member
- David Jones, Board Member
- Philip Blaker, Chief Executive
- Dr Arun Midha, Board Member

The Welsh Government are currently seeking two new members to join the Board, in addition to a new Chair.

The Executive

The Executive works in partnership with the Board when developing strategy for Qualifications Wales. The Executive is accountable for the day-to-day activities of the organisation and provides corporate leadership. It fulfils many of its management responsibilities through the Management Board.

The Executive currently comprises:

- Philip Blaker, Chief Executive
- Kate Crabtree, Executive Director, Policy & Research
- Jo Richards, Executive Director, Regulation
- Alison Standfast, Executive Director, Finance & Corporate Services

The Role

Qualifications Wales is seeking a Chair who will lead the Board, and, together with them will continue to set the strategic direction for Qualifications Wales and monitor the delivery of the organisation's business strategy, plans and performance objectives. The Board will be responsible for steering and developing the overall work of the organisation, while the Chief Executive will manage its day to day running.

The work of the Board is supported by four committees: Audit & Risk Assurance; Resources; Regulation, and Remuneration.

In addition to Chairing the Board, the Chair may be required to attend other committees. The appointee will be required to work in the region of 5 days per month.

Key Responsibilities

These will include:

- providing vision and strategic leadership;
- chairing meetings and supporting the development of the Board, ensuring an appropriate balance of skills and experience;
- ensuring that the Board is effective in working with the Executive to develop strategy and corporate business plans that are properly scrutinised and monitored;
- working with the Chief Executive, in their role as Accounting Officer, ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are implemented in line with best practice and the requirements of a public body;
- ensuring that governance arrangements deliver the legal responsibilities, functions and duties placed on the body by Statute;
- working closely with the Chief Executive to ensure a relevant organisational strategy remains in place;
- working closely with the Chief Executive continue to build and mature the organisations culture and positive approach to its work;
- overseeing the work of the Chief Executive, providing appropriate support as necessary, including managing their performance;
- representing the Body externally and fostering close working relationships with key stakeholders.

The Chair will be responsible for ensuring that they and the Board collectively and individually adhere to the Nolan Principles of public life. They are:

- Integrity
- Selflessness
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty

Person Specification

To be considered, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the qualities, skills and experience to meet all the essential criteria for appointment.

Essential

- An outstanding record of leadership, organisational transformation and development at Board level or equivalent in a complex organisation;
- Experience of leading the development and implementation of strategies aimed at achieving organisational goals;
- Demonstrable interest in education and understanding of the education system in Wales;
- Excellent track record of inspiring and enthusing staff and stakeholders that demonstrates an inclusive and collaborative approach including working in partnership with staff representatives;
- Leading or being part of the leadership in developing organisational cultures;
- An exceptional ability to communicate, including handling the media and wider public audiences, and building relationships at all levels. Strong interpersonal skills are required, including the ability to negotiate, persuade and influence;
- A track record of managing complex and challenging relationships at a senior level in a multi-stakeholder environment;
- Well-developed analytical reasoning skills and judgment based on an expert ability to process and interpret complex and often technical information;
- Able to demonstrate leadership and a creative and pro-active approach to problem solving with a high level of professionalism;
- Ability to ensure that the organisation's financial dealings are prudently and systematically accounted for, audited and publicly available showing a commitment to transparency and openness;
- Understanding of the public sector context and understanding of and commitment to the principles of public life;
- Able to demonstrate a track record of commitment to and notable delivery against principles of equality and diversity.

Desirable

- Understanding of the constraints imposed by operating in the public sector;
- Understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales and a commitment to ensuring that, along with its language, they are reflected in the working of the organisation;
- Experience of working in a regulatory environment.

Time Commitment, Eligibility & Remuneration

The appointment will be made by the Minister for Education on behalf of the Welsh Government. The appointment will be for an initial term of up to three years. You may be eligible for re-appointment for a further term, although this is not automatic and should not be assumed. The power to re-appoint the Chair rests with the Minister for Education who has the discretion to decide whether or not to offer an appointment.

Time Commitment & Tenure of Office

The new Chair will serve from September 2019, and there is an expectation that the new appointee will be able to devote a degree of time for a 'hand-over' during the Spring/Summer period, with current the Chair Ann Evans (who steps down in September 2019 after two terms).

An average time commitment of 5 days per month is required.

Appointment would be for a period of 3 years, with potential to extend for a further term. You may terminate the appointment at any time by giving three months' notice in writing. Similarly, the Minister may terminate the appointment at any time upon giving three months' notice in writing.

Under the terms of the appointment, Welsh Ministers may terminate the appointment without notice if:

- you have been absent from meetings of the organisation for a period of more than three months without the permission of the Minister;
- you are adjudged bankrupt, or your estate has been sequestered or you have made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a deed of trust for, your creditors;
- in the view of the Minister, you are unable or unfit to carry out the functions of a Board member.

Eligibility

Candidates should be persons who conduct themselves at all times in a manner which will maintain public confidence. Candidates should be aware that the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 or Orders made under the Government of Wales Act 2006 apply. Candidates should also note that being a member of Qualifications Wales is a disqualifying post for membership of the National Assembly for Wales under the [National Assembly for Wales \(Disqualification\) order 2015](#).

Conflicts of Interest

- Applicants should be persons who conduct themselves at all times in a manner which will maintain public confidence.
- In particular applicants are required to declare whether they are aware of anything in their private or professional life that would be an embarrassment to themselves or to the Welsh Government if it became known in the event of appointment.

You will be expected to avoid situations in which your duties as a Chair of the Board and any other employment or private interests' conflict (or where there would be a suspicion of conflict). The organisation has drawn up guidance about registering and declaring interests which you will be expected to follow. Relevant interests should be entered in the Register of Interests maintained by the organisation and the entry kept up to date.

Should a particular matter give rise to a conflict of interest you should inform the Chief Executive in advance and you should normally withdraw from discussion or consideration of the matter.

You should also inform the Minister and Chief Executive of any new appointments, which may impinge on your duties as Chair of the organisation. If, when you leave the organisation, you intend to take up any appointments immediately afterwards, you should clear this with the Chief Executive and the Welsh Government in advance of taking up the post.

Political Activities

- Board Members should not serve as officers carrying out executive duties in any political party;
- Board members should abstain from controversial political activity;
- Board members are free to engage in any political activities, provided that they are conscious of their general public responsibility and exercise proper discretion, particularly in regard to the work of the Board of which they are members. On matters affecting that work, they should not normally make political speeches or engage in other political activities;
- Board Members are free to maintain associations with Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies, trade associations, etc. to the extent that such associations do not conflict directly with the Board interests.

Disqualifications

- All members of Qualifications Wales are disqualified from membership of the House of Commons and House of Lords;
- All members of will be disqualified from being a member of the staff of an awarding body recognised by Qualifications Wales;
- All members of Qualifications Wales will be disqualified from being a member of the National Assembly for Wales;

- The Chair must inform the Welsh Government if they wish to engage in any new political activities of the type which were not declared on appointment. Such as holding party office; making political speeches; and standing as a candidate in local, Parliamentary or European elections. Some of these activities would not be compatible with continued service;
- Subject to the above, the Chair is free to engage in any political activities, provided that they are conscious of their general public responsibility and exercise a proper discretion, particularly in regard to the work of the Qualifications Wales. On matters affecting that work, as a board member you should not normally make political speeches or engage in other political activity. If you wish to do so, you should always consult the Welsh Government.

Location of Meetings

Qualifications Wales is located in Newport where most meetings will be held.

Accountability

The Chair will be appointed by the Minister for Education and will be accountable to the Minister for carrying out their duties and for their performance.

Standards in Public Life

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. All successful candidates will be asked to subscribe to the [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#).

Remuneration

The post of Chair is remunerated at £337 per day for a time commitment in the region of 5 days per month. Qualifications Wales will have a scheme to reimburse subsistence expenses, and other expenses necessarily incurred on business. You will be entitled to claim travel and other reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out work on the in accordance with this scheme. You may also be eligible to claim reimbursement for costs in relation to child care/care of the elderly/assistant carer, whilst carrying out work on behalf of the Body.

The appointment is not pensionable.

Timing & Process

Selection Process

The interview panel will assess candidates' CVs and cover letters to determine who it believes best meet the criteria for the role, and who will be invited to interview. The panel will rely only on the information you provide in your CV and statement to assess whether you have the skills and experience required. Please ensure that you provide evidence to support how you meet all of the essential criteria.

The selection panel will be chaired by Rosemary Varley OBE acting as the Senior Independent Panel Member and will also comprise Ann Evans, current Chair for Qualifications Wales and Steve Davies, Director of Education for Welsh Government.

Goodson Thomas has been appointed as the retained search consultants to support the whole selection process. For more information on the Welsh Government's use of data processors, please see below.

Data processors are third parties who provide elements of our recruitment service for us. We have contracts in place with our data processors. This means that they cannot do anything with your personal information unless we have instructed them to do it. They will not share your personal information with any organisation apart from us. They will hold it securely and retain it for the period we instruct.

Your application may be "long-listed", subject to the number of applications received, before it is passed to the shortlisting panel for consideration.

We anticipate that by end of March 2019 the panel will have decided who will be invited for interview mid April 2019.

The panel will select for interview only the strongest applicants who it feels have demonstrated that they best meet the criteria set out in the person specification. However, if you have applied under the guaranteed interview scheme and you meet the minimum essential criteria for the post, then you will also be invited for interview.

If you are invited to interview and if the interview date is not already provided in this information pack, we will aim to provide you with as much notice as we can of the interview date. If you are unable to make the arranged interview date, we will endeavour to re-arrange it, but it might not be possible due to time constraints within the appointment timetable or selection panel availability.

You will receive email communication from the Appoint system to let you know whether or not you have been invited to be interviewed. It is our intention that interviews will take place in Cardiff.

If invited to interview, the panel will question you about your skills and experience, asking specific questions to assess whether you meet the criteria set out for the post.

Candidates, who the panel believe are 'appointable', will be recommended to Ministers who will make the final decision. The Minister may choose to meet with

appointable candidates before making a decision. There will be a time gap between interview and a final appointment decision being made. Candidates who have been interviewed will be kept informed of progress.

If you are successful, you will receive a letter appointing you as non-executive Chair of Qualifications Wales, which will confirm the terms on which the appointment is offered. If you are unsuccessful at interview, you will be notified by Welsh Government.

We appreciate it takes a lot of time and effort to apply for roles and that feedback is a valuable part of the process. As a result, the letter will provide the details of who you may approach for feedback on your interview and application, if you so wish.

Closing Date

The closing date for applications is 11th March 2019. We will not be able to consider your application if it is received after this date. It is intended to hold interviews for this post either 9th or 16th April 2019.

Governance Calendar

2019:

- Board dates: 24 January, 18 July, 26 September, 21 November 2019, 23 January 2020
- Board Development Day: 15 May 2019
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee: 23 May, 4 July, 1 November, 25 February 2020
- Regulation Committee: 27 June, 10 October, 12 December 2019, 27 February 2020.
- Remuneration Committee: Dates to be confirmed.
- Resources Committee: 10 July, 24 October 2019, 10 March 2020.