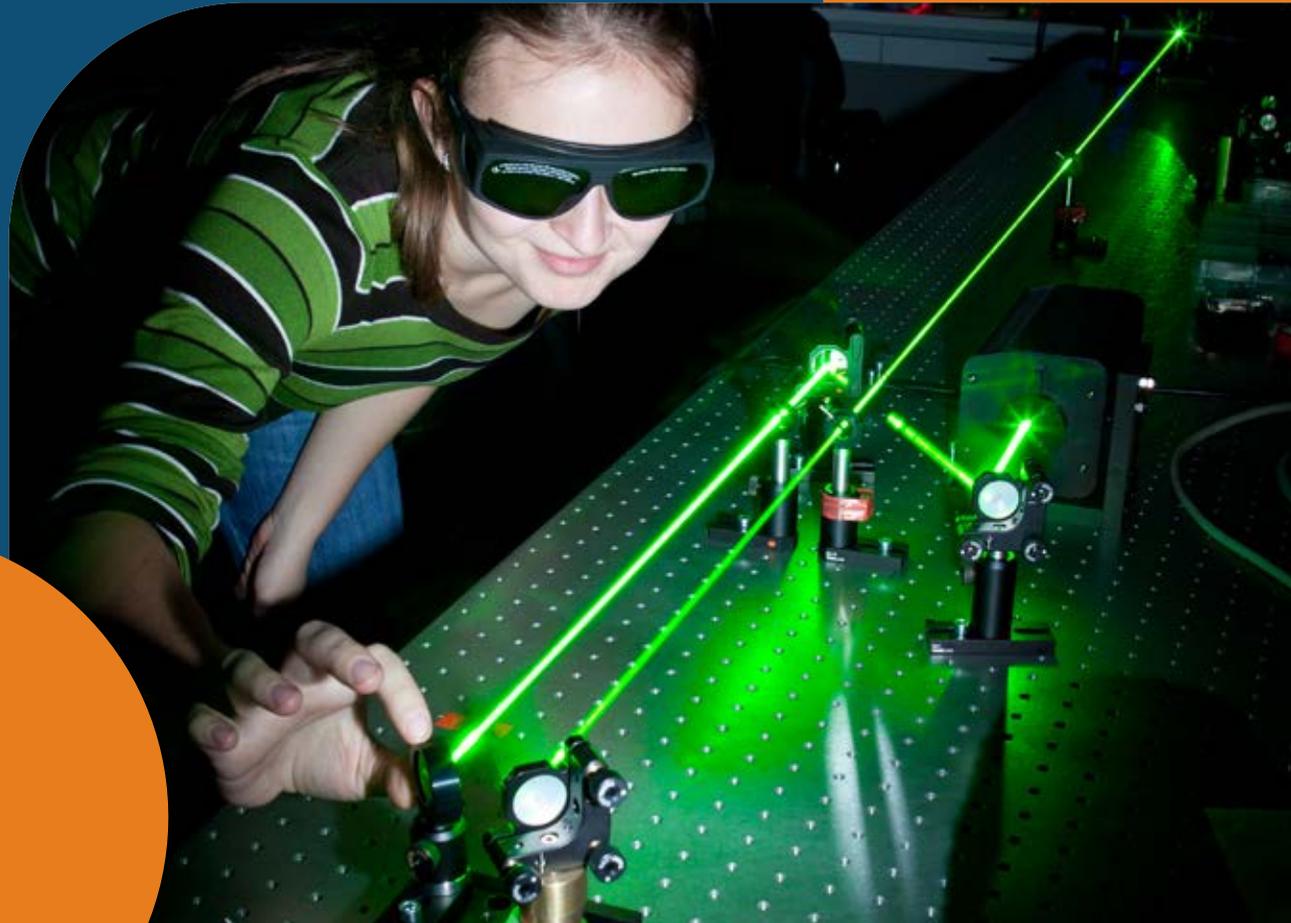




Department
for Education

Chair of the board of the Office for Students

Information pack



WELCOME



Thank you for your interest in becoming Chair of the Office for Students' board.

England's higher education sector is a global leader: diverse, enterprising and creative, delivering high quality teaching and cutting-edge research. It is my mission to ensure the higher education sector provides opportunities for all dedicated and talented students who are qualified by ability and attainment to benefit from them and which enable them to thrive in an increasingly complex and changing world.

As the independent regulator of higher education in England, the Office for Students (OfS) has a critical role to play in this mission. It aims to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers. And it will play a pivotal role in delivering in our manifesto commitment to tackle the problem of low quality courses, to drive a stronger alignment of the courses delivered with the economic and societal needs of the nation, in a way that ensures all graduates benefit from their studies.

We are seeking to appoint an outstanding Chair who can bring leadership and influence to the OfS at board level, working with the board, Ministers and the Chief Executive to provide clear strategic direction and priorities for the next phase of the OfS' critical work.

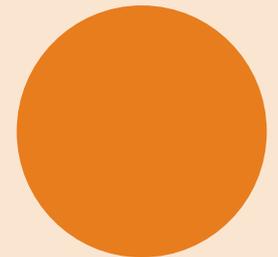
You will have substantial leadership experience and excellent strategic thinking capability, as well as an exceptional abilities in leadership, working with others and driving change.

My Department is focused on equality of opportunity and I am committed to ensuring that public appointments better represent the views of the communities which they serve. I particularly encourage applicants from underrepresented groups, those based outside London and the South-East and applicants who have achieved success through non-traditional educational routes.

Thank you once again for your interest in this role. If you have the skills and experience we are seeking, we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education



ABOUT THE ROLE

The Secretary of State for Education is seeking a new Chair for the OfS' non-executive board, to support and challenge the organisation as it continues its drive to improve higher education for students in England and deliver upon the Government's manifesto commitments.

ROLE OF THE CHAIR

1. Work closely with Ministers and government officials to set a new clear strategic direction for the OfS, taking it into the next phase of its critical work.
2. Support and challenge the Chief Executive on the effectiveness and performance of the OfS, monitoring progress against its objectives and ensuring it is discharging its statutory duties in line with government policy, and in a way which minimises bureaucracy wherever possible.
3. Build effective relationships with partners in the provider, research and business community, to engage with them, share data, work together on areas of common interest and promote understanding of the OfS' role and its activities.
4. Steer and manage the OfS board. Make recommendations to Ministers on the appointment of board members, ensuring that board membership reflects the diversity of the UK, and ensuring high standards of propriety and robust financial management across the OfS.



WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR

Applicants will be assessed against the following criteria. If there is a high volume of applicants, preliminary sifting will be done using only the first criteria.

As well as sharing your C.V with us, you should demonstrate clearly, in the candidate application form, how you meet each of the following requirements of the post (max 300 words per criteria – if this is exceeded only the first 300 words will be considered).

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

1. Excellent strategic thinking capability, experience of setting a clear vision and demonstrating strategic leadership in a range of contexts and complex environments.
2. A strong communicator with outstanding ability to influence and build effective relationships with stakeholders across the public, private or voluntary sectors, including the ability to communicate effectively with ministers.
3. Experience and a sound understanding of board management and commitment to the principles of public life.
4. Commitment to the principles of levelling up, championing opportunity for all, and representing or advocating for disadvantaged regions in the UK.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

1. Sound knowledge and understanding of the operation of regulatory activity, the strengths and limitations of regulators, and the implication of these matters to the higher education sector.



The Department is focused on equality of opportunity and is committed to ensuring that public appointments better represent the views of the communities which they serve. We particularly encourage applicants from underrepresented groups, those based outside London and the South-East and applicants who have achieved success through non-traditional educational routes.

The Department for Education has a strong culture of inclusion and diversity and it wants to encourage applications from people with a diverse range of backgrounds and educational routes. In 2018 we launched a five year strategy to create a department where everyone is able to bring their whole self to work and where honesty, challenge and innovation are encouraged and valued. We are recognised by leading diversity organisations for promoting diversity in the workplace.

We want to ensure any appointee to the Department's arm's length bodies is committed to promoting diversity, in its broadest possible sense. This will include embedding a commitment to the principles of levelling up and championing opportunity for all across the organisation, helping to ensure that the organisation is one in which a genuinely diverse range of views can be expressed, without fear or favour.

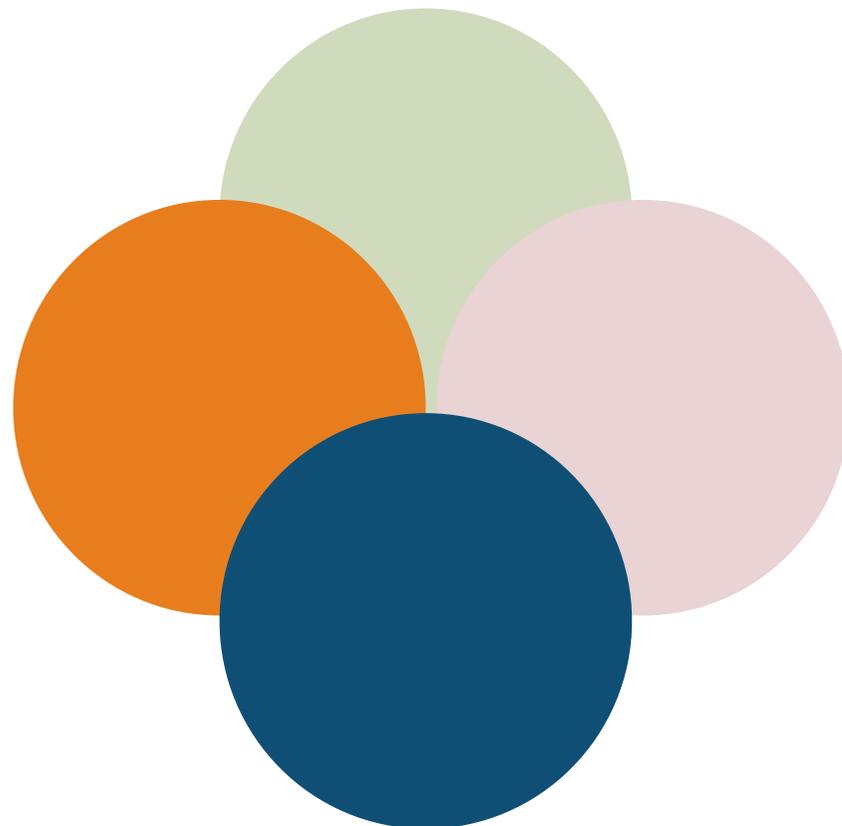
CHAMPIONING SOCIAL MOBILITY

The Department champions social mobility in all of its policies and is committed to opening up opportunities for people from all backgrounds, all socio-economic classes and all regions of the UK. We are committed to embedding this principle into our recruitment and public appointments and expect all our leaders, including in arm's length bodies, to take action to attract and retain staff from all backgrounds, while also supporting them to progress within their careers.

DISABILITY CONFIDENT

We are a member of the Government's Disability Confident scheme and have achieved Disability Confident Leader status, signifying our role as champions of the scheme. We use the Disability Confident symbol, along with other like-minded employers, to show our commitment to good practice in employing people with a disability.

We ask that all applicants complete an anonymised Diversity Monitoring Form used for gathering data only in order to ensure departments are recruiting from the widest possible pool. The information you provide is held by the Public Appointments team and not shared with the selection panel.



HOW TO APPLY

The closing date for applications is: **Tuesday 22nd September 2020**

Information on the timetable for this campaign, selection process, requisite security clearance, and the Advisory Assessment Panel can be found on the Centre for Public Appointments website: publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Please submit the following documents by email to:
PublicAppointments.APPLICATIONS@education.gov.uk

1. A CV

2. Candidate Application Form

3. Diversity Monitoring Form

Please include the heading “Chair of the Office for Students” in the subject box of your email and submit your application documents as separate attachments.

Please note the following:

- We cannot accept applications submitted after the closing date.
- Applications will be assessed on the documentation provided. Please refer to the advert and checklist to ensure you have provided the necessary documentation. We will assess it based solely on documentation provided.
- Applications will be acknowledged upon receipt.
- Feedback will only be given to candidates unsuccessful following interview.
- When 30 or more applications are received, it is likely that your application will be “pre-assessed” before it is passed to the Advisory Assessment Panel for consideration. You should be aware that in this situation, your application might not be considered in full by all the members of the Panel.

We expect to notify candidates of application outcomes by **w/c 2 November 2020**.

Interviews will take place **w/c 23 or 30 November 2020**.

The government’s preferred candidate will be announced **w/c 4 January 2021**.

Please note that the successful candidate will be required to attend a pre-appointment hearing with the Education Select Committee. More information is available in the terms of appointment section.

Select Committee pre-appointment hearing will take place end **January / beginning of February 2021**.

The appointment will be made shortly after the pre-appointment scrutiny hearing.

This appointment comes under the scrutiny of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Peter Riddell, and his office.



TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Location

Bi-monthly board meetings usually take place in London (these are currently through remote access)

Time requirement

Approximately 2 days per week

Term

4 years, subject to performance. The Chair is not an employee of OfS. The Secretary of State may recommend that the appointment be renewed at the end of the first period of office, subject to consistently good performance. There should therefore be no expectation of automatic reappointment. The maximum total term is 10 years.

Remuneration

£59,000 per annum

Expenses

You will be reimbursed for any travel and subsistence expenses you necessarily incur while on official OfS business at the appropriate rate.

Pension

The post is not pensionable.

Other

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and are required to adhere to the **Code of Conduct for Members of the board** and must confirm that you have a sound understanding of and commitment to **the principles of public life**.

Pre-appointment Scrutiny by Education Select Committee

This role is subject to pre-appointment scrutiny by the Education Select Committee.

Pre-appointment scrutiny is an important part of the appointment process for some of the most significant public appointments made by Ministers. It is designed to provide an added level of scrutiny to verify that the recruitment meets the principles set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Pre-appointment scrutiny has two parts.

Firstly, information concerning the appointment, the shortlist of interviewees, and the Secretary of State's preferred candidate will be shared with the Education Select Committee. As part of this process you will need to be content for your name, your CV and the interests you declare on your candidate application form to be shared with the select committee if you are shortlisted for interview. You may also be required to complete a pre-appointment hearing questionnaire which could include, among other things:

- declarations of any relevant potential conflicts of interest;
- what you see as the priorities and key risks for the organisation;
- questions about how you would lead the board and work with stakeholders;
- your commitment to standards in public life and how you would handle being in the public eye.

Normally any information provided to the select committee by the Government or a candidate will be published.

Secondly, it is likely that the select committee will decide to call the Government's preferred candidate to a public hearing to answer questions relating to their suitability to the role. You would not be expected to have an in depth technical knowledge of how the body works or an exact plan of what you would do in the role. However you will be expected to provide a credible representation of your understanding of the work of the body and what your role in its future would be.

The proposed date for a pre-appointment hearing for this role is to be confirmed, but will likely take place at the end of January / beginning of February 2021.

The Government is committed to making public appointments as accessible as possible so that no one is deterred from applying. The Department will provide support to you to help you prepare for the hearing and the clerks to the select committee will also be available to discuss with you how the hearing will run. You will also be supported by the Department in working with the select committee should you require any adjustment to enable you to participate fully in the hearing process.

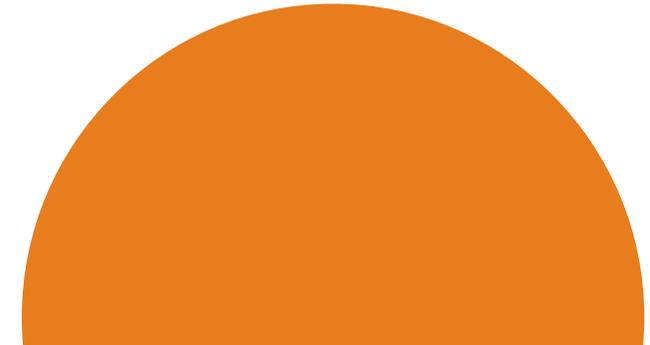
More information

For more information about pre-appointment scrutiny, please see the following Cabinet Office guidance:

Cabinet Office guidance on pre-appointment scrutiny

The Liaison Committee publishes guidelines to select committees for pre-appointment hearing

The Code of Conduct for board members of public bodies, which sets out the expectations which the Government places on non-executive members of public bodies.



PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

INTEGRITY

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.



HOW TO COMPLAIN

Please contact the Department for Education's Public Appointments team if you would like to make a complaint regarding your application at **PublicAppointments.DFE@education.gov.uk**

We will acknowledge your complaint upon receive and respond within 15 working days.

If you are not content with our response please contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments at **publicappointments@csc.gov.uk**

Further information on complaints can be found on the Commissioner for Public Appointment's website **publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk**