



Department
for Education

Office for Students

Director for Fair Access and Participation

Information pack



WELCOME



Thank you for your interest in becoming the Director for Fair Access and Participation for the Office for Students (OfS).

England's higher education sector is a global leader: delivering high quality teaching and cutting-edge research, diverse, enterprising and creative. 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 OfS has a critical role to play in this mission. It aims to maintain the highest standards of excellence throughout our higher education sector, and to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience that enriches their lives and careers. It will play a pivotal role in delivering the Government's manifesto commitments to tackle low quality courses, to drive a stronger alignment between the courses delivered and the economic and societal needs of the nation, and to levelling up opportunity across the UK.

We are seeking to appoint an outstanding Director for Fair Access and Participation. Reporting directly to the OfS board on access and participation, this is a unique opportunity to play a critical role in the levelling up agenda by driving up standards, ensuring equality of opportunity for young people across the country, one of Government's highest priorities.

The Director for Fair Access and Participation will play a pivotal role in ensuring that access to higher education, including to our most selective universities, is based upon a student's attainment and their ability to succeed, rather than on their background. Central to the delivery of this ambition will be embedding, within the OfS and the higher education sector more broadly, the fundamental commitment to educational excellence and aspiration for all that, since 2010, have successfully transformed our school system.

This will involve supporting students from all backgrounds to achieve at the highest levels and challenging practices that restrict opportunity, such as the proliferation of degrees that do little for students' skills or employability, or the patronising attitude that assessment standards should be lowered for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. You will lead the OfS' engagement with the Department for Education's proposals to widen opportunity by moving to a system of post-qualification admissions and drive forward our ambitions to see universities playing a much greater role in raising attainment in schools. Providing students with access to new skills and better paid jobs is fundamental to this Government's ambition of enabling every person to fulfil their potential – while being rooted in liberty, agency and fairness.

You will be accountable for a number of statutory duties under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, including overseeing the performance of OfS' access and participation functions (to promote equality of opportunity in connection with access to and participation in English higher education) performing those functions and reporting to the board on them. We expect you to have delegated responsibility for agreeing access and participation plans, which capture the whole student lifecycle of access, retention, attainment and progression from HE. Forging an effective working relationship with the Chief Executive, the Chair and the board of the OfS will be key. This will be a challenging and demanding role, but it offers the opportunity to make a real contribution to the Government's commitment to improving equality

My Department is focused on equality of opportunity and I am committed to ensuring that 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.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education

ABOUT THE ROLE

The Secretary of State for Education is seeking a new Director for Fair Access and Participation.

The successful applicant will be accountable for a number of statutory duties under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, including overseeing the performance of OfS' access and participation functions performing those functions and reporting to the board on them. In particular, they will be responsible for:

1. Overseeing the promotion of equality of opportunity in connection with access to and participation in English higher education, and reporting to the OfS board on all OfS access and participation functions.
2. Working to the CEO and closely with others in the OfS executive team to ensure that access and participation is integrated into the overall responsibilities of the OfS as well as working with providers to ensure a coordinated approach to regulating the higher education sector and ensure that higher education providers make further and faster progress on access and participation issues.
3. Agreeing Access and Participation plans with English higher education providers.
4. Contributing to the development, leadership, management and success of the Office the Students as a key member of the Executive Team.



WHO WE ARE 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.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

1. Strategic and influential leadership, operating at senior management or executive level in a complex and dynamic environment, with the ability to bring about sector-wide change in light of upholding and delivering the highest standards of educational excellence.
2. Proven communication, negotiation and influencing skills at a senior level, which would enable you to build effective relationships with Ministers, the OfS board and Executive and across the sector, commanding the respect of a diverse range of stakeholders.
3. A demonstrable commitment to upholding and delivering the highest standards of educational excellence and attainment for children and young people of all backgrounds.
4. A demonstrable commitment to equality of opportunity, real social mobility and the levelling up agenda, with a track record of having delivered improvements in educational outcomes for disadvantaged young people, in either the school, further education, higher education or charitable sector.

We are particularly interested in hearing from applicants who have a strong understanding of and belief in social mobility and educational excellence, whether that is from the school, college, charity or university sector.



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

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.

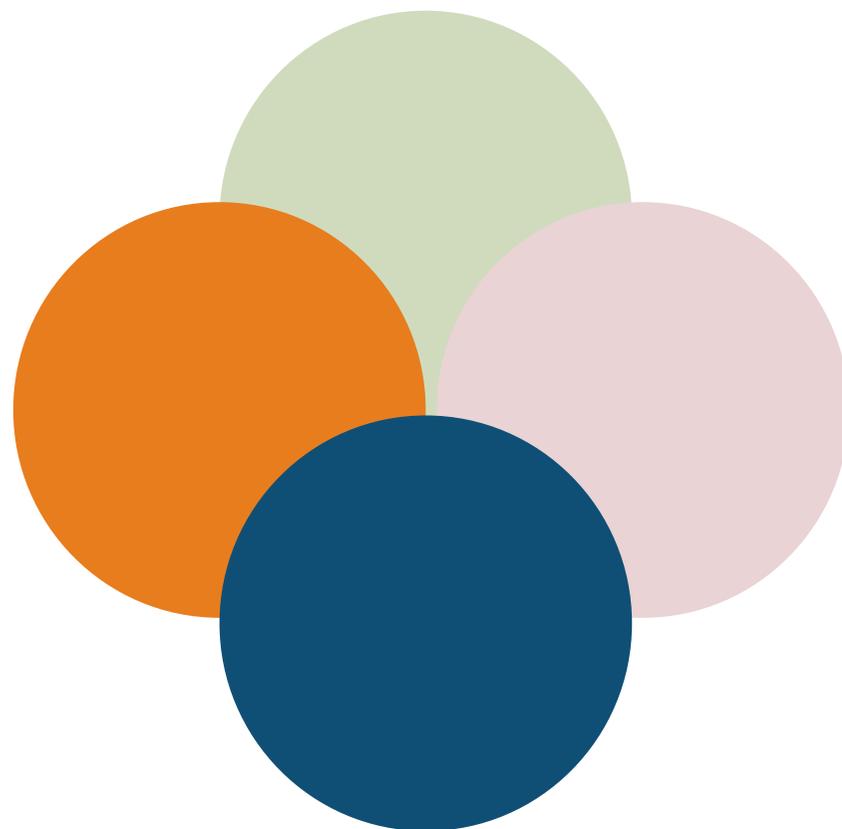
We want to ensure any appointee to the Department's arm's length bodies is committed to promoting diversity, in its broadest possible sense. This will include embedding a commitment to the principles of levelling up and championing opportunity for all across the organisation, helping to ensure that the 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 OfS Sponsorship Team and not shared with the selection panel.



TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Location

This is a full time, executive position although part time working could be considered.

The successful candidate will work flexibly, based in either London or Bristol.

Term

The appointment will be for a 4-year term, with the option of this being extended.

Remuneration

The role attracts an annual salary of £130,000.

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 Director for Fair Access and Participation will be eligible to join the Civil Service Pension Scheme.

Other

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. The successful candidate will be asked to confirm that they have a sound understanding of and commitment to the principles of public life.

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.



HOW TO APPLY

The closing date for applications is 11am on 1 July 2021

Information on the timetable for this campaign, selection process, 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:
OfficeforStudents.APPLICATIONS@education.gov.uk

1. A CV

2. Candidate Application Form

3. Diversity Monitoring Form

Please include the heading “Director for Fair Access and Participation: Office for Students” in the subject box of your email and submit your application documents as separate attachments.

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).

Please note the following:

- We cannot accept applications submitted after the closing date.
- Applications will be assessed solely on the documentation provided. Please refer to the advert and checklist to ensure you have provided the necessary documentation.
- Applications will be acknowledged upon receipt.
- Feedback will only be given to candidates unsuccessful following interview.

For further information on the panel and sift and interview dates, please see the public appointments website: publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/

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.

If you have any queries about the role or the appointment process or raise a complaint, please contact
OfficeforStudents.APPLICATIONS@education.gov.uk



PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way.

Consistent with the Governance Code, applicants will be assessed on merit, and all candidates for public appointment will need to uphold the standards of conduct set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life. These will be tested as part of the selection process and the Selection Panel must satisfy itself that all candidates for appointments can meet these standards, which are:

SELFLESSNESS

Holders of Public Office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

INTEGRITY

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

OBJECTIVITY

Carrying out Public Office 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 receipt and respond within 15 working days.