



Department  
for Education

# Office for Students board Non-Executive Directors Information pack



# WELCOME



## Thank you for your interest in becoming a non-executive member of the Office for Students' (OfS) board.

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 a number of non-executive members who can bring their skills and experience to bear on the issues facing higher education in England. You will work with the new Chair, Lord Wharton, the OfS board and the OfS Executive to provide clear strategic direction and priorities for the next phase of the OfS' critical work.

The Department for Education 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 new non-executive directors for the OfS 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.**

OfS non-executive board members play a key role in shaping the OfS strategic direction and supporting the reform programme. Board members are 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 essential that the board has the range of skills, knowledge and experience required to be the independent regulator of a sector which is of such strategic importance to the UK, including representation of the diversity of the higher education sector.



# WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR

**Our current campaign is designed to ensure the OfS board has the right skills and experience to operate successfully. Board members are appointed by the Secretary of State and are formally responsible, through the Chair, to the Secretary of State.**

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.

Applicants will be assessed against the following criteria.

#### Essential Criteria:

- Excellent strategic thinking capability, experience of setting a clear vision and demonstrating strategic leadership.
- Strong commitment to the principles of real social mobility, levelling up, equality of opportunity and freedom of speech.
- Ability to influence and inspire confidence with a wide range of stakeholders both in formal environments (such as board meetings) and less formal environments.
- Good judgement and integrity, understanding of financial and corporate governance at a strategic level, as well as a commitment to the seven principles of conduct in public life [www.public-standards.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/the-seven-principles](http://www.public-standards.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/the-seven-principles).

#### Desirable Criteria:

Under the Higher Education and Research Act the Secretary of State must have regard to the desirability of the OfS' members (between them) having experience of the following:

- 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.

We therefore welcome applicants with expertise in one or more of these areas, as well as encouraging applicants more broadly with other educational experience, not just higher education, who are committed to educational excellence and equality of opportunity.

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



# 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.

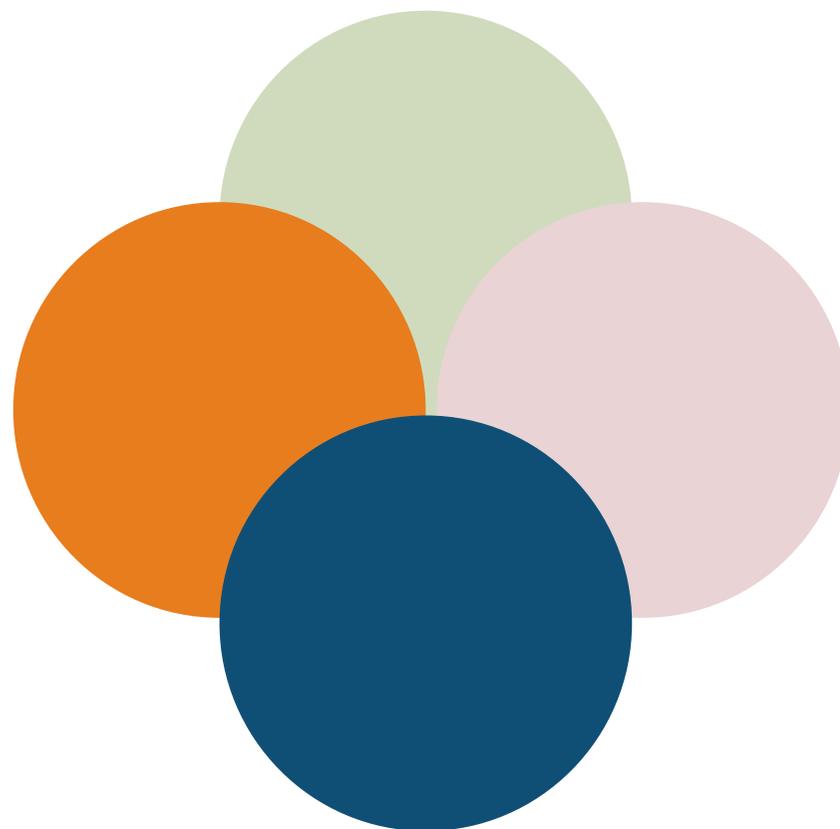
We want to ensure any appointee to the Department's arm's length bodies is committed to promoting diversity, in its broadest possible sense. This will include embedding a commitment to the principles of levelling up and championing opportunity for all across the organisation, helping to ensure that the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



# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

## Location

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

## Time Requirement

The role has an expected time commitment of 20 days per annum.

## Term

The appointment will be for an initial period of 3 years. Non-Executive Directors are not employees of the OfS. The Secretary of State may recommend that appointments be renewed at the end of the first period of office, subject to consistently good performance, but there should therefore be no expectation of automatic reappointment. The maximum total term is 10 years.

## Remuneration

£9,180 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. The successful candidates will be asked to subscribe to a Code of Conduct for Members of the board and must confirm that you have sound understanding of and commitment to the principles of public life (which are also set out on page 9).



# HOW TO APPLY

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](http://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

Please submit the following documents by email to:  
[PublicAppointments.APPLICATIONS@education.gov.uk](mailto:PublicAppointments.APPLICATIONS@education.gov.uk)

## 1. A CV – of no more than 2 pages

## 2. Candidate Application Form

## 3. Diversity Monitoring Form

Please include the heading “Non-Executive Director: 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 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.
- 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.

These appointments come under the scrutiny of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.



# 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](mailto:PublicAppointments.DFE@education.gov.uk)**

We will acknowledge your complaint upon receipt 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](mailto:publicappointments@csc.gov.uk)**

Further information on complaints can be found on the Commissioner for Public Appointments's website **[publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk](http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk)**