



**Appointment as Chairperson and Ordinary Members to the Board of the National Council  
for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)**

**Closing Date: 15:00 on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018**

**State Boards Division  
Public Appointments Service  
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stateboards.ie operates under the auspices of the Public Appointments Service and is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

The Public Appointments Service (PAS), established under statute in 2004, provides an independent shared service in recruitment, assessment and selection to organisations across the Civil and Public Services. On 30 September 2014, the Government decided that the PAS should also be given responsibility for putting in place an open, accessible, rigorous and transparent system to support Ministers in making appointments to State Boards. Our dedicated website, [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie), is the channel through which the PAS advertises vacancies on State Boards. It is also the means through which accomplished, experienced and qualified people, including people who might not previously have been identified as available for appointment, can then apply to be considered for particular vacancies.

## Membership of State Boards

High standards of corporate governance in all State Agencies, whether in the commercial or non-commercial sphere, are critical to ensuring a positive contribution to the State's overall social and economic development.

Members of State Boards are appointed to act on behalf of the citizen to oversee the running of the affairs of state bodies. State bodies must serve the interests of the taxpayer, pursue value for money in their endeavours (including managing risk appropriately), and act transparently as public entities. Members of State Boards, and the relevant management team, are accountable for the proper management of the organisation.

Board members should act on a fully informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of the State body, subject to the objectives set by Government. In that regard and in accordance with 13.2 of the Guidelines on Appointments to State Boards, "it is advisable that no member of a State Board should serve more than two full terms of appointment or should hold appointments to more than two State Boards."

The [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016](#) (the Code) provides a framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by both commercial and non-commercial State bodies.

In order to be an effective contributor on a State Board it is recommended that members should:

- bring independent and objective scrutiny to the oversight of the organisation;
- be prepared to be challenging when necessary while being supportive to the delivery of organisational strategy and objectives;
- be equipped to offer considered advice on the basis of sound judgement and experience;
- be prepared to make a time commitment to their work commensurate with their role.

## Appointments to the Board of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

<b>Location:</b>	Dublin
<b>Number of Vacancies:</b>	Chairperson and 2 Ordinary Members
<b>Remuneration:</b>	Nil. Travel and subsistence is payable at appropriate civil service rates.
<b>Time Requirements:</b>	7 full day meetings per annum. Successful candidates may be appointed to sub-committees. A total of 15 -20 days per annum for members and approximately 35 days for the Chairperson role would be required.

Candidate's attention is also drawn to the provisions of the Code in relation to Audit and Risk Committee membership which can be found [here](#).

### 1. Background

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment was established in November 1987 as a successor to the Curriculum and Examinations Board and was reconstituted as a statutory body in July 2001. The brief of the statutory Council as outlined in the Education Act (1998), is to advise the Minister for Education and Skills on matters relating to:

*...the curriculum for early childhood education, primary and post-primary schools and the assessment procedures employed in schools and examinations on subjects which are part of the curriculum. (41.1 a, b)*

The work of the Council is a key part of developing and enhancing the education system and the Council is responsible for delivering on significant elements in the Action Plan for Education. Major reform of the Junior Cycle at second-level is underway and significant proposals for reforming the structure of the Primary Curriculum and Senior Cycle at second-level have commenced.

The NCCA has a full-time executive staff of 48, led by the Chief Executive. Funding for the NCCA is by way of a grant from the Department of Education and Skills (2018 budget of circa €5.5m). The current Council was appointed and commenced its work in July 2015 and will continue until December 31<sup>st</sup> 2018.

### 2. Functions of the Council

The Council is largely a representative organisation with nominees from education and wider civil society organisations appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills. It has 25 members including the Chair and two Deputy Chairs, all of whom are appointed for a three-year term. The members of the Council are nominated by organisations representing teachers, school managers, parents, business interests, trade unions, and other educational interests. Other members include representatives of the Department of Education and Skills, the State Examinations Commission, a nominee of the Minister for Education and Skills and

of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The Minister for Education and Skills appoints the Chairperson.

At its meetings, the Council considers, discusses and approves proposals for curriculum and assessment change, specifications and other materials for particular subjects and curriculum areas, the findings of educational research, and reports of public consultations undertaken to inform curriculum development. It makes recommendations to the Minister about the strategic and structural developments required in curriculum development and assessment and on the detailed curriculum specification for subjects and areas of learning.

The Council's standing orders emphasise the importance of consensus-building in its decision-making processes.

The Council Chairperson plays a key role in chairing and managing Council meetings to achieve effective and timely recommendations to the Minister on a wide range of curriculum policies, proposals and specifications. The Chairperson works with the CEO and the Executive of the NCCA in setting the overall strategic direction of the Council's work; in preparing the agendas and discussing documentation for, and progressing the work of, Council meetings; in liaising as appropriate with the Minister and Department of Education and Skills and relevant State Agencies and in representing the NCCA publicly in the education sector and generally. The Chairperson leads the work of the Council in its governance and oversight role.

The Council has two sub-committees – an Audit and Risk Committee and a Governance Committee. As part of NCCA structures there are three Boards that report to the Council on Early Childhood and Primary, Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle. These three Boards are chaired by the two Deputy Chairs and another Council member.

Further information on the Council can be found [here](#).

Details of the current membership of the Council can be found [here](#).

### **3. Person Specification**

The Minister for Education and Skills invites applications from suitably qualified candidates to fill the position of Council Chairperson and two other Council members, whose skill and experience will complement those of the other nominees from representative bodies. Of those vacancies one is for the Council Chairperson, one for a Council Member who will be nominated by the Minister for Education and Skills and should have knowledge and experience relevant to primary and/or post-primary education and one for a Council Member who will be nominated by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and should have knowledge and experience relevant to early childhood care and education.

#### **Council Chairperson:**

The role of Council Chairperson is a key role and will include:

- Leading the Council in setting vision and strategic direction
- Effective chairing of Council meetings to deliver on Council's mandate and work programme and facilitating participation by all Council members

- Leading on performance management – for the Council itself as “board” of the organisation, for the Council organisation overall, and for the CEO
- Maintaining good governance, including oversight of compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016), effective internal and external audit arrangements and compliance with all key regulatory and reporting requirements
- Determining the agenda for Council meetings
- Ensuring that the CEO provides the board of the Council with sufficient information to support decision-making
- Representing Council publicly and with key stakeholders.

### **Essential Criteria – Chairperson**

Expressions of interest are now invited from members of the public who consider they possess the skills and experience necessary to act as Council Chairperson. The ideal Chairperson of the Council will have:

- Experience in chairing Board or equivalent and/or of chairing significant multi-stakeholder decision –making taskforces or groups
- Knowledge/experience of the education sector and appreciation of the strategic context in which NCCA operates
- Credibility or the capacity to establish credibility with the education sector in this role
- Proven experience in the review of operational and financial performance and of governance requirements
- Strong influencing skills, the ability to communicate with impact and the ability to convince through personal credibility
- Leadership experience of stakeholder management in a complex, consensus-based decision-making environment
- Capacity to represent and present on behalf of the NCCA in public fora and at public events.

Candidate’s attention is drawn to the general details of the role of Chairperson as set out on page 19 of the Code which can be found [here](#). The Principle states:-

- The Chairperson is responsible for leadership of the Board and ensuring its effectiveness on all aspects of its role.
- The Chairperson should display high standards of integrity and probity and set expectations regarding culture, values, and behaviours for the State body and for the tone of discussions at Board level.

### **2. Council Member:**

Council members are expected to bring their education and other expertise and experience to the decision-making processes of Council and work with all Council members to develop curriculum and assessment proposals and advice that will facilitate a high-quality experience for all learners. While many Council members will bring the perspective of their nominating organisations, as Council members their responsibility is to make decisions in the best interests of the NCCA’s mandate. Council members are expected to devote sufficient time

to preparing for Council meetings by reading all papers circulated and by informing and developing their own knowledge and expertise on the issues raised.

The Council is the governing board for the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and, as such, Council members will be responsible for governing NCCA in accordance with the Code of Governance for State Bodies and good governance practice. In that context, the Council is collectively responsible for leading and directing NCCA's activities, including reviewing and guiding strategic direction and major plans of action, risk management policies and procedures, annual budgets and business plans, setting performance objectives, monitoring implementation and State body performance, and overseeing major capital expenditure and investment decisions. All Council members are expected to act diligently and independently in fulfilling these functions.

#### **A. Appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills**

##### **Essential:**

Candidates must demonstrate in their application evidence of:-

- Experience relevant to primary and/or post-primary education
- Working with stakeholders to arrive at consensus-based decisions and solutions
- A general understanding of qualifications, curriculum, assessment and quality assurance issues in some or all of early childhood care and education, primary and post-primary school settings
- An understanding of the Irish education system and an appreciation of broad issues related to curriculum in the education system and to the wider, national social and economic context
- An understanding of educational assessment, and assessment and certification issues in post-primary education.

#### **B. Nominated by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills**

##### **Essential**

Candidates must demonstrate in their application evidence of:-

- Experience relevant to early childhood care and education
- Working with stakeholders to arrive at consensus-based decisions and solutions
- A general understanding of qualifications, curriculum, assessment and quality assurance issues in some or all of early childhood care and education, primary and second level school settings
- An understanding of the Irish early childhood care and education system and an appreciation of broad issues related to curriculum in early childhood care and education and to the wider, national social and economic context

### **Desirable for both roles**

- Experience of developing strategic reform proposals and driving systemic change
- Aptitude for strategic management and managing organisational change.
- Previous Board membership
- Knowledge of the application of good corporate governance practice
- Awareness of emerging developments in research and practice in education and/or early childhood care and education, or particular expertise in some aspect of these developments.

### **4. Term of Appointment**

Appointments to the Board will be for an initial period of 3 years with an option to extend the term of engagement for a second term of up to 3 years, subject to:

- The membership of any member of the Board may be terminated by the Minister at any time, on the basis of reasons to be stated by the Minister.
- A member of the Board may resign his or her membership of the Board by notice in writing sent or given to the Minister, and the resignation shall take effect on the day on which the Minister receives the notice.
- Members of the Board shall, subject to the provisions of this Schedule, hold office upon such terms and conditions as the Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, from time to time determine.
- The roles and responsibilities of Board Members are described in the Revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 which is available on the website of the Department of Finance [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies](#).
- A board member shall cease to be a member of the board if he or she is nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann, is elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or as a representative in the European Parliament, elected to the European Parliament, or becomes a member of a local authority.

### **5. Submitting your Application**

Before submitting your expression of interest, please review the self-assessment questionnaire which can be found [here](#). This questionnaire is designed to help you in considering whether to submit an expression of interest - you are not required to submit the questionnaire as part of the application process.

Having considered the general suitability criteria for membership of a State Board, you should consider carefully how your background and experience fits with the specific appointment criteria set out in the Person Specification section in this booklet.

**Please give careful consideration to the possibility of any potential conflict of interest that may exist and address this in your cover letter. The Assessment Panel may decide, based on the perceived level of conflict, not to forward your name for consideration.**

Your submission should be made via the following link [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie) together with your **Curriculum Vitae** and a **cover letter** (see Appendix 1 of this booklet for help with the online process).

### IMPORTANT NOTE

Please take care when submitting your expression of interest. As the Assessment Panel will generally make its recommendation(s) based on consideration of the documentation which you submit, it is most important that you do the following:

1. *Ensure your Cover Letter (and supporting CV) clearly specifies how your particular background and experience meets the requirements of the Council position(s) specified in this booklet, and*
2. *That you fully answer any supplementary questions which are presented to you as part of our online application process.*

This will help ensure that the Assessment Panel is as informed as possible as to the basis for your candidature and why you believe you are a person who could potentially be appointed to this State Board. **Please only include information that is directly relevant to the particular role for which you are applying.**

If you have any questions regarding the application process please email [info@stateboards.ie](mailto:info@stateboards.ie).

## 6. Assessment Process

An Assessment Panel (the "Panel") will be convened by PAS to consider and assess the applications received by PAS. The Panel will:

- review and discuss the expressions of interest received against the specific appointment criteria for the role, as advertised in this Information Booklet;
- assess potential candidates further once they meet the specified appointment criteria by undertaking any or all of the following steps:
  - Consideration of the written applications; and/or
  - Meeting<sup>1</sup>/conference call; and/or
  - Referee checks; and/or
  - Any other selection or verification method deemed appropriate (this may include PAS requiring statutory declarations from shortlisted applicants as to the bona fides of the qualifications and experience contained in their applications).
- arrive at a shortlist of suitable candidates to be sent forward for consideration by the Minister.

Please note that the Public Appointments Service will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by candidates as part of our selection process.

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<sup>1</sup> The Public Appointments Service will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

## **7. Confidentiality**

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence. All enquires, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process.

Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.

### **Data Protection**

The Data Protection Act 2018 provides that the processing of personal data shall be lawful where such processing is necessary for the performance of a statutory function of a controller. PAS is mandated by statute under the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act, 2004 to act as the centralised assessment and selection body for the civil service and to carry out all the procedures necessary to undertake the recruitment, assessment and selection of suitable candidates for appointment. By submitting your personal data (including your name, address, contact details and details of your education and work history contained in your curriculum vitae and cover letter) via publicjobs.ie, you acknowledge that such data may be used by the Public Appointments Service and disclosed to and used by client departments, in connection with its statutory roles to assist and advise relevant Ministers in relation to appointments to the boards of State bodies. The information contained in your publicjobs profile is yours to manage, amend, update or delete as appropriate. For more detailed information on our Data Protection Policy, please see our [Code of Practice for the Protection of Personal Data in the Public Appointments Service](#).

If your application is assessed and you are considered to be suitable for appointment your c.v. and cover letter (and any additional supplementary information requested as part of the application process), will be forwarded to the State Board Liaison Officer in the relevant Department. Once it obtains your personal data, the Department will act as data controller of such data and will retain it for up to one year following the appointment/s. Unless you request the withdrawal of your application such data may be used in considering your suitability for other similar vacancies/ roles that arise for a period of up to one year for this Board.

## APPENDIX 1

### Submitting your application:

In order to submit your application, you should take the following steps:

1. Go to [www.stateboards.ie](http://www.stateboards.ie).
2. On the bar at the top of the page click on "Available Appointments".
3. This brings you to a page with all our advertised vacancies. Select whichever position you would like to apply for (you are welcome to apply for more than one position if you wish).
4. On the relevant page please click on the "apply for position" button at the bottom of the page
5. This will bring you to a page on [www.publicjobs.ie](http://www.publicjobs.ie) and, if you already have a publicjobs.ie account, will prompt you for your username and password. If you do not have an account you will be asked to create one.
6. Once you input your details you will be brought to a page where there is a prompt in the middle of the page which says "apply here". Click on the link to the online application form beside it.
7. A form will appear on your screen, some of the text boxes will be populated with information from your publicjobs.ie profile (Name, address etc.). You will need to complete the rest of the fields and enter your name and the date at the bottom of the form. Click on "continue".
8. You will then be brought to a screen where you should upload your CV and Cover Letter. These are required documents and your application cannot be processed without them. Once you have selected these and uploaded them, please click on the "submit" button at the bottom of the page.
9. You will receive an e-mail confirmation (to the address listed in your publicjobs.ie profile) to confirm that your application has been submitted.

You must confirm that you do not have any conflicts of interest or legal impediment which would be likely to interfere with your ability to play a full part on the Board. You must also confirm that you can make yourself available to attend meetings and to carry out the duties of a Board member.