

Appointments to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

Closing Date: 15:00 on Monday 3rd 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, 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.

Appointment to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

Location:	Trim, Co. Meath
Number of Vacancies:	3
Remuneration:	Nil. Travel and Subsistence is payable at appropriate Civil Service rates.
Time Requirements:	6 full day meetings per annum plus additional time for preparation and attendance will be required.

Five committees of Council have been established – Audit & Risk; Finance; Strategy & Policy; Research and CEO performance.

A Council member would typically sit on one of the Finance/Strategy & Policy/Research committees and a number of Council members would also sit on the Audit & Risk and/or CEO performance committees. The Chairperson of the Audit Committee is currently an external appointment; is independent in his role but reports to the Council.

All committees have agreed Terms of Reference. These committees meet a number of times each year with the number of meetings varying depending on work on hand. For example, the CEO performance committee generally meets twice a year; the Audit Committee meets four times a year and the other committees typically meet once between or before Council meetings – but may meet more often.

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 Special Education was established under the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004 to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children.

Further information is available at: <http://ncse.ie/information-about-the-ncse>.

A new Support Service is being developed within the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) in order to assist schools in supporting children with special education needs.

Further information is available at: <http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/NCSE-Support-Service-Delivery-Plan-2017.pdf>

2. Functions of the Council

The functions of the NCSE Council are prescribed under Section 20 of the EPSEN Act, available at <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/30/section/20/enacted/en/html#sec20>

The NCSE currently comprises 108 permanent staff members, 99 teachers on secondment and 4 contracted staff to NCSE Support Service, headed by a Chief Executive Officer. The CEO manages and controls generally the staff, administration and business of the Council. The NCSE has a current annual budget in the order of €14.87m.

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

A full NCSE Corporate Governance Guide is provided to all Council Members. Available at: <http://ncse.ie/corporate-governance>

3. Person Specification

The EPSEN Act requires all Council Members to have a special interest or knowledge relating to the education of children with special educational needs.

The Minister for Education and Skills seeks applications from suitably qualified candidates to fill three vacancies on the Council.

Candidate's attention is drawn to the provisions of the Code in relation to the role of a Board member, where the principle states:-

- Each State body should be headed by an effective Board which is collectively responsible for the long-term sustainability of the body.
- Non-executive Board members should bring an independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance resources, key appointments and standard of conduct.

Details on the role of Board Members can be found in Section 3 of the Code which can be found [here](#).

Essential

All Candidates must demonstrate in their application evidence of a special interest or knowledge relating to the education of children with special educational needs as required by the EPSEN Act 2004.

In addition, one of the available vacancies will be filled from candidates who demonstrate knowledge and extensive experience at an appropriately senior level with:

- an extensive track record of national and international repute in educational research, especially in special education and the appropriate use of research to inform the development of policy

Department of Health Nominee

One of the available vacancies will be filled on the nomination of the Minister for Health. Candidates applying for this role must, in addition to the above, also demonstrate evidence of knowledge and extensive experience at an appropriately senior level of:

- Government Health policy and practice governing the supports, interventions and services provided for children and adults with special educational needs.

Desirable

It is desirable that candidates for all roles demonstrate knowledge and experience, at an appropriately senior level, of one or more of the following:

- Strategic Planning
- Corporate Governance and Compliance (including Risk Management)
- Previous experience of Board membership

Please note that there is a specific requirement set out in legislation concerning the gender composition of the NCSE Council. A minimum of 6 men and 6 women are required to be appointed to the 13 person Council. Gender may therefore be a significant factor when filling vacancies to the NCSE Council. It is also desirable that both primary and post-primary education perspectives be represented on the Council.

4. Term of Appointment

Appointments to the Council will be for an initial period of 4 years commencing on 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2022, with an option to extend the term of engagement for a second term of 4 years.

Under the terms of the prescribed legislation, members may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

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 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 Authority 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.

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
 - Meeting¹/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.

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.

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

8. 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.
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 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.
8. If there is a supplementary question, ensure that your response complies with the word limit and that it does not contain any special characters (i.e. %, & etc) or you may receive an error message and will be unable to submit your application.
9. Click on "continue".
10. 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.
11. 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.