

Appointment as Chairperson to the Board of Science Foundation Ireland

Closing Date: 15:00 on Friday 15th February 2019

**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 as Chairperson to the Board of Science Foundation Ireland

Location:	Dublin
Number of Vacancies:	1
Remuneration:	€20,520 per annum. (It should be noted that in line with the 'One Person One Salary' principle, no public servant would be entitled to receive remuneration in the form of board fees, save for situations that are statutorily provided for e.g. Worker Directors). Travel and subsistence are paid at the appropriate civil service rate.
Time Requirements:	A minimum of 6 full-day meetings per annum with a minimum of 1.5 day's preparatory work in advance of each meeting. In addition, a minimum of two days per annum are required for planning and review and additional time for stakeholder engagement and governance functions. The Chairperson also chairs two sub-committees of the Board, namely the Board Nominations Advisory Committee and the Management Development Remuneration Committee.

1. Background

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), an agency of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, is the national foundation for investment in scientific and engineering research. SFI funds oriented basic and applied research in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) which most impact the development and competitiveness of industry, enterprise and employment in Ireland. The Foundation also promotes and supports the study of, education in, and engagement with, STEM and promotes an awareness and understanding of the value of STEM to society and in particular to the growth of the economy.

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) is the parent Department of SFI. The Department has lead responsibility for driving implementation of [Innovation 2020](#), Ireland's whole of Government Strategy for Research and Development, Science and Technology. SFI, in turn, has a key role in helping to deliver the aims of Innovation 2020. A link to Innovation 2020 is provided here:

<https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Innovation-2020.html>

SFI Strategy

Science Foundation Ireland's goals and ambitions are set out in its current strategic plan, 'Agenda 2020'. This ambitious plan aims to position Ireland as a global knowledge leader, a society with scientific and engineering at its core, driving economic, social and cultural development. The plan builds on the considerable achievements in Ireland's scientific and enterprise communities since Science Foundation Ireland was established in 2003 and aims to realise the tremendous potential for further development and growth by 2020.

The four strategic objectives of Agenda 2020 are:

1. To be the best science funding agency in the world at creating impact from excellent research and demonstrating clear value for money invested;
2. To be the exemplar in building partnerships that fund excellent science and drive it out into the market and society;
3. To have the most engaged and scientifically informed public;
4. To represent the ideal modern public service organisation, staffed in a lean and flexible manner, with efficient and effective management.

Background information in relation to Science Foundation Ireland, including information about its legal remit, can be accessed on the Science Foundation Ireland website at www.sfi.ie

SFI's strategic plan, Agenda 2020, can be found here:

<https://www.sfi.ie/resources/AGENDA-2020.pdf>

A new strategic plan is currently under development and the Chairperson will have a key role to play in supporting the preparation and implementation of this strategy.

2. Functions of the Board

The Board as a whole is primarily collectively responsible for the corporate governance of SFI. The Board's role is to oversee effectively and prudently the activities of SFI, taking into consideration the nature, scale and complexity of SFI's activities. The Board is responsible for ensuring that risk and compliance is properly managed on behalf of SFI. The Board's role is to:

- Provide entrepreneurial leadership of SFI within a framework of prudent and effective controls which enable risk to be assessed and managed;
- Set SFI's strategic aims, ensure that the necessary financial and human resources are in place for SFI to meet its objectives, and review management performance;
- Develop and promote its collective vision of SFI's purpose, culture, values and the behaviour it wishes to promote in conducting its activities and ensure that its obligations to its funders, partners and others are understood and met;
- Advise and assist the Director General and senior management in formulating and achieving the Foundation's mission;
- Provide for the preparation, implementation, and review of strategies and operational plans that promote the undertaking of oriented basic and applied research of the highest international standards in Ireland—particularly in areas that are related to Ireland's economic competitiveness;
- Approving annual budgets and ensuring appropriate accountability for the disbursement and management of these budgets;
- Ensuring the organisational structures and resources required to enable SFI to undertake its functions efficiently and effectively;
- Providing annual and ongoing review of the results, impacts, and organisational effectiveness.

The Board has established four sub-committees:

- Audit & Risk Committee;
- Management Development & Remuneration Committee;
- Board Nominations Advisory Committee;
- Grant Approval Committee.

The current membership of the Board is: -

Name	First Appointed	Reappointed	Expiry Date	Position type	Basis of appointment
Vacancy	5/12/2013		4/12/2018	Chair	PAS Process
Aidan Donnelly	05/12/2013	08/06/2017		Board Member	Ministerial on Application
Barry O'Sullivan	19/11/2014			Board Member	Ministerial on Application
Bernie Cullinan	07/12/2009	25/07/2015		Board Member and Acting Chair	Ministerial on Application
Dermot Mulligan	12/09/2015			Board Member	Exemption Section 9.1.8
Grainne McAleese	25/10/2018			Board Member	PAS Process
Liam Madden (Prof.)	31/01/2013	08/06/2017		Board Member	Ministerial appointment
Maire Geoghegan-Quinn	11/04/2018			Board Member	PAS Process
Mark Ferguson (Prof.)	16/01/2012	16/01/2017		Board Member	Ex officio (Director General of SFI)
Mary Doyle	05/12/2012	25/07/2016		Board Member	Ministerial - Nominated by Minister for Education
Pat Duane (Dr.)	01/12/2009	25/07/2015		Board Member	Ministerial on Application
Tom Blundell (Prof.)	19/11/2014			Board Member	Ministerial

3. Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson is responsible for leadership of the Board and ensuring its effectiveness in all aspects of its role. This will include playing a key role in maintaining and strengthening the Board governance structures and ensuring their effective and cohesive operation.

The Chairperson is the key interface between Science Foundation Ireland and its parent Department, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, at both senior official and Ministerial level, as well as with the wider public service and stakeholder representatives.

The appointed candidate will:

- Chair the SFI Board and in so doing shall possess the leadership experience required to ensure that the Board guides, challenges and supports the Director General, the Deputy Director General and the executive team to continue to make progress towards meeting the ambitious goals laid out in SFI's strategy as set out in Agenda 2020, whilst holding them to account in doing so;
- Develop a constructive relationship with the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and other State Bodies and Agencies as appropriate, based on good understanding of the relationship between an agency and its parent Department and the wider government system;
- Play a lead role in the development of SFI's new organisational strategy for the period 2020 to 2025;
- Play a central role in relation to the direction, leadership and corporate governance of SFI;
- Provide the vision and leadership to drive the organisation towards achievement of its key strategic goals and associated operational objectives in a challenging and complex environment;
- Foster a positive relationship with the Director General in order to facilitate the conduct of good governance;
- Support and challenge the SFI Director General, Deputy Director General and executive team;
- Promote a culture of accountability, and ensure that SFI demonstrates that value is achieved for the public funds made available to it and instil an organisational culture of continuous improvement;
- Have direct responsibility for the efficient organisation, oversight and discharge of the day-to-day decision-making process at Board level;
- Have overall responsibility for ensuring that the organisation complies with best practice corporate governance standards and requirements, including those relating to budgetary and other financial matters as well as maintaining the necessary high level of ethical standards for an organisation of this nature.

4. Person Specification

The Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation invites applications from suitably qualified candidates for the position of Chairperson of the Board of Science Foundation Ireland.

The ideal candidate for the position should demonstrate in their application evidence of:

- a proven record of achievement at an appropriately senior level that demonstrates the necessary vision, leadership and management skills, as well as personal resilience;
- Prior experience of Board membership or of Chairing a Board. Demonstrate that they possess the significant leadership capabilities and experience necessary to discharge the role of Chairperson;
- Have a demonstrable understanding of Research, Development and Innovation at national or international level;
- Have the ability to think, plan and act strategically and where appropriate to develop organisational strategies;

- Have demonstrable experience of making difficult decisions, with significant consequences;
- Have strong judgement skills in order to analyse complex issues and facilitate sound decision-making;
- Be able to demonstrate the ability to plan, organise and use organisational resources effectively, as part of a clear results-driven approach;
- Have a well-developed appreciation of best practice in governance, risk management and compliance;
- Have excellent interpersonal and communication skills including consensus building and influencing skills and the ability to develop constructive relationships with all relevant stakeholders;
- Have the ability to demonstrate high levels of professional and personal integrity and probity, imbued with a progressive public-sector ethos.

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](#). This 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.

Conflict of Interest

Candidates must also be in a position to discharge the role without any potential of a conflict of interest arising or perception of such. For example, such conflict, or perceived conflict, may arise for candidates who hold positions in bodies that receive direct funding from time to time from Science Foundation Ireland.

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.

5. Term of Appointment

- The term of office of the Chairperson of the SFI Board shall be 5 years. The Chairperson may be re-appointed for a final 5-year term at the discretion of the Minister.
- 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.
- The Chairperson of the SFI 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 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.

- 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

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

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.