



Appointment as Chairperson to the Board of An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS), the Further Education and Training Authority

Closing Date: 15:00 on 26th June 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 An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS), the Further Education and Training Authority

Location:	Dublin
Number of Vacancies:	1
Remuneration:	Nil. Travel and subsistence is payable at appropriate civil service rates.
Time Requirements:	9 half day meetings per annum. Successful candidates may be appointed to sub-committees. There are 4 committees: Audit and Risk Committee; Organisational Development Committee; Strategic Planning Committee; National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee.

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

An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS), the Further Education and Training Authority, was established in October 2013 under the [Further Education and Training Act, 2013](#). SOLAS, under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills. SOLAS is responsible for the strategic co-ordination and funding of the Further Education and Training (FET) sector.

The legislation sets out the overall structure of SOLAS and provides for its functions in the areas of:

- the development and implementation of a national strategy for the delivery of further education and training;
- consultation with key stakeholders in relation to the provision of further education and training;
- coordination with the National Employment and Entitlement Service – Intreo in the delivery of further education and training programmes to those seeking employment;
- advancing monies to the Education and Training Boards and other training bodies;
- assessing whether bodies engaged in the provision of further education and training programmes perform their functions in an economic, efficient, and effective manner.
- developing and facilitating the development of new and existing further education and training programmes;
- conducting research relating to the functions of SOLAS

Funding for Further Education and Training is provided by the Department of Education and Skills from the Exchequer (central funds) and the National Training Fund. SOLAS is the main recipient of FET funding and allocates the bulk of this funding to the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) to deliver FET services at local level.

2. Functions of the Board

[Section 10](#) of the Further Education and Training Act 2013 states that the Board of SOLAS shall consist of 13 members appointed by the Minister, of whom one shall be the Chairperson, one shall be the Chief Executive Officer, and one shall represent the interests of learners in the further education and training sector.

Of the remaining 10 members, 2 shall be appointed following their nomination by the Minister for Social Protection, while 8 shall be appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills following consultation with the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Minister for Social Protection.

The Board meets regularly and members, including the Chair, may also serve on committees established by the Board. Successful candidates may be required to sit on SOLAS committees. The current SOLAS Board Committees and Committees advisory to the Board are:-

Board Committees: Audit and Risk Management Review Committee (ARMRC), Strategy Planning Committee, Workforce and Organisational Development Committee.

Committees advisory to the Board: National Apprenticeship Advisory Committee (NAAC).

The Act provides that members of the Board shall have experience and expertise in matters connected with the functions of SOLAS or matters connected with finance, trade, commerce, corporate governance or public administration.

The Board is collectively responsible for promoting the success of SOLAS by leading and directing the Body's activities. It should also have the capability to provide strategic guidance to the organisation, and monitor the activities and effectiveness of its management.

Appointments to the board of SOLAS shall be made with due regard to best practice in terms of gender balance requirements.

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

Details of current Board membership: -

Name	First Appointed	Reappointed	Expiry Date	Position type	Basis of appointment
Catrina Sheridan	27/10/2017		26/10/2022	Ordinary Member	Appointed by the Minister - PAS Process
Cecilia Munro	26/10/2013	27/10/2017	26/10/2022	Ordinary Member	PAS process
Darragh Loftus	27/10/2013	27/10/2016	26/10/2021	Ordinary Member	Appointed by Minister - First appointment via the PAS Process
Niamh O'Reilly	25/03/2019		24/03/2024	Ordinary Member	PAS Process
Orlagh Coughlan	26/03/2019		24/03/2024	Ordinary Member	PAS Process
Patricia Carey	26/10/2013	27/10/2017	25/10/2022	Ordinary Member	PAS process

Name	First Appointed	Reappointed	Expiry Date	Position type	Basis of appointment
Patrick Dwyer	27/10/2017		26/10/2022	Ordinary Member	Appointed by the Minister - PAS Process
Paul Cremmins	25/03/2019		24/03/2024	Ordinary Member	Nominee of the Minister for Social Protection
Seán Burke	26/10/2013	27/10/2017	27/10/2022	Ordinary Member	PAS process
Sinead McCluskey	27/10/2017		26/10/2022	Ordinary Member	Appointed by the Minister - PAS Process

3. Person Specification

The Minister for Education and Skills seeks applications from suitably qualified candidates for appointment as Chairperson to the Board of An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS), the Further Education and Training Authority.

Candidates must not have any conflicts of interest likely to interfere with his/her ability to assume the role of a Board member.

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.

Essential

Candidates must demonstrate in their application evidence of a capacity for leadership in an environment with multiple stakeholders at a time of significant change and challenges.

Candidates must also demonstrate evidence of: -

- Senior management experience in the public, private, or Charity and Voluntary sector
- Experience relevant to the functions of the board
- Previous board level experience.

Desirable

A career history which would ideally demonstrate evidence of knowledge and experience of at least two or more of the following:

- processing of claims/applications where there is an element of judgement and an understanding of the principles of Administrative Law
- Chairing meetings and resolving conflicting recommendations
- Analytical and Decision making skills
- Ability to work with others and build consensus
- Good communication and negotiation skills
- Organisational skills

In order to qualify for appointment a person must not have any legal impediments or conflicts of interest likely to interfere with his/her ability to assume the role Chairperson of the Board. 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.

4. Term of Appointment

As outlined in the Further Education and Training Act 2013, appointment to the Chair of the Board will be for an initial period of 5 years with an option to extend the term of engagement for a second term of up to 5 years, subject to:

- The membership of any member of the Board, including the Chair, may be terminated by the Minister at any time, on the basis of reasons to be stated by the Minister.
- The Chairperson 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.
- All Members of the Board, including the Chair 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 Public Expenditure and Reform [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.

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.

5. 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 the most suitably qualified candidates (based on the information provided by the candidate) to be sent forward for consideration by the Minister.

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

6. 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.

7. 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. 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.