

Appointments to the Board of The Higher Education Authority

Closing Date: 3.00pm on 7th July 2017

**State Boards Division
Public Appointments Service
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State Boards.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](#) 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 Higher Education Authority

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Board Meeting Location: | Meetings will generally be in Dublin, but at least two per annum will be held in a higher education institution either in Dublin or outside. |
| Number of Vacancies: | 2 – Ordinary Members (Academic) |
| Remuneration: | €7,695 per annum for Ordinary Members. <i>(It should be noted that in line with the 'One Person One Salary' principle, no public servant will be entitled to receive remuneration in the form of board fees, save for situations that are statutorily provided for e.g. Worker Directors).</i> |
| Time Requirements: | 6/7 meetings per annum. In addition, membership of one or two standing committees who each meet 3/4 times annually |

1. Background

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory funding authority for the universities, institutes of technology and a number of other designated institutions and is the advisory body to the Minister for Education and Skills in relation to the higher education sector. The HEA also has responsibility for the effective governance and regulation of higher education institutions and the higher education system. As such the HEA is the lead organisation for the development of a higher education and research system that meets the needs of Irish society and the Irish economy and is accountable to the Minister for Education and Skills for that leadership. The Department of Education and Skills and the HEA agree an annual service level agreement.

A key aim of the HEA is to create a higher education system that maximises opportunities and ensures a high quality experience for students.

In 2016 the HEA was responsible for the allocation of c €1.2bn exchequer funding to the higher education institutions.

The Irish Research Council operates as a sub-board of the HEA and is responsible primarily for funding early stage career researchers: namely, postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers. The Council allocates c. €34m in Exchequer funding.

The HEA and IRC currently employ c. 63 staff.

Functions and Legislation

The HEA was established in 1972 and its general functions derive from the following legislation:

- 1971 Higher Education Authority Act,
- 1997 Universities Act
- 2006 Institute of Technology Act

These functions include:

- Furthering the development of higher education
- Assisting in the co-ordination of the state investments in higher education and preparing proposals for such investment
- Promoting an appreciation of the value of higher education and research
- Promoting the equality of opportunity in higher education
- Promoting the democratization of the structure of higher education
- Promoting the attainment and maintenance of excellence in learning, teaching and research in higher education (from 2006 Act)

Further functions from the 1971 Act include:

- Advising the Minister on the need for the establishment of new institutions.
- Maintain a continuous review of the demand and need for higher education.
- Conduct and publish studies on challenges affecting higher education and research
- Assess the amount of state financial provision, both current and capital, required for higher education and research.
- Allocate among Universities, Institutes of Technology and the designated institutions the grants voted by the Oireachtas.

Under the 1997 Universities Act, and the subsequent Institutes of Technology Act 2006 the Higher Education Authority's remit broadened and it now carries out an additional number of functions in respect of the higher education sector.

Areas covered include review of:

- Strategic development plans
- Quality Assurance procedures
- Equality and access policies & implementation
- Frameworks for: Salary Departures; Borrowing; payments to staff by Institutional Corporations; Acquisition of Land.

National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 assigns certain operational responsibilities to the HEA including establishing significant key performance indicators for the sector and engaging in strategic dialogue with individual institutions and leading and driving the process of structural change.

It is the responsibility of the HEA to ensure that institutional objectives are aligned with national objectives, as set out in the Minister for Education & Skills performance framework, that performance is measured against these objectives and funding allocations made accordingly.

As part of the implementation of the National Strategy, a major programme of structural reform is underway which also provides for a new relationship between the state and HEIs. In July 2013 the Minister published the first System Performance Framework for the higher education system and the first Systems Performance Report was published in June 2014. The second System Performance Report was published in December 2016. A new System Performance Framework is currently being developed.

Further details on the HEA may be got from the HEA website - www.heai.ie.

2. Functions of the Board

The Board is collectively responsible for promoting the success of the HEA by leading and directing the Authority's activities. It provides strategic guidance to the HEA executive team and monitors the activities and effectiveness of management. The HEA has a schedule of matters reserved for the Board. Specifically the Board is responsible for the following:

- Set strategic direction in approving HEA statements of strategy and its implementation through annual work plans
- Approve allocation of exchequer funding
- Approve policy advice
- Approve HEA governance arrangements
- Approve functions assigned to the HEA under legislation

3. Composition of the Board

The schedule to the HEA Act, 1971 states:

“The members of An tÚdarás shall be a chairman and not more than eighteen ordinary members of whom at least seven shall be academic members and at least seven shall be other than academic members.”

The current composition of the Board is as follows:

Chair

Mr. Michael Horgan

Academic Members

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|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Prof. Orla Feely | University College Dublin |
| Dr. Sinead O'Flanagan | Massachusetts Institute of Technology |
| Dr. Lynn Ramsey | Letterkenny Institute of Technology |
| Dr. John Wall | Waterford Institute of Technology |
| Dr. Sharon Feeney | Dublin Institute of Technology |

Non-Academic Members

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Mr. Tony Donohoe | IBEC |
| Ms. Judith Eaton | Council for HE Accreditation, Washington DC |
| Ms. Darina Kneafsey | Quilly Ltd. Ireland |
| Mr. Pól Ó'Móráin | Irish Export Trade Council and Partner Enterprise Lab |
| Ms. Annie Hoey | President, Union of Students in Ireland |

The HEA has the following standing Committees:

- Audit Committee – meets minimum 4 times per annum
- Finance Committee – meets minimum of 4 times per annum
- System Development and Performance Management Committee – meets generally 4 times per annum
- Policy and Planning Committee - meets 3-4 times per annum
- Joint HEA/IRC Research and Graduate Education Committee - meets 3-4 times per annum
- Pension Appeals Committee – convened as required.

The HEA will undertake a review of its standing Committee structure in the autumn.

The successful candidate may be required to sit on the Audit Committee, and so candidate's attention is drawn to the provisions of the Code in relation to Audit and Risk Committee membership which can be found [here](#).

4. Person Specification

Applications are now invited from suitably qualified applicants, with a demonstrable interest in the work of the HEA, for the two vacancies for ordinary membership.

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](#).

Paragraph 2 of the Schedule to the Higher Education Authority Act , 1971 provides that the membership of the Authority shall comprise a Chairman and not more than 18 ordinary members, of whom at least 7 shall be academic members and at least 7 shall be non-academic members.

Having regard to the provisions of the HEA Act and the existing membership, **both** of the new ordinary member appointments must be academics in higher education institutions.

An academic member is defined in the Higher Education Authority Act , 1971, as one who, at the time of their appointment, holds a teaching or research post in an institution of higher education (other than the position of chief officer or President). The Higher Education Authority Act, 1971 (as amended by the Institutes of Technology Act 2006) defines an institution of higher education as:

- (a) a university,
- (b) a college of a university,
- (c) a college to which the *Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 to 2006* apply,
- (d) Dublin Institute of Technology,
- (e) Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland,
- (f) National College of Art and Design,
- (g) Royal Irish Academy,
- (h) such educational institutions as may be designated by order under section 5 of the Act

As outlined above, the HEA is currently overseeing a programme of reform in the higher education system and this informs the competences which the Department of Education and Skills and the HEA considers desirable.

Applicants must have experience that satisfies the criteria in at least **one or more** of the categories set out below.

a. Economics

Applicants should have significant experience in the area of economics.

b. Data Analytics

Applicants should have significant experience in large-scale data analytics, advanced data-mining and machine learning, applied regression modelling, information retrieval techniques, natural language processing, data visualisation, Web mining, Linked-Data analytics, simulation and modelling, digital image processing

c. E-Learning

Applicants should have significant experience in the design or delivery of a learning, training or education programme by electronic means.

For **all positions** it is desirable that applicants have:

- Previous board experience
- Knowledge of the Higher Education sector

The Minister shall have regard to the desirability for gender balance on the Board as the Minister considers appropriate and determines from time to time when making appointments.

Conflicts of Interest:

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. It should be noted, that given the possibility for potential conflict of interest, the holders of certain senior positions within a higher education institution such as President or equivalent, Registrar or equivalent and Secretary/Financial Controller or equivalent, will not be eligible.

You must also confirm that you can make yourself available to attend meetings and to carry out the duties of a Board member.

5. Terms of Appointment

Appointments to the Authority will be for a period not exceeding five years with the possibility of serving a second term not exceeding five 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 having served two consecutive terms, of whatever length, shall not be eligible for further appointment until a period of two years has elapsed.
- A member of the Board may resign his or her membership of the Authority 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 Authority 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 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2009 (under review) which is available on the Department's website.

- 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 expression of interest

If you are interested in this position, please review the self-assessment questionnaire which can be found on www.stateboards.ie. Please note that the 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 Section 4 - Person Specification in this booklet.

If you decide that you wish to be considered for appointment, we welcome you submitting your expression of interest via the following link www.stateboards.ie together with your detailed 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 Board 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.

7. Assessment Process

An Assessment Panel (the “Panel”) will be convened by PAS to consider and assess the expressions of interest received by the PAS via www.stateboards.ie. The Panel will:

- review and discuss the expressions of interest received against the specific appointment criteria for the role;
- assess potential appointees 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/conference call; and/or
 - Referee checks;
 - Any other selection method deemed appropriate.
- compile a list of people deemed suitable for appointment which will then be sent forward for consideration by the Minister.

If you have any questions regarding the application process please email info@stateboards.ie.

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 Acts 1988 & 2003

For further information on Data Protection please follow the [link](#)

The Public Appointments Service thanks you for your interest in State Board appointments

APPENDIX 1

Submitting your expression of interest

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.