



Appointment of a Chairperson and ordinary Members to the Board of An tSeiribhís Oideachais Leanúnnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS), the Further Education and Training Authority

Closing Date: 15:00 on Friday 2nd November 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.

Appointments to the Board of An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (SOLAS)

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| Location: | Dublin |
| Number of Vacancies: | 4 (including Chairperson and one ordinary member who is representative of the needs and interests of Learners) |
| Remuneration: | Nil. Travel and subsistence is payable at appropriate Civil Service rates. |
| Time Requirements: | 4 - 6 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 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 can be found [here](#).

3. Person Specification

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

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.

A nominated Chairperson is required to meet with the relevant Oireachtas Committee, before an appointment can be confirmed

Chairperson - Essential Criteria

Candidates must demonstrate capacity for leadership in an environment with multiple stakeholders at a time of significant change and challenges. Candidates must also have:

- Senior management experience in the public or the private sector
- Experience relevant to the functions of the board

Desirable:

A career history which would ideally demonstrate evidence of knowledge and experience of:

- 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
- Previous board level experience.

Ordinary Members – Essential Criteria (Three ordinary member positions vacant)

Candidates must demonstrate in their application evidence of extensive experience in **one or more** of the following areas;

A. Corporate Governance and Compliance

Candidates must demonstrate relevant experience, at an appropriately senior level, that clearly demonstrates knowledge of, and experience in dealing with corporate governance, compliance and accountability issues, including legal issues;.

Desirable

- A relevant qualification
- Previous Board experience

B. Financial Expertise (Accountancy, Audit, Corporate Finance)

Candidates must demonstrate proven experience at a sufficiently senior level in finance and risk management. He/she will demonstrate a capacity to understand the economics of the sector (or of another relevant specialist field), and the budgets required to achieve the organisation's mission.

Desirable

- A relevant qualification and membership of a relevant professional body
- Previous board experience

C. Senior Management Experience

Candidates must have significant experience in a senior management role, from within the public or private sectors **and** a career history which would ideally demonstrate evidence of knowledge and experience of one or more of the following:

- The employer perspective on skills requirements and skills development
- Government policy and priorities on job creation and tackling unemployment

- The Further Education and Training sector in Ireland
- Engagement with employers in meeting skills needs

D. Representing the needs and interests of Learners

Candidates must have experience of representing the needs and interests of learners, either at local or national level.

Desirable for all Roles:

For all roles it is desirable that candidates have a range of competencies in two or more of the following:

- Expertise in strategic thinking in areas relevant to the functions of the board including the planning and management of further education and training systems
- Significant Experience in the area of policy development and evaluation
- Significant Experience in the area of public service reform
- Significant experience in the challenges of delivering Further Education and Training effectively in the changing world of work
- Expertise in skills development, human resources or senior management in enterprise
- Outward perspective on the needs of major stakeholders, including other areas of Government, enterprise, trade, commerce, research, the community and voluntary sectors and learners
- A working understanding of financial planning, service planning, budgets and good financial management practise
- Experience of working with teams and/or committees (either professional or voluntary)
- Experience in Auditing, Finance, Governance and/or Legal
- Experience of serving as a Board member

4. Term of Appointment

- It is anticipated that appointments to the Board will be for a period of 5 years.
- 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 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

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

- 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.

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.