

Appointments to the Board of Science Foundation Ireland

Closing Date: 15:00 on Tuesday 28th January 2020

**State Boards Division
Public Appointments Service
Chapter House, 26 – 30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1**

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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 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 Science Foundation Ireland

Location:	Dublin
Number of Vacancies:	2
Remuneration:	€11,970 per annum. (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). 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 one day's preparatory work in advance of each meeting. Participation in one of the four sub-committees of the Board would also be required.

1. Background

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is the national foundation for investment in scientific and engineering research. It funds oriented basic and applied research in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) which promotes and assists 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.

SFI Strategy

Science Foundation Ireland's goals and ambitions are set in its 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 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:

[http://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/AGENDA-2020-\(2018\)-WEB.pdf](http://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/AGENDA-2020-(2018)-WEB.pdf)

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

The existing strategic plan was updated on a mid-term basis in 2018 and the updated Strategy can be found here.

<http://www.sfi.ie/research-news/publications/organisational-publications/Annual-Review-Agenda-2020-web.pdf>

Innovation 2020, Ireland's whole-of-Government strategy for research and development, science and technology, was launched in 2015. A copy of the strategy document can be found here:

<https://www.djei.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Innovation-2020.pdf>

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	Position type	Basis of appointment
Peter Clinch (Prof.)	01/08/2019		Chair	PAS Process
Aidan Donnelly	05/12/2013	08/06/2017	Board Member	Ministerial on Application
Barry O'Sullivan	19/11/2014	25/07/2018	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
Tom Blundell (Prof.)	19/11/2014	25/07/2019	Board Member	Ministerial

3. Person Specification

The Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation invites applications from suitably qualified candidates who have an interest in the area of science/research to fill two vacancies on the Board of Science Foundation Ireland.

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](#).

The ideal candidates should demonstrate in their application evidence of at least one of the following at an appropriately senior level:

- Experience in an international competitive scientific research-based organisation;
- Successful entrepreneurial experience, development of a business idea from incubation through to successful international growth and expansion;

- Membership of a high-profile, world renowned Academy such as the Royal Society UK or National Academy of Sciences USA;
- A significant record of high quality and productive research and scholarship of international standing as evidenced by international prizes, medals, named lectures etc;
- Leading strategy development in a research funding organisation;
- Senior level experience within a company (national or multinational) whose area of business is an important sector in Ireland e.g. Medical Devices, Pharma, ICT, big data, agri tech.

Desirable

- Proven ability to influence and communicate;
- Ability to contribute to a visionary strategic agenda of relevance and impact to Ireland.

Note regarding 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. Such conflict, or perceived conflict, may arise for candidates who hold positions in bodies that receive funding from time to time from Science Foundation Ireland.

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.

4. Term of Appointment

- The term of office of the Board member of the SFI Board shall be 5 years. On the 24th of July each year, the two longest-serving members of the board shall retire. No member may serve for more than ten years in succession.
- 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.
- 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
 - Meeting/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.

Please note that the Public Appointments Service will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by candidates as part of our selection process.

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.
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.