



Appointment as Chairperson and Members to the Student Grants Appeals Board

Closing Date: 15:00 on Wednesday 28th July 2021

**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. PAS also has responsibility for providing 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 and Members to the Student Grants Appeals Boards

Location:	Department of Further Higher Education Research Innovation & Science (DFHERIS), Tullamore but in response to Covid pandemic, all Board meetings are currently held over video conference. It is anticipated that the use of video conferencing continue until normal working arrangements have resumed. Board meetings will then take place in the Departments office Tullamore. Members must be available to attend meetings in Tullamore.
IT Requirements:	It is important that all members are ICT literate. Board papers are only accessible via a secure portal which requires Internet connection. Members will need access to WiFi in order to participate in meetings.
Number of Vacancies:	7
Remuneration:	€295 for a day's sitting which includes preparatory work prior to sitting.
Time Requirements:	There will be a minimum of two Board meetings per calendar month during the period September to August. Each meeting requires up to a day's preparatory work in advance.

Candidates' 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

The Student Grants Scheme is a statutory based grants scheme operating under provisions provided for in the Student Support Act 2011 and secondary legislation which give effect to the annual student grants scheme and regulations.

The first independent Student Grants Appeals Board (SGAB) was established by the

Minister for Education and Skills on 8th September 2011 for a 5-year term in line with Section 25 (5) of the Student Support Act 2011.

The City of Dublin Education and Training Board (ETB) was appointed as the awarding authority on the 22nd of May 2012. A business unit of the ETB was subsequently established and called Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI). Prior to its establishment, student grants were processed by 66 Local Authorities and Vocational Education Committees (now Education and Training Boards).

Under the 2011 Act, applicants who are unhappy with a determination of an awarding authority may appeal to an appeals officer against that determination. Where an applicant is still unsatisfied by the determination of an appeals officer he or she may appeal to the Student Grants Appeals Board.

Approximately 800 appeal cases are heard by the Student Grants Appeals Board per academic year.

2. Functions of the Board

The main function of the Student Grants Appeals Board is to hear appeals from applicants/students against decisions on the awarding of grants after such appeals have been heard by the appeals officer and where the applicant / student wishes to pursue their appeal.

In accordance with Section 21(4) of the Student Support Act 2011 , the Appeals Board

- (a) shall be independent in the performance of its functions under the Act,
- (b) shall not be confined to the grounds on which the determination of the awarding authority or appeals officer concerned was based, but may decide the matter which is the subject of the appeal as if it were being decided for the first time,
- (c) shall, as it considers appropriate, consider written or oral submissions made by the applicant or student concerned and consult with the awarding authority or appeals officer,
- (d) shall make a determination within 60 days from the making of an appeal which may be a determination to
 - (i) confirm the determination the subject of the appeal
 - (ii) revoke the determination and replace it with such other determination as the Appeals Board considers appropriate, or
 - (iii) refer the matter concerned back to the awarding authority for reconsideration in accordance with such directions as the Appeals Board considers appropriate, and
- (e) shall notify in writing the applicant or student and the awarding authority and appeals officer concerned of the determination and the reasons therefore.

Members are expected to contribute effectively to the work of the Board by balancing a

strategic view of key decisions with a specialist or expert perspective, while being committed to the principle of collective decision making that underpins the Board's role by bringing independent and objective scrutiny to the effective delivery of the Student Grant Scheme.

Please note that membership of the Student Grants Appeals Board requires a significant time commitment and prospective applicants should consider carefully their availability and willingness to attend Board meetings in Tullamore before submitting an application.

Current Board membership:

Name	First Appointed	Reappointed	Expiry Date	Position type	Basis of appointment
Brenna Clarke	08/09/2011	08/09/2016	07/09/2021	Board Member	Re-appointed by the Minister
Eithne Frost	08/09/2011	08/09/2016	07/09/2021	Board Member	Re-appointed by the Minister

Grainne Healy	08/09/2016		07/09/2021	Ordinary Member	PAS Process
Kevin Donoghue	08/09/2016		07/09/2021	Ordinary Member	PAS Process
Kevin Ryan (Prof.)	08/09/2011	08/09/2016	07/09/2021	Board Member	Re-appointed by the Minister
Marie Clarke (Dr.)	08/09/2011	08/09/2016	07/09/2021	Board Member	Re-appointed by the Minister
Martin Corboy	08/09/2016		07/09/2021	Ordinary Member	PAS Process
Mary-Jane Meegan	08/09/2016		07/09/2021	Ordinary Member	PAS Process
Maureen Waldron	08/09/2011	08/09/2016	07/09/2021	Chair	Re-appointed by the Minister
Padraic McNamara	08/09/2011	08/09/2016	07/09/2021	Vice Chair	Re-appointed by the Minister
Patrick Hopkins	08/09/2016		07/09/2021	Ordinary Member	PAS Process

3. Person Specification

The Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, is seeking to appoint up to seven suitably qualified candidates including Chairperson to sit as members on the Student Grants Appeals Board.

Chairperson:

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.

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

In order to be considered for appointment to the role of Chairperson by the Minister, you must first satisfy the requirements to be appointed as an Ordinary member of the Board. The Minister shall then appoint a Chairperson from among those members, therefore, as part of this application process, applicants should also indicate whether they wish to be considered for the position of Chairperson.

- 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.

In addition to the requirements laid out below for Ordinary Member, candidates for the Chairperson role must demonstrate in their application evidence of previous Board membership experience.

Ordinary Members:

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](#).

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

Essential

Expressions of interest are invited from applicants who consider they possess the skills and experience necessary to join the Student Grants Appeals Board. Candidates should familiarise themselves with the Student Support Act 2011.

Following a review of the current skills mix on the Board and the anticipated appointment of up to 7 members, the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science invites applications from suitably qualified candidates in one or more of the following areas:

a) Student Representation:

- Candidates must have the demonstrable ability to represent the user perspective either by being a third level student or through some other representative capacity such as a student representative or a member of a learner advocacy group. It is particularly desirable that candidates have previous experience of advocacy and a knowledge of the student supports system.

b) Accountant/Financial management/business

- Part of the assessment of cases before the Board entails a review of financial circumstances consequently candidates should have demonstrable professional experience in financial management/accountancy or an area of business which relies on financial literacy.

c) Academic administration

- Candidates must have knowledge of the system of academic administration/policy including knowledge of the student supports system as demonstrated by professional experience in 3rd level administration or as an academic in a position of responsibility (e.g. Head of Department) which would indicate such knowledge.

d) Public sector administration

- Candidates must have senior professional experience of administering complex Schemes within the Public Service. This would indicate the ability to read, understand and interpret complex legislation, and to understand the budgetary processes etc. which underpin such legislation.

e) Voluntary/community sector engagement

- Candidates must have significant experience in the sector, particularly in advocacy. It would be useful if their experience was in the area of education and include a familiarity with legislative provisions in this area although this is not a mandatory requirement

In addition it is desirable that all candidates have:

- Administrative experience at a high level, preferably in the civil or public service
- Knowledge of social welfare, health schemes, the education sector and/or income support schemes
- Experience in the operation and continuous improvement of complex administrative processes
- Familiarity with funding and policy interfaces and schemes
- Awareness of stakeholders and the broad policy landscape
- Knowledge and demonstrated experience in applying the principles of good administration e.g. fairness, impartiality, consistency, transparency, timelines etc.
- Good judgement and a capacity for sound and objective decision making

Desirable specialist knowledge :

- Previous experience on a Board, ideally on a State Board would be an advantage
- Professional experience in interpretation of legislation
- Professional accountancy experience
- Qualification and/or membership of a relevant professional body
- Experience in reading, analysing and comprehending various statutes, regulations and complex summaries of evidence in the course of preparing for, and holding of a hearing
- Experience and understanding of the Post Leaving and Higher Education Sectors
- Knowledge of immigration, refugee and child welfare law

The Minister shall have regard to the desirability for gender balance, diversity and inclusion on the Board as the Minister considers appropriate and determines from time to time when making appointments, in line with the updated Code.

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

- The term of office of the chairperson and the ordinary members of the Student Grant Appeals board shall be for such period as shall be determined by the Minister but which period shall not exceed 5 years unless the chairperson or other member sooner dies or retires.
- 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 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 which is available here [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies](#).
- In accordance with subsections 25(11), (12) and (13) of the Student Support Act 2011, the following persons are excluded from sitting on the Appeals Board:
 - If adjudicated bankrupt;
 - Makes a composition or arrangement with creditors;
 - Is sentenced by a court of competent jurisdiction to a term of imprisonment;
 - Nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann;
 - Elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or to be a representative in the European Parliament; or a member of a local authority.
 - Regarded pursuant to Part XIII of the Second Schedule to the European Parliament Elections Act 1997 as having been elected to that Parliament; or
 - A person who is for the time being entitled under the Standing Orders of either House of the Oireachtas to sit therein or who is a representative in the European Parliament shall, while he or she is so entitled or such a representative, be disqualified from being appointed as a member of the Appeals Board.
- No person shall hold office as a Chairperson or Ordinary member of the Student Grants Appeals Board for more than two consecutive terms of office.

5. Submitting your Application

Before submitting your application, please review the self-assessment questionnaire which can be found [here](#). This questionnaire is designed to help you in considering whether to submit an application - 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.

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
 - 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.

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.

8. 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.