



**Appointment to the Board of Quality and Qualifications Ireland**

**Closing Date: 15:00 on 29<sup>th</sup> September 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](http://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 Quality and Qualifications Ireland

<b>Board Meeting Location:</b>	Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), 26-27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2.
<b>Number of Vacancies:</b>	4 (1 Chairperson; 3 Ordinary Members)
<b>Remuneration:</b>	Nil. Members of the Board are not remunerated but are entitled to claim travel and subsistence allowances in accordance with Government guidelines.
<b>Time Requirements:</b>	<p>Board meetings are held approximately 5 times per annum with a normal duration of half a day.</p> <p>The time commitment for preparation and review of documents related to the Board meetings is approximately 10 days per annum for Ordinary Members and 20 days per annum for the Chairperson (including other related meetings).</p> <p>In addition to attendance at Board meetings, these roles involve membership of at least one of the Committees listed below.</p>

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

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is a state agency established by the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#). QQI is governed by a Board of ten members including the Chief Executive. The Board is appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills who also appoints the Chief Executive following a recommendation by the Board.

Its functions include those previously carried out by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC); the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC); the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI).

QQI has the following Standing Committees (on which Board members serve)

- Programme and Awards Oversight Committee - meets approx. 3-4 times per year
- Policies and Standards Committee - meets approx. 4 times per year
- Approvals and reviews Committee - meets approx. 4 times per year
- Audit and Risk Committee - meets approx. 5 times per year
- Human Resources and Organisation Committee – meets approx. 5 times per year

QQI currently employs c. 78 staff.

## 2. Legislation and Functions of the Board

QQI was established in 2012 and its general functions derive from the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012. Full details on QQI are available from the website [www.QQI.ie](http://www.QQI.ie).

The QQI Board is a non-representative, 10-member Board consisting of people with broad experience and expertise in relation to the functions of QQI.

Members of the Board include:

- At least one person with international experience related to the functions of the Board, and
- At least two learner representatives; one nominated by the Union of Students in Ireland.

QQI's responsibilities include:

- maintaining the ten-level NFQ (National Framework of Qualifications)
- setting standards for awards made under the NFQ
- validating education and training programmes and making extensive awards in the Further Education and Training sector, including in the Education and Training Boards
- making awards in Higher Education, mainly to learners in private providers - the universities and institutes of technology largely make their own awards
- providing advice on recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland and on the recognition of Irish qualifications abroad
- publishing a directory of providers and awards in the NFQ
- reviewing the effectiveness of quality assurance among further and higher education providers in Ireland, and
- authorising the use of an International Education Mark (IEM) for providers.

In May 2017, following Government approval, the Minister for Education and Skills published the General Scheme of a new Bill, the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Amendment) Bill, which will provide new powers to QQI to improve the quality of Ireland's education and training system.

The key changes being proposed by the Minister in this new Bill include:

- New powers to prosecute 'essay mills' and other forms of academic cheating
- A Learner Protection Fund, which will support students to complete their studies if their college closes
- An International Education Mark (IEM), awarded by QQI, will provide international students studying higher education or English language education programmes with confidence that their college or school is reputable
- Establish the Institutes of Technology as Designated Awarding Bodies in line with the Universities
- Powers to check a provider's bona fides to ensure that it is fully equipped to provide a programme of education and training
- Give QQI the power to 'list' awarding bodies and to include their qualifications in the National Framework of Qualifications to allow awards made by private, professional and non-national awarding bodies, where appropriate, in the Framework

- Information sharing by QQI with other State bodies to ensure a coordinated approach to regulation of the education and training sector
- To strengthen and improve QQI's approval processes for provider's quality assurance procedures
- To involve education and training providers more centrally in the application process for recognition of prior learning (RPL)

The current membership of the Board is:-

Name	First Appointed	Expiry Date	Position type	Basis of appointment
Barbara Brittingham (Dr.)	06/11/2012	05/11/2017	Board Member	Ministerial appointment (international expert)
Gordon Clark	06/11/2012	05/11/2017	Chair	Ministerial appointee
James Moore	06/11/2012	05/11/2017	Board Member	Ministerial appointment
Joanne Harmon	06/11/2012	05/11/2017	Board Member	Ministerial appointment
Mary Danagher	06/11/2012	05/11/2017	Board Member	Ministerial appointment
Oisín Hassan	21/07/2017	05/11/2017	Board Member	Appointed by Minister on nomination of USI as representative of learners
Padraig Walsh (Dr.)	06/11/2012	05/11/2017	Board Member	Ex officio. Chief Executive
Thomas McDermott	15/06/2015	05/11/2017	Board Member	
Una Buckley	06/11/2012	05/11/2017	Board Member	Ministerial appointment (learner representative)

### 3. Vacancy Details and Legislative Requirements

Four Board vacancies will arise from the completion of terms of members of the Board who hold the roles of Chair and ordinary members of the Board.

The four vacancies will arise in the following categories of Board member:

- Chair (1)
- Ordinary members (3)

### 4. Person Specification

Expressions of interest are invited from suitably qualified applicants, with a demonstrable interest in the work of QQI, for the four vacancies outlined above.

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.

Having regard to the functions of QQI, applicants for the position of **Chair** of the Board must demonstrate in their application:-

- Significant senior management/board level experience of corporate governance in the public or private sector (including strategy and/or change management)
- Senior/board level experience within one or preferably more of the areas of qualification systems, higher education, further education and training (including community education or English language education) or professional education
- Experience of Board membership, preferably as a Chairperson

Having regard to the functions of QQI, applicants for the positions of **ordinary member** of the Board must demonstrate experience that satisfies the criteria in one or more of the categories set out at **a** to **c** below.

**a. Learner Representative:**

Applicants should have a career history which enables them to act as a representative of adult learners outside the higher education sector. Applicants should possess extensive experience in the areas of lifelong learning and/or tackling educational disadvantage.

**b. Qualifications Expertise:**

Applicants must have senior level practical or governance experience in the area of qualifications, qualification systems and/or qualifications bodies, awards and awarding bodies in the professional or academic fields.

**c. Sectoral Knowledge/Experience:**

Applicants must have senior level practical or governance experience in the area of higher education or further education and training (including through public education and training, learning provision linked to the labour market/employers and apprenticeships, community education or English language education)

In addition to the foregoing specific skills and experience, it is highly desirable that candidates for the positions of **ordinary member** possess one or more of the following:

- Experience of corporate governance, compliance and risk in a public or private sector body
- Experience of finance and audit in a public or private sector organisation. Previous experience of sitting on an audit committee is desirable
- Experience of quality assurance and enhancement in education and training
- Experience of promoting access, transfer and progression in relation to learners
- Previous Board experience.

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](#).

## 5. Term of Appointment

Appointments to the Board will be for a period not exceeding five years with the possibility of serving a second term not exceeding five years, subject to:

- A member having served two consecutive terms, of whatever length, shall not be eligible for further appointment
- A member of the Board may resign his or her membership 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.

## 6. Submitting your Expression of Interest

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 arise if appointed to this board.

Your submission should be made via the following link [www.stateboards.ie](http://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 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.

If you have any questions regarding the application process please email [info@stateboards.ie](mailto:info@stateboards.ie).

## 7. Assessment Process

An Assessment Panel (the "Panel") will be convened by PAS to consider and assess the expressions of interest 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 suitable candidates to be sent forward for consideration by the Minister.

## 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](#).



## 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](http://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](http://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.