



Department
for Education

We are the department
for opportunity

Office for
Students

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Office for Students Board Non-Executive Directors

Information pack



WELCOME



Thank you for your interest in this important role.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a non-executive member of the Office for Students (OfS) board.

England's higher education sector includes some of the best universities in the world. It is also incredibly diverse; our universities have a vast range of different missions and values, with world leading small and specialist providers and further education colleges widening access to higher education for many. Our universities and colleges are engines of economic growth and a key part of our plans to put education back at the heart of change and the forefront of national life.

This government is committed to breaking down barriers to opportunity. It is our aim to ensure higher education provides each and every student, whatever their background, with the skills they need to seize opportunity.

As the independent regulator of higher education in England, the Office for Students is fundamental to delivering this aim. It is also critical in ensuring that our universities and colleges make a strong contribution to economic growth, enabling our next generation of teachers, scientists, engineers, healthcare and IT specialists and other essential professionals and graduates to truly benefit from their higher education experience.

The Office for Students is entering an important stage in its development as a regulator. Whilst our universities and colleges continue to enjoy a world-leading reputation, the sector is facing challenges. In particular, these include the increasingly difficult financial context, and the need to safeguard students' interests arising from that.

Last year, the government published the report of Sir David Behan's review of the Office for Students: "Fit for the Future: Higher Education Regulation towards 2035". This vital report looks ahead to these challenges and how the sector will adapt to them and sets out the future of regulation in this new environment. Its vision for the Office for Students is one of a confident regulator, refocused to prioritise the financial stability of the higher education sector and deliver better quality and outcomes for students.

We are seeking to appoint a number of non-executive members who can bring their skills and experience to bear on the issues facing higher education in England. You will work with the substantive Chair, to be announced upon their appointment, as well as the OfS board and the OfS Executive team to provide clear strategic direction and priorities for the next phase of the OfS's vital work.

The Department is focused on equality of opportunity and we are committed to ensuring that public appointments better represent the views of the communities which they serve. We particularly encourage applicants from under-represented groups, those based outside London and the South East and applicants who have achieved success through non-traditional educational routes.

Thank you once again for your interest in this role. If you have the skills and experience we are seeking, we look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget Phillipson".

Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education



ABOUT THE OFS

The Office for Students (OfS) is the independent regulator of higher education in England.

Its primary aim is to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers. It regulates in the interests of students and prospective students from all backgrounds, whether they are:

- undergraduates, postgraduates or studying other levels of higher education
- UK-based or international
- studying full-time or part-time
- based on campus, learning at a distance or in work-based settings or anything in between

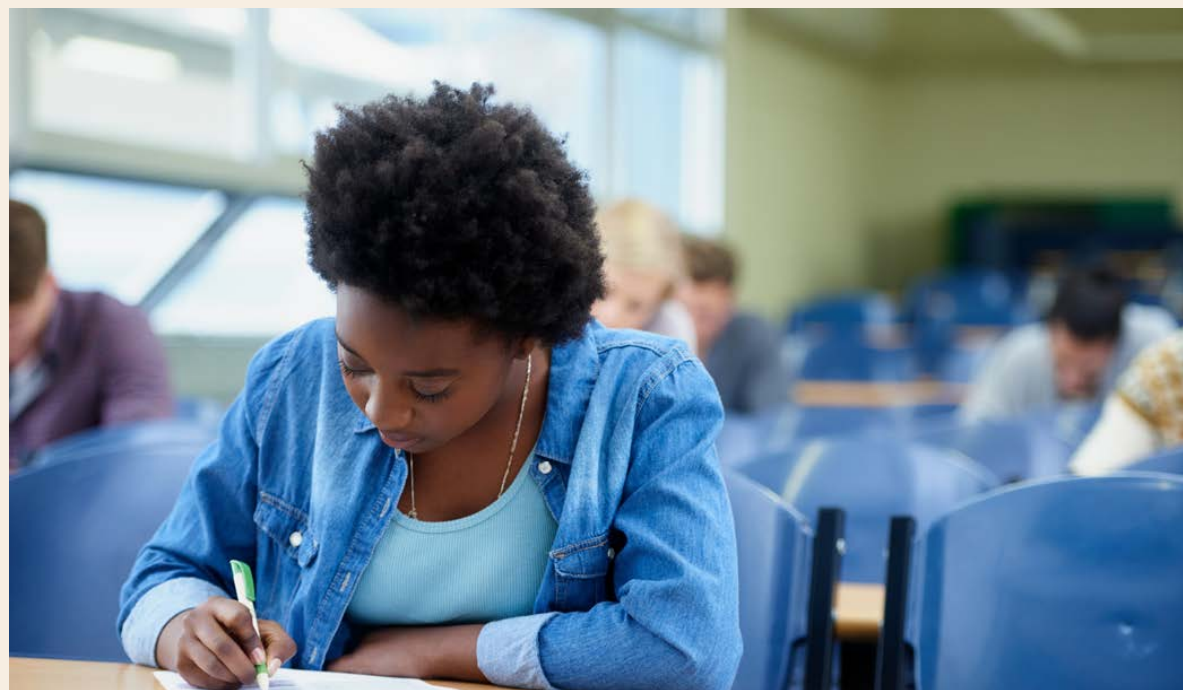
Created by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA), which sets out its powers and duties, the OfS regulates through a voluntary register of higher education providers. Over 420 providers are registered with the regulator, and they teach or supervise over 2.5 million students.

Through its regulatory framework the OfS promotes high quality education to ensure that all students, regardless of background, achieve high quality outcomes that will meet the skills needs of the economy.

On the census date of 31 March 2024, the OfS employed 461 full-time equivalent staff. The regulator is funded primarily through registration fees paid by the higher education sector. Fees for academic year 2024-2025 will total around £30 million. The OfS also distributes around £1.6 billion of government funding annually. This supports teaching and students in higher education, including for expensive to deliver subjects, students at risk of discontinuing their studies and funding to world-leading specialist providers.

As an independent public body, the OfS reports to Parliament through the Department for Education.

Further information about the OfS can be found on its website [here](#) and details of the current board [here](#).



ABOUT THE ROLE

The Secretary of State for Education is seeking to appoint up to 6 new non-executive directors for the OfS board.

These non-executive directors will support and challenge the organisation as it continues its drive to improve higher education for students in England and deliver upon the Government's higher education reforms.

If successful, applicants may be offered an immediate or delayed start date.

ROLE OF THE BOARD

OfS non-executive board members play a key role in shaping the OfS strategic direction and supporting the reform programme. Board members are responsible for a wide range of activities including reviewing risks and benefits and monitoring outcomes against plans, oversight of OfS's corporate strategy, and the stewardship of public funds.

It is essential that the board has the range of skills, knowledge and experience required to be the independent regulator of a sector which is of such strategic importance to the UK, including representation of the diversity of the higher education sector.



WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR

This campaign is designed to ensure the OfS board has the right skills and experience to operate successfully. Board members are appointed by the Secretary of State and are formally responsible to them, through the Chair.

We are looking for a range of high quality candidates who, together, can have the overall strategic level and wide-ranging knowledge, skills, and experience to contribute to the work of the board.

Applicants will be assessed against the following criteria:

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- Excellent strategic thinking capability, experience of setting a clear vision especially in times of strategic transformation and demonstrating leadership.
- Ability to influence and build effective relationships with a wide range of senior stakeholders in formal and less formal environments.
- A commitment to the principles of public life and to the principles removing barriers to opportunity in higher education.

And one or more of the following in a leadership role:

- Expertise in financial resilience and sustainability, adept at dealing with matters of value for money.
- Proven track-record of assessing or dealing with quality within the higher education sector.
- Experience of regulation in the consumer sphere, with knowledge of competition and markets.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

- Understanding of financial and corporate governance at a strategic board level, experience of exercising good judgement and integrity within these settings.

If there is a high volume of applicants, preliminary sifting will be using the essential criterion “having one of the following in a leadership role”:

- a) Expertise in financial resilience and sustainability
- b) Proven track-record of assessing or dealing with quality within the higher education sector, or
- c) Experience of regulation in the consumer sphere

We will establish which category each applicant falls into and sift using experience, and skills in that area.

In your application please include:

- A CV setting out your career history, with key responsibilities and achievements that are relevant to this role.
- A supporting personal statement (maximum two pages of A4) detailing how you consider your personal skills, qualities, and experience provide evidence of your suitability for the role, with particular reference to the essential criteria listed below.



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We want to encourage applications from people with a diverse range of backgrounds.

The department champions opportunity and social justice in all its policies and is committed to breaking down barriers for all people from all backgrounds, from all socio-economic classes and across all regions of the UK.

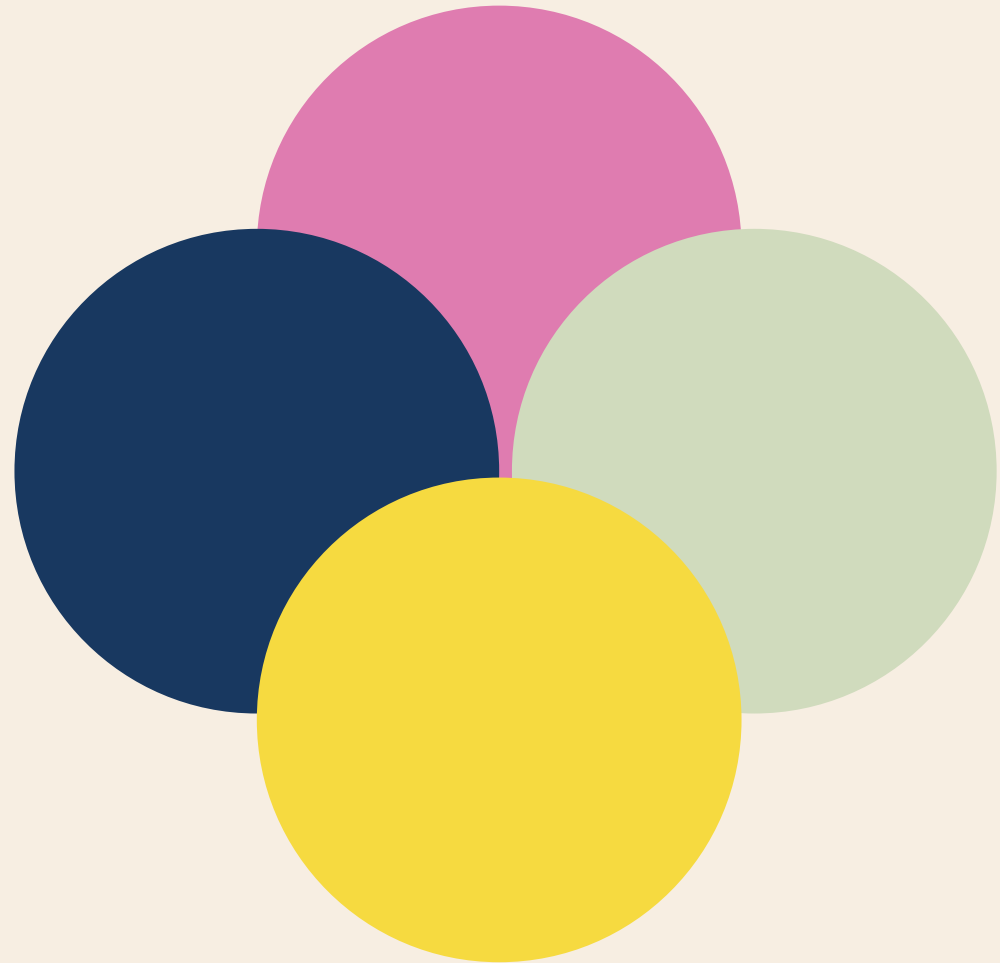
We are committed to embedding this principle into our recruitment and public appointments.

DISABILITY CONFIDENT

We are a member of the Government's Disability Confident scheme. We use the Disability Confident scheme symbol, along with other like-minded employers, to show our commitment to good practice in employing people with a disability. The scheme helps recruit and retain disabled people.

As part of implementing the scheme, we guarantee an interview for anyone with a disability whose applications meets the essential criteria for the role, set out in the advert, and who has asked that their application is considered under the scheme. Indicating that you wish your application to be considered under the scheme will in no way prejudice your application. By 'essential criteria', we mean that you must provide evidence which demonstrates that you meet the level of competence required under each of the essential criteria, as set out in the job-advert.

When you apply you will have the opportunity to select if you would like your application considered under this scheme.



TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Location

The Office for Students has offices in London and Bristol. The role holder will be required to attend board meetings every two months (alternating between in-person London meetings and virtually on Teams).

Time Requirement

The role has an expected time commitment of around 20 days per annum.

Term

The appointment will be for an initial period of 4 years. Non-Executive Directors are not employees of the OfS. The Secretary of State may recommend that appointments be renewed at the end of the first period of office, subject to consistently good performance, but there should therefore be no expectation of automatic reappointment. The maximum total term is 10 years.

Remuneration

£9,180 per annum.

Expenses

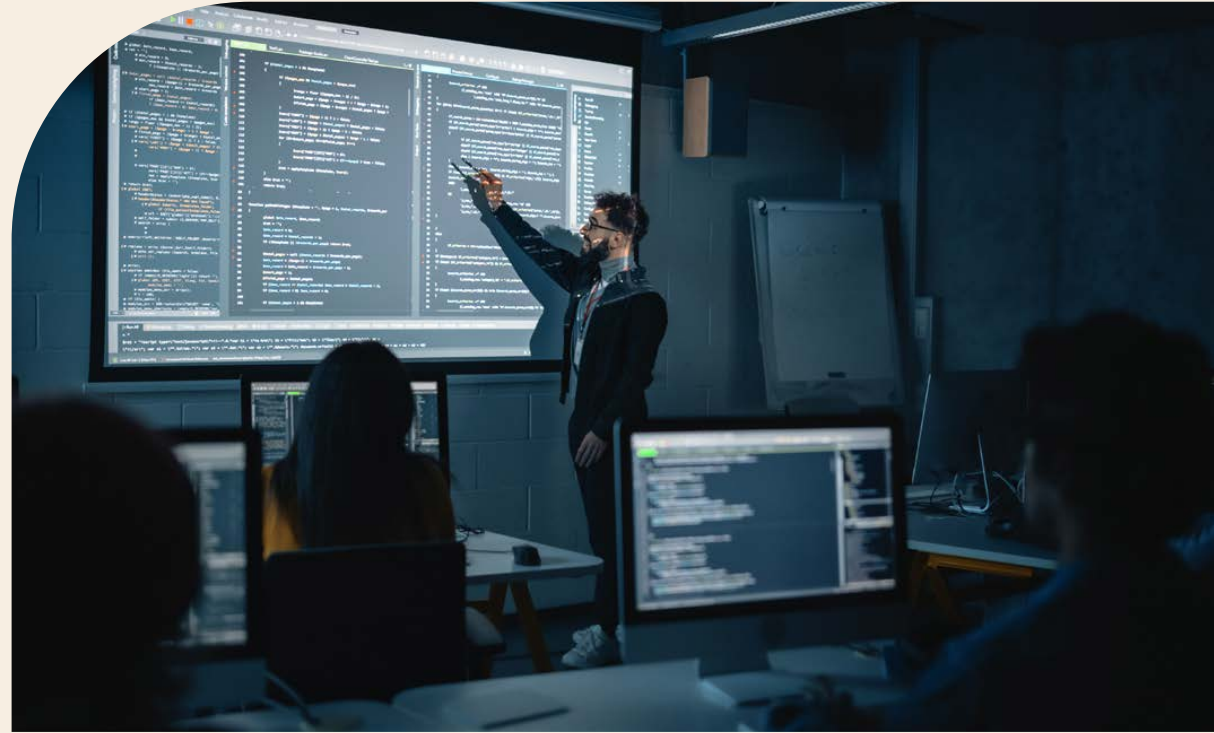
You will be reimbursed for any travel and subsistence expenses you necessarily incur while on official OfS business at the appropriate rate.

Pension

This post is not pensionable.

Other

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. The successful candidates will be asked to subscribe to a Code of Conduct for Members of the Board and must confirm that you have sound understanding of and commitment to the principles of public life (which are also set out on page 8).



HOW TO APPLY

The closing date for applications is Friday 14th March 2025 11am.

To apply you will need to create an account or sign in.

Once you are logged into your account, click on 'apply for this role' and follow the on-screen instructions.

To apply, all candidates are required to provide:

- a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- a supporting statement
- equality information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

We will ask you to check and confirm your personal details to ensure your application is accurate.

You will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application.

The Advisory Assessment Panel reserves the right to only consider applications that contain all of the elements listed above, and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.

The closing date for applications is Friday 14th March 2025 11am.



PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

In 1995 the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way.

Consistent with the Governance Code, applicants will be assessed on merit, and all candidates for public appointment will need to uphold the standards of conduct set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life. These will be tested as part of the selection process and the Assessment Panel must satisfy itself that all candidates for appointments can meet these standards, which are:

SELFLESSNESS

Holders of Public Office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

INTEGRITY

Holders of Public Office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY

Carrying out Public Office business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of Public Office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS

Holders of Public Office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY

Holders of Public Office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP

Holders of Public Office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.



HOW TO COMPLAIN

Please contact the OfS sponsorship team at the Department for Education

If you would like to make a complaint regarding your application for the chair of the board of the Office for Students, please contact: officeforstudents.applications@education.gov.uk

We will acknowledge your complaint upon receipt and respond within 15 working days.

If you are not content with our response please contact the Commissioner for **Public Appointments** at publicappointments@csc.gov.uk

Further information on complaints can be found on the Commissioner for Public Appointment's website <https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>