



Department
for Education

We are the department
for opportunity

Office for
Students

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Office for Students Board Non-Executive Board Members

Information pack



WELCOME



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

England's higher education sector is one of the most dynamic and diverse in the world. Our universities and colleges serve communities across the country, each with distinct missions, values, and strengths, from world-leading research institutions to specialist providers and further education colleges that open doors to opportunity for many. They provide a driving force for economic growth and are a central part of our plans to put education front and centre of national life. This rich tapestry reflects the diversity of our nation, and it is vital that the leadership of the sector does too.

The government is committed to breaking down barriers to opportunity and ensuring that every student, regardless of background, can access high-quality education and graduate with the skills to thrive. The Office for Students plays a central role in delivering this vision, regulating the sector to ensure financial stability, quality, and outcomes that truly benefit students and society.

As the OfS enters a new phase of development, shaped by the recommendations of the "Fit for the Future" review, we are seeking non-executive board members who bring fresh perspectives, lived experience, and a deep commitment to quality and excellence. We know that diverse boards make better decisions. They are more innovative, more reflective of the communities they serve, and better equipped to navigate complex challenges.

We warmly invite applications from individuals whose experiences can enrich and broaden the conversations in our boardroom. We particularly welcome voices that reflect the breadth of England's regions, diverse life experiences and varied career paths. We value diversity of thought, background, and experience; your perspective can help shape a richer future for higher education.

Thank you once again for considering this opportunity. If you believe in the power of education to transform lives and want to contribute your unique skills and experience to this vital work, we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget Phillipson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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 2025, the OfS employed 500 full-time equivalent staff. The regulator is funded primarily through registration fees paid by the higher education sector. Fees for academic year 2025-26 will total around £32 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 four new non-executive board members for the OfS board.

These non-executive board members 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

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 lived experience to contribute to the work of the board.

Applicants will be assessed against the following criteria:

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA:

- Experience of leading change at a senior level, with a background that demonstrates the ability to bring fresh perspectives and apply these to board discussions.
- Awareness of how boards operate and understanding how members, both non-executive and executive, contribute effectively to board to enable success.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively with a diverse range of stakeholders, providing strategic support and constructive challenge to drive effective decision-making.
- A commitment to removing barriers to opportunity in higher education.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA:

Candidates will ideally bring experience and insight in one or more of the following areas:

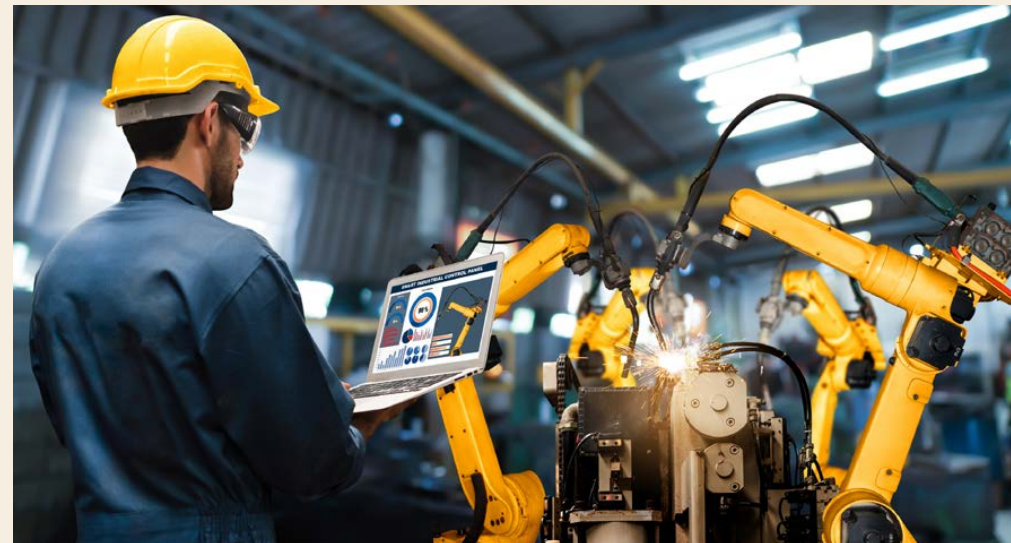
- Advocacy for Student Interests
- Higher Education Delivery and Leadership
- Public Affairs, Media, or Political Engagement
- Economic and Financial Insight

If there is a high volume of applicants, preliminary sifting will be using the essential criterion:

- Experience of leading change at a senior level, with a background that demonstrates the ability to bring fresh perspectives and apply these to board discussions.

In your application please include:

- A CV setting out your career history, with key responsibilities and achievements that are relevant to this role.
- Your answers on the pre-populated form for the questions relating to the lead, essential and desirable criteria. There is a maximum word limit of 500 words for the lead criterion with 250 words for the remaining questions. These limits will be clearly indicated on the form. Please ensure you do not go over this limit, as any words 501 and 251 and over will not be scored. Use examples and/or situations from your lived experience in your response to clearly demonstrate how you meet each criterion.



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

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

The Department champions social justice in all of its policies and is committed to opening up opportunities for people from all backgrounds, all socioeconomic classes and all regions of the UK.

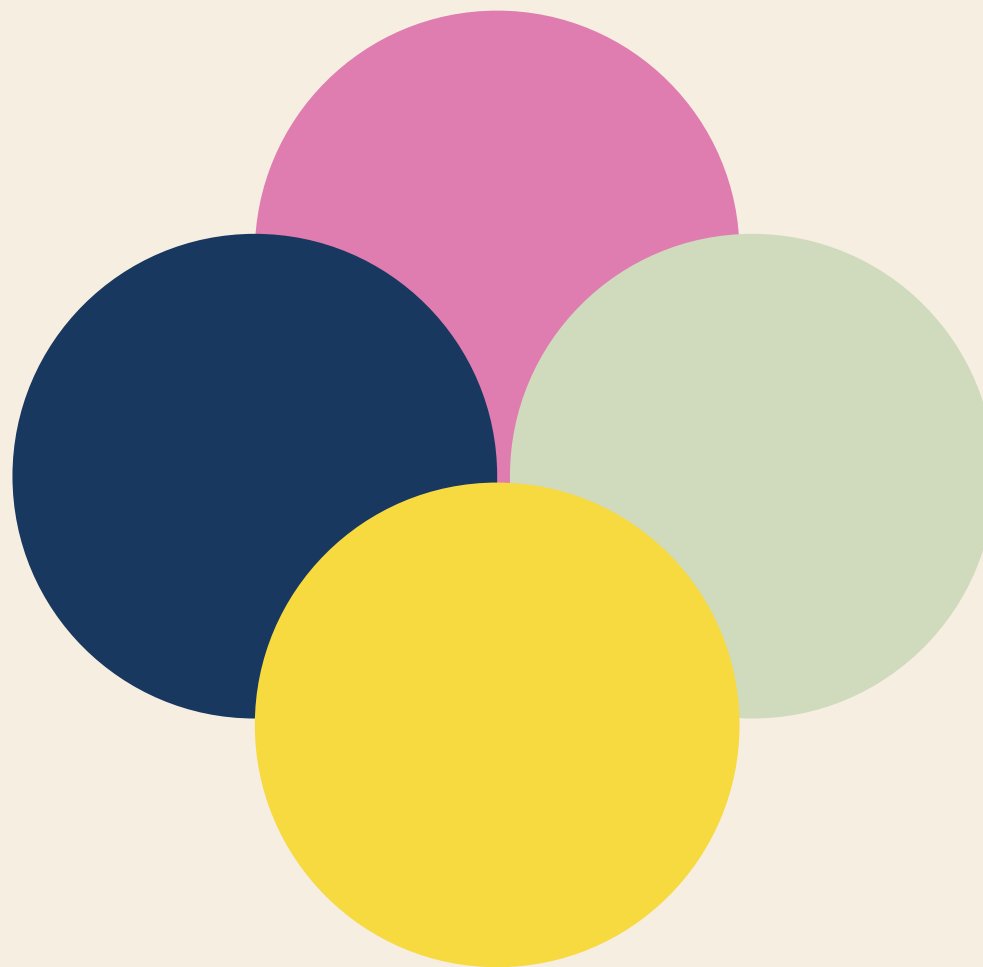
We are committed to embedding this principle into our recruitment and public appointments.

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 application 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 bi-monthly board meetings (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 5 years. Non-Executive Board Members 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 principles of public life (which are also set out on page 8).



HOW TO APPLY

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 29 October at 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)
- completed answers to the pre-populated questions
- 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.

WEBINAR SESSIONS:

The current OfS Chair will be hosting webinars to share information about the role, what the expectations are and to provide an opportunity for questions during the application window. There are two webinar dates available – please note that the content will be the same in both sessions, so you should only sign up for one.

Please complete the form corresponding to the date you would like to attend:

Registration form to the Chair webinar session,
Monday 6 October 12:00-13:00 pm, [Register here](#)

Registration form to the Chair webinar session,
Wednesday 15 October 17:00-18:00 pm, [Register here](#)

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 29 October at 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/>