



Department  
for Education



Oak  
National  
Academy

# Oak National Academy Chair Information pack



# WELCOME



## Thank you for your interest in becoming the Chair of the Board of Oak National Academy.

The Department for Education is leading delivery of the Government's Opportunity Mission, seeking to break down the barriers to opportunity for every child and young person, at every stage of their education. A high-quality curriculum is critical to this mission. Every child should benefit from a broad, ambitious curriculum, taught by highly skilled teachers, so that they can achieve and thrive at school and in their future lives.

As Chair of Oak National Academy, you will make a real and lasting positive difference in education. You will lead an organisation that is exploring the potential of technology and AI to transform learning, supporting teachers to teach brilliant lessons, and demonstrably improving teacher workload. AI is changing the face of education, and the power of technology is being harnessed to equip teachers with innovative teaching tools which support strong pedagogy. Oak is playing its part in this landscape, developing AI and ed tech tools which draw on assured content, which are crafted and tested by teachers and subject experts, and which meet the highest standards of AI safety.

We are seeking to appoint an outstanding individual with senior leadership experience in either the education or education technology sector, to lead the Oak Board. You will be a strong strategic thinker, who is committed to, and understands the importance of, a high-quality, knowledge-rich curriculum and who can shape Oak's future direction, particularly through continued technological innovation. You will also be an exceptional communicator, who can build strong working relationships with Oak's executive and with organisations across the education landscape.

Through our commitment to equality of opportunity, my Department wants to ensure that its public appointments reflect a better representation of the communities which we serve. Diversity is very important, and we are committed to recruiting actively from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, creating an atmosphere that nurtures talent and different perspectives. Whether you're from an underrepresented group, or you have achieved success through non-traditional education routes, I encourage candidates from all backgrounds and professions to apply for this role.

Thank you for your interest and for taking the time to read through this pack. If you have the skills and experience that we are seeking and want to support Oak in delivering its aim to help schools and teachers deliver a high-quality curriculum, I hope that you will apply. If you wish to have an informal and confidential discussion about the role before doing so, please contact Jenny Oldroyd, Director of Curriculum, General Qualifications and Digital Strategy at [jenny.oldroyd@education.gov.uk](mailto:jenny.oldroyd@education.gov.uk).

*Bridget Phillipson*

**Bridget Phillipson MP**  
Secretary of State for Education



**This is an exceptional moment to lead the Board of Oak National Academy. As Chair, you will shape the direction of the organisation, provide governance oversight, and maintain Oak's unique 'by teachers, for teachers' ethos while ensuring it can remain at the forefront of educational technology and curriculum design.**

Oak's **framework agreement** sets out its strategic aims and role in the education system. Oak provides free, open licence, optional curriculum materials through its digital education platform, covering all subjects for pupils aged 4 to 16. Its resources are now used by around 200,000 teachers in more than 3 in 4 of all schools in England, with especially high use amongst schools in disadvantaged areas. Oak's materials include fully adaptable curriculum plans and digital resources covering the whole of the national curriculum to support teachers to develop their skills in long-term curriculum planning as well as with their immediate teaching needs. As part of everyday school life, digital tools can support collaboration, creativity, and independence in ways that complement strong teaching. Oak has developed an AI lesson planning tool, Aila - the first publicly funded and publicly available generative AI tool of its kind in the UK. This tool enables teachers to be firmly in control, supporting them in developing lessons that are tailored to the needs of their classes, and reducing workload, whilst maintaining high standards of quality and safety.

Over the next two years Oak will redevelop its resources to reflect the refreshed curriculum and GCSEs following the independent **Curriculum and Assessment Review**, helping teachers with their implementation. Oak will also create new high-quality resources designed specifically for reception teachers. Oak's new resources will also align with the Review's recommendations on embedding of applied knowledge and skills in financial, media and digital literacy and improving climate and sustainability education in the relevant subjects. The resources will reduce workload for teachers who want to use them, giving them more time to identify and invest in supporting pupils with learning gaps, particularly in literacy and numeracy. They will help close the disadvantage gap as well as helping teachers to support pupils with SEND.

Oak will continue to place itself at the forefront of educational technology, providing teachers with products which support tailored lesson planning, reduce workload and help raise quality standards. Its resources, data and expertise will also be shared with industry to support the curriculum alignment and quality of edtech and AI tools available from other providers.

The Oak platform also continues to provide a national contingency for remote education should it be needed in the event of disruption.

You will chair a Board overseeing groundbreaking work at the intersection of education and technology. Oak has established itself as a leader in the safe development of AI tools for education, having become one of the first public sector organisations to launch a generative AI service to the public, whilst setting new standards in quality and safety. This work is attracting attention from around the world.



# ABOUT THE ROLE

**The Oak Board provides governance to the organisation. It provides leadership and direction to the executive, setting strategic aims and standards.**

The Chair will have the opportunity to work with a high-performing executive team.

They will work closely with the Board, the executive and ministers to set Oak's direction, ensure strong oversight and accountability, supporting Oak to deliver its remit. Oak is strategically aligned with, but operationally independent from government.

The Oak Chair will:

- Alongside the Chief Executive and ministers, shape Oak's next phase by setting the organisation's purpose, strategy and direction, ensuring that Oak achieves its objectives as agreed by the Secretary of State whilst balancing this aim with operational independence.
- Promote the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources.
- Represent Oak and its Board both internally and externally, maintaining the confidence of the education sector and sustaining a broad range of stakeholder relationships. This includes acting with propriety, being politically impartial and consideration of conflicts of interest.
- Act as a point of contact between ministers and the Board.
- Maintain an effective working relationship with the Chief Executive to help inform Oak's decision-making process, with consultation on all significant, strategic or potentially contentious issues as they arise. This will involve supporting, guiding, and where necessary providing challenge to the Chief Executive in their leadership of Oak.

- Provide leadership to the Board and executive, ensuring that the organisation operates effectively and efficiently, within its remit, and meets its objectives; and that all activities are conducted both lawfully and ethically.
- Provide for the induction, training, objectives and performance assessment of all members of the Board so that it has the knowledge and expertise to direct the organisation's business effectively.
- Ensure that the Board Operating Framework is in place and adhered to, setting out the role and responsibilities of the Board consistent with and adhering to the Government Code of Good Practice for Corporate Governance.

The Board comprises at least five and not more than eleven members (currently ten, including two Executive Directors). There will be a minimum of four Board meetings per year. Board meetings will normally be held in person. Meetings are usually held during normal working hours, Monday to Friday. Meeting length will vary according to the agenda, but meetings are usually between 2-3 hours in duration.

The Chair will also be expected to be in regular contact with the executive between Board meetings.



# WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR

The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate the following essential criteria:

- A proven track record of exceptional leadership resulting in successful delivery of strategic outcomes, demonstrating the ability to play a key role in the leadership of the English education system and to provide strong and inspirational leadership to Oak and to the wider education sector.
- Senior Board level experience of providing strategic direction, facilitating effective decision-making, driving delivery and governance oversight in a high-profile and complex environment.
- Outstanding communication skills, with the ability to influence and build effective relationships with the Oak Board and staff and with stakeholders across the education and education technology landscape, including ministers.
- Strong understanding of the education system, the direction of education reform, and how to drive education outcomes.
- Experience overseeing technology-enabled transformation, including managing risk and public trust.

In addition, the following is desirable:

- Experience as a non-executive Board member or Chair of an Arm's Length Body board or equivalent.

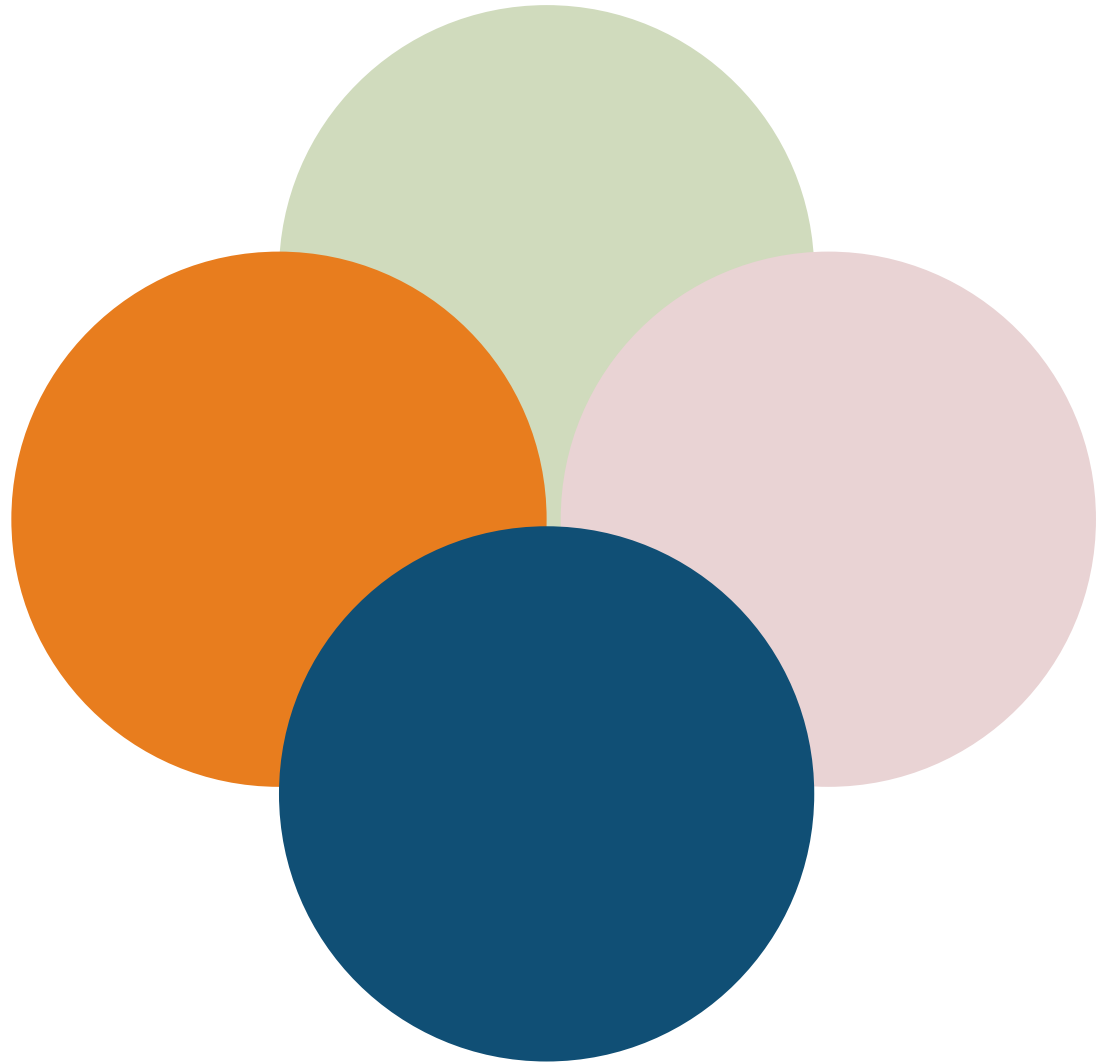


# EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We 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 socio economic 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. As part of implementing the scheme, we guarantee an interview for anyone with a disability whose application meets the essential criteria for the role and who has asked that their application be considered under the scheme. Indicating that you wish your application to be considered under the scheme will in no way prejudice your application.

**Reasonable adjustments:** We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to make sure applicants with disabilities, physical or mental health conditions, or other needs are not substantially disadvantaged when applying for public appointments. This can include changing the recruitment process to enable people who wish to apply to do so. When you apply you will have the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments to the application process.



# HOW TO APPLY

**The closing date for applications is noon on 27 March 2026**

To apply you will need to create an account or sign in on the public appointments service website.

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:

- equality information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues
- a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- a supporting statement using the template provided (maximum 300 words per criterion – if this is exceeded only the first 300 words will be considered)
- a short professional biography (maximum 150 words)

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 consider only applications that contain all the elements listed above, and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.

Please note the following:

- The Department cannot accept applications submitted after the closing date.
- Applications will be assessed solely on the documentation provided; please refer to the advert and checklist above to ensure you have provided everything requested.
- The Department cannot provide feedback at application stage; feedback will only be given to candidates unsuccessful following interview.
- If a large number of applications is received, preliminary sifting will be carried out using only the following two essential criteria:
  - A proven track record of exceptional leadership resulting in successful delivery of strategic outcomes, demonstrating the ability to play a key role in the leadership of the English education system and to provide strong and inspirational leadership to Oak and to the wider education sector.
  - Strong understanding of the education system, the direction of education reform, and how to drive education outcomes.

You should be aware that in this situation, your application might not be considered in full by all members of the panel.



# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

## TERM

The initial appointment will be for a period of three years, commencing by 1 September 2026, or sooner by mutual agreement.

While there should be no presumption of reappointment, the Secretary of State may decide to offer a reappointment after considering a number of factors including the balance of skills and experience on the Board and the appointee's performance. Individuals should not generally serve more than two consecutive terms.

## TIME REQUIREMENT

The Chair is expected to commit no more than one day per week carrying out their duties. This time commitment is expected to be used flexibly i.e. Board activities may amount to more than one day in one week and less in another.

## LOCATION

Remote with travel to other locations as required. Board meetings are usually held in London.

## REMUNERATION

£500 per day for a maximum average time commitment of one day per week.

## EXPENSES

Reasonable expenses properly and necessarily incurred will be reimbursed in line with Oak National Academy's expenses policy.

## PENSION

The post is not pensionable.



# CONDUCT AND STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

## STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

The Government expects all holders of public office to work to the highest personal and professional standards. In support of this, all non-executive board members of UK public bodies must abide by the principles set out in the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies. The Code sets out the standards expected from those who serve on the boards of UK public bodies and will form part of your terms and conditions of appointment.

## ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for apply for this role you should have the right to work in the UK.

The Government expects all holders of public office to work to the highest personal and professional standards. You cannot be considered for a public appointment if:

- you are disqualified from acting as a company director (under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986);
- have an unspent conviction on your criminal record;
- your estate has been sequestrated in Scotland or you enter into a debt arrangement programme under Part 1 of the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act 2002 (asp 17) as the debtor or have, under Scots law, granted a trust deed for creditors.

When you apply, you should declare if:

- you are, or have been, bankrupt or you have made an arrangement with a creditor at any point, including the dates of this.
- you are subject to a current police investigation.

You must inform the Department for Education if, during the application process, your circumstances change in respect of any of the above points.

When you apply you should also declare any relevant interests, highlighting any that you think may call into question your ability to properly discharge the responsibilities of the role you are applying for. You should also declare any other matters which may mean you may not be able to meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct of Board Members.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Before you apply you should consider carefully:

- any outside interests that you may have, such as shares you may hold in a company providing services to government;
- any possible reputational issues arising from your past actions or public statements that you have made;
- and/or - any political roles you hold or political campaigns you have supported, which may call into question your ability to do the role you are applying for.

You will need to answer relevant questions in relation to these points when making an application. Many conflicts of interest can be satisfactorily resolved and declaring a potential conflict does not prevent you from being interviewed. If you are shortlisted for an interview, the panel will discuss any potential conflicts with you during that interview, including any proposals you may have to mitigate them, and record that in their advice to ministers.

Alongside your own declaration, we will conduct appropriate checks, as part of which we will consider anything in the public domain related to your conduct or professional capacity. This may include searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information. The successful candidate may be required to give up any conflicting interests, and their other business and financial interests may be published in line with organisational policies.

Details of declared political activity will be published when the appointment is announced, as required by the Governance Code (political activity is not a bar to appointment, but must be declared).



# PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder.

## **SELFLESSNESS**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

## **INTEGRITY**

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

## **OBJECTIVITY**

In carrying out public 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 Oak National Academy Sponsorship Team if you would like to make a complaint regarding your application at: [Oak.PUBLICAPPOINTMENTS@education.gov.uk](mailto:Oak.PUBLICAPPOINTMENTS@education.gov.uk)

Please include 'Oak National Academy Chair application' in the subject box.

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](mailto:publicappointments@csc.gov.uk)

Further information on complaints can be found on the Commissioner for Public Appointments' website: [publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk](http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk)