

**Candidate  
Information Booklet**

**APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE  
GOVERNING BODY  
OF  
NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

Application forms and this information pack can be made available in other formats – including Braille, Large Print and audio formats

Please email Public Appointments Unit (PAU) at: [PAU@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:PAU@economy-ni.gov.uk) or telephone:

028 9052 9461 (Jean Mageean)  
028 9052 9212 (Neil Morrison)

**All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants/candidates with a disability.**

## **FOREWORD BY COLM MCKENNA, NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE INTERIM CHAIR**

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining the Governing Body of Northern Regional College.

As Chairperson of the Governing Body, it is a privilege to serve an institution that plays such a vital role in the lives of our students, our communities, and our regional economy. Our campuses in Ballymena, Coleraine, Newtownabbey, and Magherafelt provide further and higher education across a wide region of Northern Ireland.

A Further Education College is more than a place of learning. It is a gateway to opportunity, a driver of innovation, and a key contributor to regional growth. Through our work, we actively support the Economy Minister's priorities - helping to raise productivity by developing a highly skilled workforce, enabling our learners on the pathway to good jobs, contributing to the transition to a low-carbon economy, and driving forward regional balance by creating opportunities across all the communities we serve.

At Northern Regional College we play a vital role in delivering on our dual mandate of skills development and social inclusion.

We are now seeking new Governors to join us - people with strategic insight, sound judgement, and a passion for education and community impact. Whether your expertise lies in business, finance, innovation, public services, or community development, your perspective could help shape opportunities for thousands of learners.

Governors typically commit a small number of hours each month, supported by a full induction and ongoing development. It is an opportunity to grow your leadership skills, broaden your professional network, and contribute meaningfully to the economic and social wellbeing of our region.

If you are ready to use your skills to help shape the future of Northern Regional College, I encourage you to consider applying. This is your opportunity to influence, to contribute, and to make a lasting impact.

Best Regards

Colm McKenna

**NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE (NRC)**  
**APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE GOVERNING BODY**  
**INFORMATION PACK**

- Section One** - **Introduction and Background to NRC**
- Section Two** - **Role and Person Specification**
- Section Three** - **Application Process**
- Annexes** - **A Integrity and Conflicts of Interest – Guide for Candidates**
- **B Disqualifications associated with positions on Governing Bodies**
- **C Detailed Explanation of Essential Criteria**

The Department for the Economy (DfE) and the Northern Regional College (NRC) are committed to the principles of public appointment based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. We are also committed to equality of opportunity and welcome application forms from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, race, political opinion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not they have dependents.

**Women, people under 40, people with a disability and those from minority ethnic communities are currently under-represented on the Governing Body. In addition, there is a lack of members with a community, voluntary or rural background. Applications from members of all these groups would be particularly welcome.**

A public appointment to a Board gives individuals from different backgrounds and with specific skills and experience a chance to help make decisions that affect all our lives. Board appointments are a great opportunity to give something back to the community, whilst developing your own skills.

**We are operating a Guaranteed Interview Scheme in this competition for applicants with a disability. Applicants with a disability who meet all of the criteria at the sift stage will automatically be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to any short-listing which may take place.**

## **Section One - Introduction and Background to Northern Regional College (NRC)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

DfE is seeking to appoint six new Members to the Governing Body (GB) of NRC. This competition will also be used to fill any additional vacancies that arise on the GB for a period of 12 months following the initial appointments.

#### **A Regulated Appointment**

The procedure for these appointments will adhere to the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI). This means that they will be based on merit after a fair, open, and transparent process that involves independent scrutiny and with the DfE Minister making the final decision on who to appoint. In the absence of a Minister, decisions on appointments will fall to the Department's Permanent Secretary.

Further information on the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland can be found at <https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/>

### **BACKGROUND**

NRC is one of six Further Education (FE) colleges across NI, offering a wide range of skills provision including professional, technical and academic studies, from Level 0 to higher education.

NRC has four campuses, located in Ballymena, Coleraine, Magherafelt and Newtownabbey. The College's vision is *"To be the FE College of choice, providing lifelong learning opportunities for all, through innovative, high-quality education and skills training, supporting the Northern Ireland economy to be globally competitive"*.

In 2024/25, NRC had 15,560 enrolments (13% of total enrolments across the sector), with 11,985 part-time and 3,575 full-time enrolments. In the same period, it employed 512 people (expressed as full-time equivalents) of whom 278 were teaching staff. Further information on the College can be found on its website - [www.nrc.ac.uk](http://www.nrc.ac.uk).

Colleges are mostly funded from the public purse through DfE. In 2024/25 NRC received funding of £32.4 million, compared to sector funding across all six colleges of £234.7 million. In addition, capital funding is provided to support an investment programme in new buildings, minor works and specialist equipment/vehicles.

Colleges are classified as Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and carry out their functions at arm's length from DfE, the sponsor Department. As NDPBs, they:

- Carry out functions on behalf of Government;
- Are legally incorporated with their own legal identity, under [The Further Education \(NI\) Order 1997](#) ;

- Employ their own staff and are allocated their own budgets;
- Publish their own business plans, annual reports and accounts; and
- Are subject to Executive and Departmental priorities.

### **NRC Governing Body (GB) – Strategic Context**

The DfE Minister is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly for the colleges' performance and in relation to wider government aims reports to the Executive. The DfE Permanent Secretary is accountable for the funds allocated to colleges and designates each college Principal/Chief Executive as the college Accounting Officer. In practice most of the responsibilities of the Minister/Departmental Accounting Officer are delegated to the lead official (the Director of FE) to discharge.

On 27 February 2025 the Northern Ireland Executive agreed a [Programme for Government 2024-2027](#) 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most.' This sets out the Executive's nine priorities with the goal of improving the wellbeing of everyone living and working here. One of the priorities is to 'Grow a Globally Competitive and sustainable Economy', which encompasses the four key objectives of the Economic Vision set out by the Economy Minister in February 2024:

- increasing the proportion of working age people in Good Jobs;
- promotion of Regional Balance;
- raise Productivity; and
- reduce carbon emissions.

The FE sector will have a critical role in supporting the achievement of the PfG as it is a key delivery mechanism to growing the economy and supporting social inclusion. The objectives of this Economic Vision are the main focus of the [Department's Business Plan 2025-26](#) which sets out what DfE needs to do to deliver growth for the economy in Northern Ireland.

The Minister's priority of promotion of Regional Balance is further articulated in the Department's [Sub-Regional Economic Plan](#), published on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, which sets out a new strategic approach to economic policy. FE helps underpin the creation of a successful regional economy by strengthening the skills profile of Northern Ireland and linking individuals to work through the successful delivery of all skills levels, including significant support towards social inclusion and creating opportunity. As well as supporting workforce development and promoting social inclusion, FE also directly supports businesses, including help with innovation and growth, which in turn increases regional competitiveness. The sector's collaborative offering aligns strongly to economic priorities at regional and sub-regional levels.

The colleges provide skills and opportunities that are essential to building a modern economy and creating a stronger, more inclusive society. The aim for FE in Northern Ireland is to develop a world class FE sector, financially efficient and with strong governance; a sector with state of the art facilities; a sector which is collaborative, and responsive both to learner and employer needs; a sector which plays a vital role in delivering skills for the economy, as well as

high quality skills and support services for learners/employers aligned to economic priorities; and which supports social inclusion.

Other key issues for the colleges include:

- The need to consider the current FE sector delivery model, in order to ensure the most sustainably effective model is employed, one which can meet the needs of key stakeholders, and can transition to address evolving strategic economic and societal priorities,
- Establishing the most effective presence in an evolving skills landscape, such as demographic change and other skills avenues (e.g. schools and universities). This will include promoting a clear identity for key FE provision and developing more responsive services to support learners and economic growth priorities,
- Addressing a challenging financial position – ongoing public sector budget constraints require tight controls on spend and a renewed effort on achieving good outcomes within available resources,
- The effective management of a good industrial relations framework with college staff, led by GB Chairs who, in conjunction with College Principals, oversee collective bargaining arrangements in the sector and the wider FE workforce issues.

Further information on the college can be found on the NRC website:

[Northern Regional College](#)

## **Section Two - Role and Person Specifications**

### **Role Specification**

The role of Member of a Governing Body (GB) is a demanding one with a number of corporate responsibilities and individual responsibility to observe the highest standards of integrity. The College GB is required by legislation:

- To ensure the efficient and effective management of that College; and
- To ensure the provision of suitable and efficient Further Education to students of the College having regard to the needs of industry, commerce and the community and existing educational provision within the local area.

A GB's responsibility includes scrutiny of the college's financial performance and the quality of its teaching and learning. It must ensure that the College for which it is responsible is managed with probity and integrity. It must ensure that the professional, technical and academic programmes of the College reflect the College's strategic direction and mission as well as meeting the strategic priorities the Department has set for Further Education. In guiding the College's strategic direction, the GB provides and exercises a support and challenge function in respect of the Principal/Chief Executive and executive team.

College GBs have up to 18 Members each, 12 of whom are appointed by the Economy Minister through the public appointments process. The remaining Members are the College Principal/Chief Executive, two staff representatives, a student representative and up to two Members who may be co-opted by the GB to bring added expertise and experience not considered adequately covered by other Members.

NRC is currently operating with an Interim Chair, 8 publicly appointed members and 5 ex-officio members. There are usually around six to nine full GB meetings per year held at one of the College campuses. In addition, dependent on Committee membership, each Committee has four or more meetings per year.

Individual GB Members should bring independence, objectivity, impartiality and expertise to both the decision making and challenge processes within the College. All Members have equal voting rights on the GB.

All GB Members must demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and subscribe to their GB's Code of Conduct which encompasses the seven principles of public life, set by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. (See **Annex A** Principles of Public Life)

The GB Members' specific responsibilities include:

<b>Governance</b>
Assisting the Chair in ensuring that the GB has sufficient support and information to discharge its functions.

Assisting the Chair in ensuring that the GB takes due account of all statutory regulations, codes of practice and other requirements.
Contributing objectively to the proceedings of the GB and its committees, exercising a robust challenge role as appropriate.
Working with fellow GB Members to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Further Education (NI) Order 1997 and adherence to the public sector standards applied to Non-Departmental Public Bodies.
<b>Leadership</b>
Providing leadership to the College, working within the GB as a team member.
Representing the interests of the College at meetings with the Minister, senior Departmental officials and the general public.
Helping to ensure that the College acts as a responsible employer, including contributing to the GB's role in approving and supporting the implementation of the College's staff management framework; and also, determining the pay/conditions/appraisal arrangements of senior staff.
Working collaboratively with all other Colleges to develop a cohesive Further Education sector.
<b>Strategic Direction</b>
Helping to determine the mission of the College, the establishment and maintenance of its general character and its medium- to long-term strategic direction.
Helping to set the strategic direction of the College, aligned with Executive/ Ministerial strategic priorities.
Working in partnership to ensure that the College delivers against the strategy and policy for Further Education in NI.
Collaborating with fellow GB Members and College management to ensure that the quality of College education/skills provision meets the needs of students, prospective students and employers.
<b>Budget</b>
Providing effective oversight of the College's management of performance, financial controls and staff.

Encouraging high standards of propriety and promoting the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources throughout the College.

Providing effective oversight of the College's operational and financial performance, including ensuring an effective risk management system is in place.

You can find further information on the roles and responsibilities a Further Education College GB, the Chair and the individual Governor in the [Guide for Governors of Further Education Colleges](#).

### **Period of Appointment**

A Further Education College GB Member will normally serve for a period of four years (one term) but may be considered for appointment for one further term. An annual assessment of the performance of GB members is carried out throughout the period of appointment. Reappointment may be considered subject to satisfactory performance during the initial period of office, continued adherence to the principles of public life and subject to **statutory disqualifications set out in Annex B**. Ultimately, the decision to re-appoint will rest with the Minister responsible for the Department for the Economy.

In accordance with the Code of Practice issued by CPANI, appointments for the same position i.e. on the same GB, are restricted to two terms. An individual who has served for two terms on the GB of one college, is however eligible to apply to serve on the GB of another college should they wish to do so. An existing GB member can be considered for appointment as GB Chair, through open competition. Such an appointment would be to a different position and would count as a new appointment.

### **Time Commitment and Remuneration**

On average, the successful candidates can expect to commit around one day per month to College business. This includes attendance at around six to nine full GB meetings per year held at one of the College campuses. In addition, dependent on Committee membership, each Committee has about four meetings per year. Governors may also represent the College at meetings and public events, as well as interacting with the Department.

The post of GB Member is remunerated at the following rate:

- £250 for a Governing Body meeting;
- £150 for a committee meeting or event sanctioned by the Chair.

Further details are available at [GB Remuneration Circular](#). GB Members are also eligible to claim allowances, at Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) rates, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on GB business. All remuneration and expenses are subject to deduction of income tax and national insurance.

## **Double Paying**

Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that; if appointed, they will be asked to obtain confirmation from their employer that any remuneration due and time worked for this position are truly additional to their existing job role and not a duplication of salaried employment (unless allowed under the terms and conditions of employment).

In the interests of minimising the potential for double paying to occur, the Department reserves the right to contact an employer regarding your candidature.

## **Nationality**

DfE have no public appointments which are restricted to UK nationals only. However, there is a mandatory requirement to ensure that those appointed do not contravene immigration legislation.

- Republic of Ireland (RoI) citizens may be appointed to any post.
- Commonwealth citizens who have immigration status allowing them to work in the UK may be appointed to any post.
- There is an onus on non-UK and non-RoI citizens to provide proof of their right to work in the UK and an onus on the appointer to check that.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of the individual to provide evidence that they have the appropriate permission if being offered a post. The Department will check the individual's passport, share code or other documents to confirm if they can legally work in the UK.

## **Qualifications**

No specific academic qualifications are required for these appointments.

## **Training**

Appointees to FE College GBs are expected to undergo appropriate training in corporate governance and board membership. You will be expected, as a condition of your appointment, to attend an appropriate training course, provided by the Department or college. All appointees will be supported with additional development needs or training as necessary.

## **Person Specification**

The person specification addresses the qualities, experience, background and competences sought. A criteria-based selection procedure is employed by DfE. This process requires applicants to provide evidence which demonstrates that they can meet the requirements. The mere mention of a skill or attribute is insufficient. Neither can selection panel members make assumptions from the title of a post or the nature of an organisation as to the experience, qualities and skills gained. **For that reason, CVs will not be accepted.**

Make sure that you take full advantage to provide practical evidence and examples of how you feel you are suitable for this appointment. **It is strongly recommended that you read the 'Public Appointments Guide' which contains guidance on the completion of criteria-based application forms and can be found at:**

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/public-appointments-guide-overview-public-appointments-northern-ireland-and-helpful-information>

DfE will recognise less traditional career patterns and experiences found within the employment field. Therefore, in your application form, you may use examples from your working or personal life e.g. part-time activities or leisure activities, including any voluntary or community work you are or have been involved in.

## **Selection Criteria**

### **Eligibility**

[Schedule 3](#) of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 requires that applicants should be, or have previously been, engaged or employed in business, industry or any profession. This is a basic eligibility requirement for all applicants, and candidates must demonstrate how they meet this criterion. Please note the legislation does not set a minimum time period for this criterion.

For the purposes of this criterion:

- **'business'** means any type of enterprise and includes organisations in the community, voluntary and public sectors; and
- **'any profession'** is defined as an occupation, practice or vocation requiring significant understanding and experience of applying a complex set of knowledge and skills through professional learning and/or practical experience.

Please be aware that DfE employs a broad interpretation of this criterion. **A background in education is not required to undertake the role of GB Member and is not a criterion for appointment.**

Selection is also based on the essential criteria set out below.

### **Essential Criteria**

Candidates must provide evidence (by way of example) to demonstrate that they have the following skills and knowledge. They will need to show, both on the application form and at interview, how they meet the following criteria:

1. **Leadership and Corporate Governance** - how **you** have contributed to providing guidance and direction in helping an organisation to set and secure its aims and objectives, to ensure focus and direction to deliver results, and take accountability for effectively addressing governance, financial and risk management considerations.

2. **Delivering Strategy and Analytical Skills** – how **you** have influenced and supported the strategic direction of an organisation and analysed issues using relevant information sources, assessing risks and available options to contribute to effective and timely decision making.
3. **Communication and Partnership Working** – how **you** have demonstrated effective communication, influenced others and developed and maintained effective collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders/partners.

4. **Specialist Skills**

For this fourth criterion, candidates must provide evidence against only one of the options. **If a candidate provides evidence against more than one of these four options then the Selection Panel will only consider the first one. Any other completed criteria will NOT be considered.**

- a. **Sustainability / Green Economy or**
- b. **Business Development or**
- c. **Digital economy including experience of emerging technologies or**
- d. **Managing and Developing People**

**A. Sustainability/Green Economy** - how **you** have worked within the green economy / Net Zero carbon at a strategic level and in a leadership role.

**B. Business Development** – how **you** have experience of the business/economic environment and/or experience in a business or public sector/voluntary organisation at a senior level. You should also have a reasonable knowledge of the NI economy and some of the key factors which may influence it.

**C. Digital economy including experience of emerging technologies** – how **you** have experience of working within the digital economy at a strategic level and in a leadership role. You should have an understanding of digital business models and their impact on business strategy.

**D. Managing and Developing People** - how **you** have delivered effective workforce planning and staff development to meet changing workforce requirements, contributing to the management of continuous and varying employment matters and relationships.

**The pass mark for each criterion is 3.** Only those candidates who have provided evidence of sufficient quality to meet the eligibility criterion, the first three essential criteria and their chosen fourth essential criterion will be considered for interview.

**A more detailed explanation of the essential criteria can be found in Annex C.**

## **Applications from Civil Servants/former Civil Servants**

It is possible that conflicts of interest could arise in relation to government policy, strategy, or the fair administration of public services and justice during the course of College business. Civil servants, or former civil servants, are welcome to apply for the post of a Further Education College GB Member. However, they should be aware that a judgement will be made by the interviewing panel as to whether the nature of his/her employment could lead to a perceived or real split of loyalties of a sufficiently serious nature to render appointment as Board member an unmanageable conflict of interest.

Former civil servants are subject to rules on the acceptance of outside business appointments, employment or self-employment for a period of up to two years after leaving the NI Civil Service. Individuals in this category, who wish to apply, should check their eligibility to do so with NICS HR Employee Relations. You can contact HRConnect using the contact details below:

Email: [NICS@HRConnect.nigov.net](mailto:NICS@HRConnect.nigov.net) or External Dial: **0800 1 300 400**

Candidates who are current employees of the Northern Ireland Civil Service are advised, should you be offered an appointment, you will be asked to confirm that you have obtained the necessary approval to undertake private work with another public sector body (including another Government Department) from NICS HR Employee Relations. Further information on this can be found in the [NICS HR Handbook](#), **Section 6.01: Standards of Conduct, Sub Section 6: Private Occupations.**

**Current and Former Civil Servants are advised to seek the required authorisation at the start of their application process.**

### **Integrity & Conflicts of Interest**

DfE must ensure that potential appointees are committed to the principles and values of public service. These principles are **Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.**

DfE must take account of actual, or perceived, conflicts of interest. Therefore, applicants, in their application form, must disclose information or personal connections, which, if they were to be appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such. Conflicts of interest may not be a barrier to appointment but both real and perceived conflicts must be discussed with all candidates by the selection panel at interview. This is to ensure that the public can have confidence in the Board's independence and impartiality and the integrity of the potential appointee.

Please refer to the attached **Annex A** for further information on this subject.

## **Section Three – Application Process**

### **Application Form**

The application form is designed to ensure applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements. You will be assessed against the criteria on pages 10-11 and detailed in **Annex C** of this document. You can use examples from your working life, including any voluntary or community work you are, or have been, engaged in or, if preferred, you can use examples from your personal life.

Braille, large print, and audio formats are available on request.

### **Data Protection**

As much of the information involved in the appointment process will be of a personal nature, the provisions of Data Protection legislation will be followed. To ensure that you are aware of how and why your personal information is to be used, and with whom it may be shared, a DfE Public Appointments 'privacy notice', is available on the following link for your information and reference:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/privacy-notice-public-appointments>

### **Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form**

The Department is required to monitor the gender, ethnic origin, community background and disability of applicants to ensure that equal opportunities measures are effective. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a person with a disability as someone who has, or has had in the past, a physical or mental impairment which has had a substantial long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This includes sensory impairments, people who have had a disability in the past even though they are no longer disabled, people whose disability is likely to last for twelve months or rest of their life, and people whose condition is likely to progress or recur. Severe disfigurement is also acknowledged as a disability.

You are therefore asked to complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information section of the application form. The information is not made available to the panel members and does not play a role in the decision-making process. It will be detached from your application form by the admin Administration Team and sent to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for analysis and will be treated in strict confidence.

### **Application procedure**

Please complete your application online by following the link below:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/public-appointment-northern-regional-college-governing-body-members-competition>

Alternatively, you can request a hardcopy from the DfE Public Appointments Unit at [pau@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pau@economy-ni.gov.uk) or by telephoning Jean Mageean on 028 9052

9461 (Textrelay: 18001 028 9052 9461) or Neil Morrison on 028 9052 9212 (Textrelay: 18001 028 9052 9212)

Written applications should be posted to:-

Department for the Economy  
Public Appointments Unit  
First Floor  
Adelaide House  
39-49 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8FD

Information on the expectations of the role or if you require any clarification on a particular aspect of the role or the criteria being assessed,

Email: [tina.diamond@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:tina.diamond@economy-ni.gov.uk)

To ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:

- CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms **will not be accepted**;
- There is a maximum word count of **400 words** per criterion. Anything over and above that will be redacted by the PAU Administration Team and not seen by the selection panel;
- Submitted application forms must be presented in **Arial format, Font 12**, and within the box provided;
- Applications will be automatically rejected if the box size is changed or the text is not in required format/font size. (Please note you can work in a different font size when drafting before submitting in Font 12); and
- Applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline.

### **Sift and Shortlisting**

An anonymised sift and short-listing process will be employed (for each background type). The Selection Panel will use a Marking Frame to determine how an applicant's skills, knowledge and experience meets each of the criteria. Applications which do not meet all of the selection criteria will be sifted out. The eligibility criterion will be assessed on a met/not met basis.

The Selection Panel reserves the right to apply a scoring system to further short-list for interview, based on the quality of evidence provided using aggregated marks.

**The pass mark for each of the essential criteria is 3 out of 5.**

If shortlisting is required, the Selection Panel has agreed that candidates must have achieved a score of **4** or above in **Criterion 1: Leadership and Corporate Governance** and an **aggregate score of 17** out of a possible score of **20**.

Should there be an insufficient pool of candidates achieving the required score of **17** the Selection Panel may consider reducing the required

aggregated pass mark by one mark each time until a sufficient pool of candidates eligible for interview is in place.

**Even if the aggregated score is lowered, shortlisted candidates must have scored 4 or above in the Leadership and Corporate Governance criterion to remain eligible for interview.**

### **Time Frame for Process**

The closing date for receipt of all applications is **12.00 Noon (BST) on Thursday 14 May 2026.**

Applications received by post will be individually date-stamped and the time of receipt formally recorded. It is the responsibility of the applicant, taking into account their chosen method of delivery, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for their application to arrive with DfE on or before the deadline. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

**Your application will be acknowledged immediately after submission if applying online, or within 2 working days if applying via an email or hardcopy application form.**

**If you have not received an acknowledgement within this timescale, please contact the DfE Public Appointments Unit by phone on 028 90 529461 or 028 90 529212.**

All those sifted out or short-listed out will be provided with feedback on request based on the agreed panel's assessment of their application. If you wish to contest the decision not to short-list you for interview you should do so within 5 working days of the issue date of your regrets letter. Further details about the process will be provided in the letter.

### **INTERVIEWS**

Interviews will last approximately 35 minutes. It is expected that interviews will be held on **Monday 22, Tuesday 23, Wednesday 24 (am), Thursday 25 June (pm) and Wednesday 1 July 2026**, in the Belfast area.

Those invited to interview are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable travelling expenses incurred within the UK and the ROI. All reasonable receipted dependant carer and/or childcare expenses will also be reimbursed where applicable.

### **Competence-Based Interviews**

Competence-based interviewing tests candidates against the specific selection criteria for a particular appointment. The application form gives you an opportunity to provide examples relevant to the specific criteria. These, in turn, provide the interview panel with information and evidence about you, and a deeper understanding of your abilities.

The interview is a crucial part of the appointment process and thorough preparation is essential. You can prepare for the interview by:

- reading and thoroughly understanding the selection criteria;
- reminding yourself of the examples you used in your application form and being prepared to expand on these at interview, if asked;
- rehearsing how you might relate your experiences to the interview panel, emphasising your own role and responsibilities; and
- not assuming that your qualities and experience will speak for themselves.

### **Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)**

The aim of the GIS is to provide applicants with a disability the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities beyond the initial application stage. Applicants with a disability who meet or exceed the pass-marks set for the criteria at the sift stage will automatically be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to any short-listing which may take place.

### **Pre-appointment Checks**

Before the names of suitable candidates are presented to the Minister or Permanent Secretary a Company Director's disqualification check and a bankruptcy check will be carried out. In addition, a cross-departmental check will be carried out on the probity and performance of those candidates who currently hold or have held public appointment roles.

### **Presentation of Results**

Ministerial choice is a key element of public appointment policy that enables Minister(s) to indicate if they wish to have the names of candidates suitable for appointment presented in a ranked (strict merit order) or unranked (alphabetical) list. Minister Dr Archibald has made it known that her preference in all cases is an unranked list.

### **Publicising Appointments**

A press release will be published to announce the appointment. Consequently, upon appointment, the candidate will be required to complete a political activity form and provide a short biography for publication. The press release will include, the candidate's name, a short description of the body to which they have been appointed, a brief summary of the skills and knowledge the candidate brings to the role, the length of the appointment term and details of the candidate's response to the political activity question.

### **Complaints Procedure**

The Public Appointments Unit (PAU) within the Department for Economy (DfE) is committed to the principles of public appointments as set out in the Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPANI) code of Practice.

If at any stage you feel you have reason to complain, details of the Department's Public Appointment Unit Complaints Procedure can be found at:

## **ANNEXES TO INFORMATION PACK**

### **ANNEX A**

#### **INTEGRITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES**

*This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained in the leaflet ‘Guidance on Conflict of Interest, Integrity and How to raise a Complaint’ produced by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Northern Ireland, which provides examples of the types of issues that may give rise to conflicts of interests.*

1. 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. These are:

**Selflessness:** Members should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity:** Members must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity:** Members must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability:** Members are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness:** Members should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty:** Members should be truthful.

**Leadership:** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

2. All candidates who put themselves forward for a public appointment must be able to demonstrate their commitment to the principles and values of public service. One of the issues which might arise in relation to this is that of conflict of interest.

### **What is a conflict of interest?**

3. Public Appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared. There is always the possibility for real or perceived conflicts of interest to arise. Both are a problem, as the perceived inference of a conflict may, on occasions, be as damaging as the existence of a real conflict.
4. No-one should use, or give the appearance of using, their public position to further their private interests. This is an area of particular importance, as it is of considerable concern to the public and receives a lot of media attention. It is important, therefore, that you consider your circumstances when applying for a public appointment and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived.

### **Surely a perceived conflict is not a problem, as long as I act impartially at all times?**

5. The integrity of the individual is not in question here. However, it is necessary for the standing of the individual and the Board that members of the public have confidence in their independence and impartiality. Even a perceived conflict of interest on the part of a Board Member can be extremely damaging to the body's reputation and it is therefore essential that these are declared and explored, in the same way as an actual conflict would be. The fact that a member acted impartially may be no defence against accusations of potential bias.

### **What should I do if I think I have a conflict of interest?**

6. You will find a section on conflicts of interest in the application form for you to complete. This asks you to consider and declare whether or not you have a real, or perceived, conflict. If you are unsure if your circumstances constitute a possible conflict, you should still complete this section, in order to give selection panel members as much information as possible.

### **If I declare a conflict, does this mean I will not be considered for appointment?**

7. No - each case is considered individually. If you are short-listed for interview, the panel will explore with you how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially on the Board and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed. For example, it may be possible to arrange for you to step out of meetings where an issue is discussed, in which you have an interest. However, if, following the discussion with you, the panel believes that the conflict is too great and

would call into question the probity of the Board or the appointment, they can withdraw your application from the competition.

8. The report on the outcome of the interview process which is put to the Minister will include clear written reference to any perceived or actual conflicts of interest or integrity issues connected to any candidate put forward as suitable for appointment. It will include sufficient information to ensure that the Minister is fully aware of any of these matters and can make an informed decision.

**What happens if I do not declare a known conflict, which is then discovered by the Department after my appointment?**

9. Again, each case would be considered on its merits, but the Department may take the view that by concealing a conflict of interest, you would be deemed to have breached the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life and may terminate your appointment.

**What happens if I do not realise a potential conflict exists?**

10. This situation may arise where the candidate is not familiar with the broad range of work which a body covers and therefore does not realise that a conflict might exist. In some cases, the panel, with their wider knowledge of the body, might deduce that there is a potential conflict issue, based on the information on employment and experience provided by the candidate in the application form. They will then explore this at interview with the candidate.

**What happens if a conflict of interest arises after an appointment is made?**

11. This could arise for two main reasons. The first is that the member's circumstances may change, for example, they may change jobs and in doing so, a conflict with their work on the Board becomes apparent. The second is where a member is unfamiliar with the range of the work of the body, but after appointment, it becomes clear that a conflict exists where none had been envisaged during the appointment process.
12. In both cases, the issue should be discussed with the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Sponsoring Department, to decide whether or not the member can continue to carry out their role in an appropriate manner and each case is considered individually.
13. It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for the member to continue on the Board, if they would have to withdraw from a considerable amount of the body's routine business. In such cases, the member may be asked to stand down from the body.

### Disqualification

There are statutory disqualifications associated with positions on GBs. You are not eligible for **appointment** as a member of the GB:-

- Where, in regard to a college you intend applying for, you have previously served two full terms of office, of four years each, whether or not consecutive, as a member of the GB, unless you are the current Principal and Chief Executive. This condition does not apply if you served as a member of a previous GB established prior to 2007
- If you are a Member of the GB of another college
- If you are a full-time student of the College
- If you are a member of staff of the College or if you are a member of staff of another institution of further education established under the Further Education (NI) Order 1997
- If you are a Member of the NI Assembly
- If you have been removed from the membership of a GB of an institution of further education established under the 1997 Order
- If you have been removed from the GB or its equivalent in any organisation grant-aided for the purposes of providing education
- If you have, within five years of the date your appointment would take effect, been convicted in a court in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Irish Republic of any offence and have been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months without the option of a fine
- If you are included in a list kept by the Department of Education under Regulation 8 of the Education (Prohibition from Teaching or Working with Children) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007
- If you are included (other than provisionally) in the list maintained as required by Article 6 of The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- If your estate has been sequestrated, you have been adjudged bankrupt, you have made an arrangement with your creditors, or you have granted a trust deed for your creditors or a composition contract
- If DfE reasonably believes that you are not fit to hold office

These disqualifications are applicable on appointment and will not impact on your eligibility to submit an application if your circumstances are due to change before the appointment starts. For example, if you are a Member/Chair of the GB of another college, a full time student of the College you wish to apply for or a member of staff of any of college at the time of submitting your application, you could be considered for appointment if you will no longer be in this position when the appointment is due to start.

The central concept is that you **cannot** serve as a GB Member **at the same time** as any of the circumstances listed. If you wish to seek clarification on the impact of this from a personal perspective, please contact us.

Where any person is disqualified under Schedule 1, the disqualification shall cease:-

- a. if that person's estate had been sequestrated, when the sequestration is recalled or reduced or they are discharged under or by virtue of The Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 1989;
- b. if adjudged bankrupt, on the discharge from bankruptcy or from the date of annulment if the bankruptcy order is annulled;
- c. if disqualified because that person had made an arrangement with creditors, or granted a trust deed for creditors or a composition contract, the disqualification shall cease when the arrangement or, as the case may be, the trust deed or composition contract is no longer in force; or
- d. if that person is no longer included:
  - i. on a list kept by the Department of Education under Regulation 8 of the Education (Prohibition from Teaching or Working with Children) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007; or
  - ii. in the list maintained as required by Article 6 of The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.

## DETAILED EXPLANATION OF ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

### 1. Leadership and Corporate Governance

Working within the GB you will be providing leadership and contributing to good governance in the College. In this context, governance is about leadership, direction and oversight. You will contribute to providing guidance and direction in helping the College to set and secure its aims and objectives, ensuring focus and direction to deliver results. As a GB Member you will have to understand and deal with issues related to college corporate governance including finance and risk management, in line with established FE legislative requirements and the policy framework set by the Department.

#### **Examples of evidence the panel will be looking for are:**

- providing clear strategic direction and guidance of a business, voluntary, community or public sector organisation to ensure focus and direction, and deliver results successfully.
- ability to effectively resolve conflicts or disagreements between team members;
- demonstrating strong values and be adaptive, flexible and resilient leadership;
- building partnerships and working collaboratively across a broad range of settings to achieve outcome;
- effectively monitoring and analysing an organisation's performance, and addressing underperformance
- identifying, evaluating and managing risks which may have an adverse impact on the organisation's performance and/or reputation;
- ensuring systems and internal controls are in place to support the achievement of policies, aims and objectives of the organisation;
- ability to make timely, sound and difficult financial decisions, ensuring value for money is achieved, based on a range of information;
- constructively challenging decisions, policies and procedures based on relevant evidence, including an understanding of the related legal framework;
- demonstrating standards of behaviour that gain a reputation of trust and integrity within a team/organisational environment.

### 2. Delivering Strategy and Analytical Skills

As a GB Member you will be responsible for influencing and supporting the strategic direction of the College, understanding the educational, economic and social environment in which it operates. As a GB Member you will work collaboratively with the college management teams to promote and grow the

business of the college in line with the agreed strategy and College Development Plan. You will analyse issues using relevant information sources, assessing risks and available options, in order to contribute to effective and timely decisions.

**Examples of evidence the panel will be looking for are:**

- ability to recognise and successfully respond to competing and changing priorities in developing and implementing the strategic direction of a business/voluntary, community or public sector organisation;
- contributing to and influencing the preparation, monitoring and review of the strategic plans of an organisation;
- ability to constructively challenge existing work practices and develop innovative new approaches;
- identifying a problem and addressing how this can be managed to deliver results;
- creating, commercialising and evaluation innovative solutions
- knowledge or experience in overcoming barriers, such as legal constraints, to develop new approaches or services.
- ability to make effective decisions on the basis of analysis, experience and judgement and showing ability to effectively convey your views and positively influence others;
- ability to critically analyse and review information from a range of sources to make effective, and as necessary, quick decisions;
- ability to analyse issues in the face of problems, generate options, display a broad knowledge and perspective to see potential future scenarios that will impact on the organisation;
- knowledge/experience of the NI economy and how the educational development of people supports the growth of the economy.

### **3. Communication and Partnership Working**

As a GB Member you will be required to input to the strategic direction of the College and ensure outcomes are delivered. You will influence others and develop effective collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

**Examples of evidence the panel will be looking for are**

- ability to communicate orally and in writing using a range of communication tools and methods;
- ability to develop constructive and collaborative working relationships and networks, with both internal and external stakeholders/partners;

- capacity to use persuasive and compelling arguments to influence others to understand and accept different approaches and perspectives;
- ability to provide direction and guidance, as well as support individuals as part of an effective team, manage conflicts or disagreements between team members, positively influence the behaviour of others and engender trust;
- ability to use partnerships to deliver shared objectives and outcomes;
- experience of working across a range of organisations to gain commitment and achieve consensus.

#### **4. Specialist Skills – select only one from A-D below:**

- A. Sustainability/Green Economy, or**
- B. Business Development, or**
- C. Digital economy including experience of emerging technologies, or**
- D. Managing and Developing People**

##### **A. Sustainability/Green Economy**

As a Governing Body member you will play a strategic role in helping the college respond to environmental, sustainability and decarbonisation priorities. This is in terms of both the College's statutory responsibilities and wider Executive objectives on green economic growth. You will provide support to the college to respond to Net Zero commitments, environmental regulations and sustainability related priorities. You will support green economic growth and opportunities and identify and champion these for the college. As part of the Governing Body you will provide scrutiny, guidance and support for College initiatives related to sustainability, decarbonisation, estates projects, resource efficiency and green skills development and also ensure that strategic decisions consider the long term environmental impacts and opportunities.

##### **Examples of evidence the panel will be looking for are:**

- experience of introducing technologies to produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment, conserve natural resources, address key challenges like decarbonisation and saving energy
- experience of developing green economic growth opportunities in any sector.
- experience of creating opportunities related to enhancing business capability to reduce energy costs, maximise resources to support net zero, sustainability, circular economy and green economy activities
- evidence of achievement and results

## **B. Business Development**

As a Governing Body member you will play a key strategic role in supporting and challenging the college to ensure it contributes effectively to the economic needs of Northern Ireland. You should understand the economic environment in which the college operates including the needs of employers, communities and learners.

### **Examples of evidence the panel will be looking for are:**

- successfully overseeing the delivery and/or management of strategic
- outputs, such as successful completion of significant project within a personal, voluntary or employment context,
- building strategic partnerships that can be applied in developing shared objectives and building productive networks across organisations
- experience of legal issues which impact or influence an organisation's decisions or activity, and to use this understanding to effectively resolve issues and/or make decisions

## **C. Digital economy including experience of emerging technologies**

As a Governing Body member you will play a strategic leadership role in helping the college respond to digital transformation, technological change and the evolving needs of employers and learners. You will have knowledge and experience of digital business models and their impact on business strategy including technologies such as AI, data analytics, cyber security, cloud services, social platforms and other digital tools. You will contribute to the oversight and effective scrutiny of digital service delivery and projects within the College

### **Examples of evidence the panel will be looking for are:**

- ability to understand digital business models and their impact on business strategy
- experience of the economic and competitive implications of the application of emergent technologies, such as, AI, digital twins, and automation technologies
- experience of overcoming skills challenges that are prevalent in the digital sector
- experience of transforming business performance through effective introduction of digital technologies, such as robotics, sensors and automation
- a track record of a senior\* role in developing a digital economy business
- experience in the application of relevant or emerging technologies such as AI, data analytics, cyber security, cloud, social, etc

- understanding of the implications and potential applications of digital technologies in helping create green economic growth
- Experience of delivery of new business models and opportunities enabled by digital technologies and connectivity
- Evidence of achievement and results

\* Working at a **senior** level is defined as providing detailed advice on or taking decisions personally or being party to decisions affecting strategic issues concerning the corporate body or organisation with which an individual is working either as an employee or advisor.

#### **D. Managing and Developing People**

You will support the GB as the employer of all College staff, in fulfilling its employment/industrial relations responsibilities for staff. This may also include the need to deal with varying employment matters and relationships which at times can be contentious. As the sector goes through a period of change and consolidation, you will, as a GB Member ensure that effective workforce planning and staff development is undertaken to meet changing workforce requirements. As a GB member you will have to have knowledge/experience of the NI economy and how the educational development of people supports the growth of the economy.

#### **Examples of evidence the panel will be looking for are:**

- providing opportunities for staff to discuss problems which affect their work and encouraging staff to offer their views and ideas assisting in decision making process;
- seeking out and implementing relevant policies to address the situation;
- ensuring regulatory and legislative responsibilities are identified and met;
- dealing effectively with any difference of opinion in ways which avoid offence and maintain respect;
- promptly identifying conflict and taking appropriate actions to resolve issues;
- dealing with people in a compassionate manner showing empathy;
- contributing to the development of people to achieve success;
- addressing skills needs to help organisations/learners to grow and develop.