

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

**APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE COUNCIL OF THE
CURRICULUM, EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT (CCEA) AND
THE COUNCIL FOR CATHOLIC MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (CCMS)
AND ITS DIOCESAN EDUCATION COMMITTEES (DECs)**

INFORMATION BOOKLET

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FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in the post of member(s) of the:

- Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA);
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) & Diocesan Education Committees (DECs).

I am delighted that you are interested in finding out more about the member roles.

I believe these members roles provide a unique opportunity for exceptional individuals to influence and shape the future direction of education in Northern Ireland.

Our education system faces a period of unprecedented operational and financial challenges. The role of Council Member plays an important role, requiring a strong ability to support corporate governance, accountability and risk management and strategic direction/planning and performance within an organisation.

Serving as a Council Member offers an exciting opportunity to contribute your professional expertise, provide strategic leadership and independent challenge, and play a meaningful role in shaping the future of education in Northern Ireland.

CCEA is the main education body in Northern Ireland, setting educational standards and carrying out its statutory duties in relation to the curriculum, examinations and qualifications

CCMS is an organisation that is responsible for over 40% of schools in Northern Ireland and plays a key role in supporting the educational outcomes of children and young people

My vision for education in 2032 is for a modern, forward-looking education system, scaffolded by a sustainable funding model, guided by robust evidence and evaluation and informed by learning from international best practice. If you share in this vision for education and you would like to make a positive difference for children and young people in our society, I strongly encourage you to apply.

Paul Givan MLA
Minister for Education

SECTION 1: DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING

Diversity in Public Appointments

1. The Department of Education (DE) is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. DE is also committed to providing equality of opportunity for all applicants and to improving diversity and eradicating under-representation.
2. We encourage everyone to apply irrespective of gender, age, marital status, disability, religion, ethnic origin, political opinion, sexual orientation or whether or not you have dependants.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

3. DE collects monitoring data to assess the effectiveness of its equality of opportunity and diversity measures. Applicants will therefore be asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form included in the application pack. 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.
4. You are not obliged to answer the questions on the monitoring form, and you will not suffer any penalty if you choose not to do so. Nevertheless, we would encourage you to complete it. The information is used to provide (anonymised) statistical data for all public appointments, and we would encourage you to respond to all sections and return the form. It is not made available to the Selection Panel and does not play a role in the decision-making process.

SECTION 2: INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANISATIONS

The Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

Introduction and Overview

1. CCEA was established on 1 April 1994 and is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored and supported by DE. CCEA's duties and functions are detailed in the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, Articles 73 to 80.
2. CCEA is the main education body in Northern Ireland setting educational standards and is responsible for the curriculum, examinations and qualifications. CCEA is responsible for keeping under review all aspects of the curriculum, examinations and assessment for schools including developing, conducting and moderating qualifications and assessments, and developing resources to support the implementation of the curriculum

Role of CCEA

3. CCEA's role is to:
 - continually review all aspects of the curriculum, examinations and assessment for grant-aided schools and colleges of further education;
 - undertake statutory consultation on proposals relating to legislation involving curriculum, examinations and assessment;
 - advise DE on matters concerning curriculum, assessment, examinations and external qualifications;
 - develop qualifications, conduct qualifications and assessments, and moderate relevant qualifications and assessments, ensuring that educational standards are recognised as equivalent to those upheld by other similar UK bodies;
 - accredit and provide advice on approval of qualifications;
 - publish and disseminate information relating to curriculum, assessment and examinations;
 - develop and produce teaching support materials for use in schools; and
 - carry out research and development.

Composition of CCEA

4. Under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, Schedule 3, the Council comprises a Chairperson and between 9 and 17 members, all of whom are appointed by the Minister of Education. As currently constituted the Council has a Chairperson and 13 members with three vacancies and one forthcoming vacancy.
5. There are five CCEA Council Committees which are:
 - Audit and Risk Assurance;
 - Education;

- Finance;
- Remuneration; and
- Regulation

6. Further information about the work of CCEA can be found at www.ccea.org.uk.

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) & Diocesan Education Committees (DECs)

Introduction and Overview

7. The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by and reporting to DE. It has both executive and advisory functions and was established as a result of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989.
8. CCMS act as the managing authority of all Catholic Maintained Schools, which make up over 40% of schools in Northern Ireland, and is one of the largest teaching employers, employing in the region of 6,500 teachers.
9. The role of CCMS is to:
 - promote effective management in the Catholic maintained sector through the provision of advice and information;
 - help raise and sustain education standards in that sector; and
 - provide a focus, and unified voice for the Catholic maintained sector in all matters relating to education policy and procedures.

The specific functions of CCMS are set out in Articles 142 to 146 and Schedule 8 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 but its fundamental aims can be summarised as follows:

- to develop and promote, in conjunction with the Trustees of Catholic maintained schools, quality education within the Catholic maintained sector;
- to develop policy, advice and guidance which promote effective management within CCMS, and the effective management and control of Catholic maintained schools;
- to ensure the effective and efficient recruitment, management and development of a highly motivated teaching force within the Catholic maintained sector and develop and maintain policies and procedures to support this aim; and
- to promote and co-ordinate, in consultation with the Trustees, the planning of the effective provision of Catholic maintained schools.

Diocesan Education Committees (DECs)

10. The 1989 Order provides for the establishment of a Diocesan Education Committee (DEC) in each of the five Dioceses of Armagh, Clogher & Kilmore, Derry, Down &

Connor and Dromore. The five CCMS DEC's act in an advisory and consultative role, supporting the Council to fulfill its statutory duties and deliver against its identified strategic priorities by advising on local, diocesan considerations. Decision making powers are not delegated to DEC's. The key roles of the DEC's and its members include:

- chairing of appointment panels for school principals and vice principals.
- early identification of, and advice on how to address, challenges across provision within the diocese in areas such as pupil outcomes, school management & governance, school leadership, employee relations, estate needs, and attendance.
- informing CCMS's contribution to the development of Area Plans by identifying sustainability challenges, needs and opportunities for school provision within the diocese.
- informing organisational policy and practice in respect of CCMS's statutory duties.
- supporting the development of the Catholic maintained sector, its ethos, and the family of schools within the diocese.

Composition of CCMS

Council Membership

11. Membership of the CCMS Council is as follows:

Archbishop of Armagh (or nominee) and the Bishops of Clogher, Kilmore, Derry, Down & Connor and Dromore (or, in each case, a person named by that Bishop)	Persons appointed by the archbishops acting jointly	DE Appointed	Parent Representatives	Assistant Teacher Representatives
6	14	8 (2 vacancies)	4	4

12. The work of the CCMS Council is supported by a number of standing Committees which are as follows:

- Chairpersons' Committee
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)
- Education Curricular Committee (ECC)
- Education Provision Committee (EPC)
- Finance and Personnel Committee (FPC)

Terms of reference, including any delegated powers, are in place for each committee.

13. Membership of the CCMS DEC is as follows:

REPRESENTATION					
ARCH DIOCESE/ DIOCESE	Archbishop / Bishops	Persons appointed by Trustees of Catholic Maintained Schools	DE Appointed	Parent Represent- atives	Teacher Represent- atives
Armagh	Archbishop of Armagh (or nominee)	10	4 (3 Vacancies)	2	2
Clogher & Kilmore	Bishops of Clogher and Kilmore (or their nominees)	6	2 (2 Vacancies)	1	1
Derry	Bishop of Derry (or nominee)	10	4 (1 Vacancy)	2	2
Down & Connor	Bishop of Down & Connor (or nominee)	10	4 (2 Vacancies)	2	2
Dromore	Bishop of Dromore (or nominee)	6	2 (1 Vacancy)	1	1

Role of the Council

14. The Chairperson and all members have corporate responsibility for the organisation's performance and for ensuring that it fulfils the aims and objectives set/agreed by DE and approved by the Minister, and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of resources.
15. The CCMS Council:
- establish the overall strategic direction of the CCMS within the policy and resource framework determined by DE;

- participate as appropriate in the performance management framework determined by DE for the CCMS's executive team, including setting and assessing the annual performance objectives;
- constructively challenge the CCMS's executive team in its planning, target setting and delivery of performance and holding it to account;
- ensure that DE is kept informed of any changes which are likely to impact on the strategic direction of the CCMS or the attainability of its targets, and determine the steps needed to deal with such changes;
- proactively promote the highest standards of financial management including ensuring that all requirements for the proper use of public funds are met and that the CCMS operates efficiently within the limits of both its statutory authority and delegated authority in line with all official guidance;
- ensure that it receives and reviews regular financial information concerning the management of the CCMS, is informed in a timely manner about any concerns about its activities, and provides assurance to DE that appropriate action has been taken on such concerns;
- demonstrate high standards of corporate governance at all times, including using the independent audit committee to help the Council to identify and address any risks the CCMS faces;
- appoint, with DE's approval, the CCMS's Chief Executive and, in consultation with DE, set performance objectives and remuneration terms linked to those objectives for the Chief Executive which give due weight to the proper management and use of public monies; and
- establish policies for staff on recruitment, fair employment, staff appraisal and development, health and safety, disciplinary procedures and grievance and ensure they are implemented and monitored.
- ensure that any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with; that the organisation operates within the limits of its authority and any delegated authority agreed with DE, and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds; and that, in reaching decisions, the organisation takes into account all relevant guidance issued by the Department of Finance (DoF) and DE;
- set the culture and values of the organisation, and set the tone for the organisation's engagement with stakeholders and customers;

16. Further information about the work of CCMS can be found at www.ccmsschools.com

Accountability, Strategic and Financial Planning Responsibilities

17. The Minister of Education is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly for the activities and performance of all the public bodies sponsored by DE. The DE Permanent Secretary is the Principal Accounting Officer, responsible for the stewardship of resources allocated to the education service, including funding allocated to CCEA and CCMS, and is responsible to the Minister for ensuring that the organisations sponsored by DE operate effectively and to a high standard of probity.
18. Both the CCEA and CCMS Councils are accountable to the Minister of Education for the performance and delivery of their individual statutory functions and the aims and objectives set by DE and approved by the Minister. The Chairperson of each organisation is normally the main point of contact between the Minister and the Council, in respect of the accountability of their organisation's performance.
19. In common with all public bodies, CCEA and CCMS are expected to have in place robust and effective governance and financial control arrangements to ensure proper and full accountability for public money. Each of the bodies is subject to the provisions contained in its formal Management Statement and Financial Memorandum issued by DE or their new Partnership Agreement agreed by DE.
20. The objectives, key targets and performance measures for CCEA and CCMS are reviewed and agreed annually with DE and set out in each body's Corporate and Business Plan. DE determines each body's performance framework in the light of the Department's wider strategic aims and contribution to the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government.
21. Each body's Chief Executive is designated as its Accounting Officer by the DE Permanent Secretary and is personally responsible for safeguarding the public funds for which they have charge; for ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those public funds; and for the day-to-day operations and management of the body. In addition to being accountable to the DE Permanent Secretary, the Chief Executive is also accountable to their Council for the overall organisation, management, staffing and performance of the body.
22. The Chairperson and all Council members have corporate responsibility for their organisation's performance and for ensuring that it fulfils the aims and objectives agreed with DE.

SECTION 3: ROLE PROFILES

1. DE members of the CCEA and CCMS Councils and the CCMS DECs, are appointed by the Minister of Education and shall act in accordance with their wider responsibilities as members. They should in particular:
 - ensure that CCEA/CCMS policies and actions support the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government targets and the strategic priorities of the Minister of Education and that the bodies' affairs are conducted with regularity and probity and deliver value for money as well as meeting the requirements of Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI);
 - contribute to the development of CCEA/CCMS strategy ensuring that it is consistent with the Minister's priorities and DE aims and objectives;
 - challenge and work for consensus in the decision-making processes of CCEA/CCMS and ensure decisions take proper account of guidance provided by the Minister/DE;
 - contribute to the work associated with the discharge of CCEA/CCMS statutory functions;
 - act in good faith and in the best interests of CCEA or CCMS and make a constructive contribution to the work of the Council and its committees;
 - undertake induction and further training and make the commitment of time necessary to fulfill the member role;
 - comply at all times with the Code of Conduct that is adopted by the CCEA/CCMS body and with the rules and guidance relating to the use of public funds and to conflicts of interest;
 - abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life, set by the Committee on Standards in Public Life;
 - not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political profit, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons or organisations; and to declare publicly and to their respective Council any private interests that may be perceived to conflict with their duties;
 - comply with the body's rules on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and of business appointments; and
 - comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 – General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Freedom of Information Act and all other reasonable requests for information.

SECTION 4: PERSON SPECIFICATION

1. The person specification addresses the qualities, experience, and competences sought.
2. The information you provide will be used to determine your suitability for appointment. DE also seeks to bring a wide range of interests and experiences to the membership of its public bodies by drawing in individuals who are not necessarily associated directly with the education service, but who have gained their experience from other backgrounds including business or commercial life and/or voluntary service and involvement in the community. 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.

Essential Criteria

3. Applicants will be expected to meet **four** essential criteria which DE considers provides an appropriate range of skills and experience for effective membership of the Council of CCEA or CCMS/DECs.
4. Applicants are required to demonstrate their suitability by providing evidence against the following **four** essential criteria.
 1. **Corporate Governance, Risk Management and Financial Oversight**
 2. **Strategic Direction, Planning and Performance**
 3. **Transformation and Change Management**
 4. **Understanding of an Arm's Length Body (ALB)'s Role in Delivering Policy**
5. Only those applicants who have provided evidence of sufficient quality to meet the eligibility criteria will be considered for interview. More detail is set out below. The following examples of evidence are purely for illustration; although some criteria have more examples than others, this does not indicate any prioritisation or weighting. The panel will consider any examples of your personal or professional experience that meet the criteria.

Essential Criteria

1. Corporate Governance, Risk Management and Financial Oversight

Please provide example(s) from personal or professional experience which demonstrates applying the principles of corporate governance, including risk management and financial management such as, maintaining budgetary control and delivering value for money, to ensure the proper accountability of an organisation.

For example:

- **Your** experience of constructively challenging decisions, policies or procedures based on relevant evidence;
- **Your** experience of providing a challenge function on the performance of an organisation including the management and accountability of its budget, risk management systems or staffing
- **Your** experience of dealing with financial statements, costed corporate business plans, budgets and related standards in an organisation;
- **Your** experience or knowledge in the delivery of value for money in an organisation;
- **Your** experience of identifying, evaluating, reporting and managing corporate risks which may have an adverse impact on an organisation's performance;
- **Your** experience in developing, implementing, or monitoring key governance and risk documents / policies;
- **Your** experience of using risk management systems and processes for managing significant risks facing an organisation;
- **Your** experience of ensuring systems of internal and external control work well by effectively monitoring and analysing performance, and addressing underperformance and
- **Your** experience of making timely and sound decisions based on a range of information.

2. Strategic Direction, Planning and Performance

Please provide example(s) from personal or professional experience of your contribution to the achievement of strategic organisational goals; how you identified and managed key strategic issues, formulated workable solutions and evaluated and prioritised information to make decisions in line with the strategic direction of an organisation.

For example:

- **Your** experience of recognising and successfully responding to competing and changing priorities in developing and implementing the strategic direction of a business/voluntary, community or public sector organisation;
- **Your** experience of contributing to and influencing the preparation, monitoring and review of the strategic plans of an organisation with regard to corporate business planning;

- **Your** understanding of the relationship between financial and corporate business planning;
- **Your** experience of making effective decisions on the basis of analysis, experience and judgement;
- **Your** experience of using information to develop effective solutions for difficult problems;
- **Your** experience of identifying current trends using current and relevant information and planning for the future;
- **Your** experience of influencing effective strategy development, to understand the quality of own thinking and decisions and seek feedback where appropriate;
- **Your** experience of actively measuring performance against strategic plans and evaluating results;
- **Your** experience of assimilating complex or conflicting data and different perspectives in order to arrive at a solution/recommendation;
- **Your** experience, knowledge and general understanding of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and Statutory Assessment; and
- **Your** experience and understanding of all aspects of examinations and qualifications.

3. Transformation and Change Management

Please provide example(s) from personal or professional experience of when you successfully managed or implemented a significant organisational change (programme or project) to deliver greater efficiencies and/or improved outcomes within an organisation.

For example:

- **Your** experience of developing and implementing plans for organisational change and recovery;
- **Your** experience of building and developing organisation culture and performance to align with Corporate Strategy;
- **Your** experience of empowering individuals/teams to effect change;
- **Your** experience of organisational change and/or [staff] restructuring;
- **Your** experience of monitoring progress and adapting plans to deal with changing circumstances;
- **Your** experience of dealing with internal and external resistance and influencing direction;
- **Your** experience of communicating change, both internally within the organisation and externally; and
- **Your** experience of monitoring and evaluating the impact of change, including the realisation of benefits/improved performance.

4. Understanding of an Arm's Length Body (ALB)'s Role in Delivering Policy

Please provide example(s) from personal or professional experience which demonstrate your understanding of the role and working relationship between an Arm's Length Body (ALB) and its sponsoring Department and Minister (or equivalent) in delivering policy.

For example:

- **Your** experience of engaging with and/or working in an ALB;
- **Your** experience and understanding of the services that ALBs are required to deliver;
- **Your** experience of developing constructive proactive relationships between an ALB and its sponsor department;
- **Your** experience of ensuring delivery aligns with government and departmental priorities;
- **Your** experience of translating policy into practice;
- **Your** experience of a Board gaining assurance that policies are having the desired impact;
- **Your** experience of risks in delivering policy through an ALB;
- **Your** experience of delivering or measuring policy success in reform;
- **Your** experience of Digital policy on transformation and AI; and
- **Your** experience of policy changes that have the greatest impact on outcomes.

SECTION 5: NUMBER OF POSTS, TIME COMMITMENT, REMUNERATION, TERM OF APPOINTMENT AND TRAINING

Number of Posts

1. DE is seeking to make the following appointments:

- 4 members to fill current and forthcoming vacancies on the CCEA Council;
- 2 members to fill vacancies on the CCMS Council; and
- 9 members to fill vacancies across the five CCMS DECs.

Should the Minister wish to create a reserve list of eligible candidates to fill any future vacancies arising in these organisations, this list will be operative for one year from the date of the Minister's decision.

Time Commitment

2. CCEA Council Members are expected to make a time commitment of approximately **two days per month**, based on a cycle of approximately six Council meetings and eight committee meetings per year. There are five Council Committees which are Audit and Risk Assurance; Education; Finance; Remuneration; and Regulation. Each meeting would normally last between two and three hours. Council meetings and committee meetings are normally held in CCEA Headquarters (29 Clarendon Road, Clarendon Dock, Belfast BT1 3BG) during business hours.
3. CCMS Council Members are expected to make a time commitment of approximately **5 days per year**, as well as any sub-committee(s) the member may be asked to serve on; which include Chairpersons' Committee, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Education Curricular Committee, Education Provision Committee, and Finance and Personnel Committee. In addition to, attendance at additional special meetings, workshops and public occasions, such as celebration events. Council members may also be asked to carry out specific functions including the ratification of appointments. Council meetings and committee meetings are normally held during business hours.
4. CCMS DEC Members are expected to make a time commitment of approximately **3 days per year**, as well as any sub-committee(s) the member may be asked to serve on; and attendance at additional special meetings, workshops and public occasions, such as celebration events. In addition, under the current Scheme of Employment, members are required to chair panels for appointments to prescribed posts (Principals and Vice-Principals). DEC meetings and committee meetings are normally held during business hours.

Remuneration

5. CCEA and CCMS and DEC Council Member positions are not remunerated; however, members are eligible to claim allowances, at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence expenses (payable in line with HMRC rates), necessarily incurred on business travel while carrying out their Council duties. Reasonable actual costs shall be re-imbursed.
6. CCMS and DEC members are eligible for attendance allowance (currently £22 up to four hours and £30.39 for more than four hours), or a financial loss allowance (currently £27.65 up to four hours and £55.31 for more than four hours) in respect of any loss of earnings or any expenses (other than travel and subsistence) necessarily incurred while carrying out their board duties, in relation to other responsibilities they may have.

Double Paying

6. Applicants who already work in the public sector need to be aware that no one can be paid twice from the public purse for the same period of time. Therefore, to avoid double payment of remuneration or travelling expenses if any of the successful appointees are employed within the public sector, the Department will agree, with the appointee and the other employer, the arrangements for the retention of such costs.

Abatement

7. Applicants should be aware that if they receive a PCSPS (Northern Ireland) Pension or have taken an Annual Compensation Payment (ACP) and they subsequently take up a remunerated appointment with a public body covered by the PCSPS (Northern Ireland) they may not earn more, by way of remuneration and pension, than they were earning before they retired. Where the new remuneration and pension exceed their previous salary, it may be necessary to deduct the excess from their pension. This is known as abatement. The Department will liaise with Civil Service Pensions if it believes that abatement may be necessary.

Term of Appointment

8. It is anticipated that all appointments will be effective from January 2027, with the length of each first term of appointment ending as stated below (in order to align with the terms of appointment for existing Council/DEC members):
 - The term of appointment for CCEA members will be from the date of appointment until **20 December 2030** (unless terminated before that time).
 - The term of appointment for CCMS and DEC members will be from the date of appointment until **29 November 2028** (unless terminated before that time).
9. Following this, subject to a satisfactory performance assessment and continued adherence to the principles of public life, members may be eligible for re-appointment. This does not

guarantee the members coming to the end of their first term of office an automatic second term. This is entirely a decision for each individual Minister to make according to their preference and in line with the CPANI Code of Practice.

Locations

CCEA

10. It is anticipated that most business will be in CCEA's Headquarters located at 29 Clarendon Road, Clarendon Dock, Belfast BT1 3BG.

CCMS & DEC Locations

It is anticipated that most business will be in CCMS Headquarters at Linen Hill House, 23 Linenhall Street Lisburn BT28 1FJ.

CCMS Council Headquarters: Linen Hill House 23 Linenhall Street LISBURN BT28 1FJ	Armagh DEC Cathedral Road ARMAGH BT61 7QY
Clogher & Kilmore Dublin Road Monaghan Co. Monaghan	Derry DEC Francis Street DERRY BT48 9AP
Down & Connor DEC Lisbreen 73 Somerset Road Belfast BT15 4DE.	Dromore 44 Armagh road Newry Co. Down BT35 6PN

Training

11. Induction training will be provided that all successful applicants must attend, and any further training events considered necessary.

Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities

12. Every effort will be made to provide whatever reasonable support any member of the Council may need to help them carry out their duties.

SECTION 6: APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

1. The appointments will be made following an open, transparent and merit-based competition conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland. DE operates a criteria-based selection process, which is currently the most common method of making public appointments.
2. Applicants may apply for appointment to more than one position. **Applicants may apply for membership of one or both bodies. Only one application form is required. Applicants should specify on the form which body or bodies and positions they are applying for and, if applying for more than one, their preferred body. This preference may be taken into consideration if they are recommended to the Minister as suitable for appointment. Applicants may apply for and be considered for appointments to both bodies and, if successful, may be appointed to positions on both bodies.**

Application Procedure

3. Applicants should demonstrate their knowledge, experience, skills and competences by way of specific practical examples, as to how they meet the essential criteria through completion of the application form. This form contains the Essential Criteria which reflect the knowledge, experience, skills and competences required by applicants in order to be eligible for appointment.
4. You must demonstrate clearly on your application form how and to what extent your experience is relevant to the published essential criteria for the post(s). There may be several aspects to a criterion, so ensure you provide evidence that shows how you meet all aspects. It is not enough simply to list the various posts that you have held. The Panel will not make assumptions from the title of your post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills or experience gained.
5. Only those candidates who have provided evidence of sufficient quality to meet the eligibility criteria will be considered for interview.
6. Electronic or legible, handwritten versions of application forms are acceptable. **We cannot accept** CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms, or applications where the format of the form has been altered. Please complete your application form in **black ink**, in either typescript Arial, font size 12 or handwritten. **You are limited to a maximum of 400 words per each criterion; any words over the limit will be discounted.**
7. Applicants will be tested against the essential criteria both in their application forms and at interview stage.

The Selection process

8. A four-member Selection Panel has been appointed, comprised of:

- Mr Jeremy Gardner – (DE Director of Corporate Services and Education Governance)- Panel Chairperson;
- Mrs Deborah O'Hare – (CCEA Council Chairperson);
- Mrs Patricia Carville – (CCMS Council Vice Chairperson); and
- Dr Audrey McKeown– (CPANI Independent Assessor).

The Independent Assessor is appointed from a pool of suitably trained independent Assessors managed by the office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland (CPANI). Independent Assessors provide independent scrutiny as part of the appointment process to help ensure that appointments are open, transparent, based on merit and command public confidence. Independent Assessors are fully involved in the selection process.

Sift and Short-listing Process

9. Following the closing date for applications, an anonymised sift and short-listing process will be carried out by the Selection Panel to assess each applicant against the selection criteria.
10. When assessing each application against the selection criteria, the Panel will use a marking framework to determine how an applicant's experience, skills and competencies meet each of the criteria. Applicants will be awarded a score out of **5** for each criterion and must meet a minimum standard of **3** or above in each criterion in order to be invited for interview. All criteria will be weighted equally. Applications which do not meet the minimum standard will be sifted out at this stage.
11. In order to encourage diversity, DE is committed to interviewing as many eligible applicants as practicable without further short-listing being applied. However, in the case of a high volume of applications the Panel may decide to limit the number of applicants it invites for interview in a proportionate manner. If this happens, the Selection Panel will agree a higher acceptable requirement (i.e., a higher overall pass mark) prior to commencing the eligibility sift. The purpose of this will be to identify those applicants whom the Selection Panel considers best meet the essential criteria from the written evidence provided in their application forms.
12. Should the Panel need to limit the number of applicants invited for interview DE will operate a **Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)** for this appointment process. The GIS has been developed for applicants with disabilities or those with a long-term impairment or health condition, which is expected to last for at least 12 months. In these circumstances, provided that the applicant has demonstrated in their application form that they have met the criteria, the applicant will be offered a guaranteed interview. If you wish to apply under this scheme, you must indicate this and sign the declaration. You must be considered as disabled under

the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. DE reserves the right to request relevant information from the applicant to confirm they are eligible.

Criteria-based Interviews

13. The Department is aware that not all potential applicants will be familiar with the criteria-based selection process which is employed. To seek to address this, a Guidance Note is included in the Application Pack which provides information about this type of interview i.e. what they are, how to prepare for them and what candidates can expect at interview.
14. Those applicants who remain in the process following short-listing will be invited for interview. **Interviews will be held in person.** Applicants invited for interview are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses, to and from the interview, incurred within the UK and Ireland only. Travel should be based on the use of the most economic method of travel, and reimbursement will be paid at public transport rate.
15. Where travelling from outside Northern Ireland is required, flights and one overnight hotel accommodation (costs of which must be approved by the Department prior to booking) may also be reimbursed. Childcare costs, meals and any other incidental expenses will not be reimbursed.
16. Applicants who are invited to interview will be tested and scored on all completed criteria. There will be a set of short questions probing your understanding of integrity, probity and conflicts of interest which are not scored (see Point 21).
17. Applicants who are not offered an interview will be provided with written feedback based on the Selection Panel's agreed assessment of their application. If an applicant wishes to contest not being short-listed for interview, they must do so within the timescale stated in their feedback letter, setting out in writing their reasons for contesting the decision. Further details about the process will be provided in the feedback letter.
18. Applicants who are deemed by the Selection Panel as disqualified will be informed by letter.
19. The Selection Panel will score candidates at interview against an agreed pass mark for each criterion. Those who pass the interview will be recommended to the Minister as suitable for appointment and presented to the Minister as a pool of candidates in an unranked (alphabetical) list i.e. they will not be ranked in order reflecting the scores at interview.
20. An applicant summary agreed by the Selection Panel will also be provided to the Minister with an objective analysis of each applicant's experience, skills and competencies based on the information provided by each applicant and the panel's assessment of that applicant during the selection process. It will also include (for each candidate) details of other public appointments held and any current commitments. The Minister will decide who should be appointed.

Integrity, Probity and Conflict of Interest

21. DE must ensure that the individuals appointed have an understanding of, or a clear commitment to, the principles and values of public service. These principles are *Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty; and Leadership as established by the Nolan Committee*. These are described more fully in the enclosed information leaflet “*Probity and Conflicts of Interest: Guidance for Candidates*”. The conduct of those appointed to serve on public bodies must be above reproach. To this end, applicants, in their application form, must disclose whether or not they are involved, or have been involved, in activities that could damage their own reputation or that of the relevant organisation if raised in public. As part of the selection process, you will be tested on your commitment to maintaining high standards in public life with particular emphasis on probity issues and conflicts of interest. These are not scored. Some examples to help applicants evaluate whether or not they have a potential conflict are also included on the above leaflet.
22. DE must take account of actual, or perceived, conflict of interest. Therefore, applicants, in their application form, must disclose all appointments held whether or not they are remunerated. In addition, information on personal connections, which, if they were appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such, must also be disclosed on the application form.
23. It is very important, therefore, that all applicants provide appropriate details on their application form of any interests which might be perceived as being in conflict with the appointment for which they are applying. If it appears from the information provided on the application form a possible probity and/or conflict issue exists, or may arise in the future, these will be fully explored with the applicant with a view to establishing whether they are sufficiently significant to prevent the individual from carrying out the duties of the post. The Selection Panel will do this at interview stage.

Political Activity

24. All those selected for appointment will be asked to complete a form indicating if they have undertaken any political activity in the last five years. The Commissioner for Public Appointments Northern Ireland requires that the information provided on political activity is included in the press release announcing the appointments.

Announcing the Appointment

25. In the interests of openness and transparency, information on the individual appointed as a result of this process will be made public in a press release. If you are appointed, some of the information you supply – that is, your name, a summary of your experience, the skills you bring to the organisation, other public appointments held with any related remuneration, if appropriate, and your response to the political activity question (see above) – will be included in the press release.

Disqualification from CCEA Council Membership

26. A person will be disqualified from being a Member of the CCEA Council if they:
- are employed by the CCEA as a paid officer;
 - have been adjudged bankrupt or have made a composition with their creditors;
 - have, within the last five years immediately preceding the day of their appointment or at any time thereafter, been convicted by a court in Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic or elsewhere in the British Islands of any offence and ordered to be imprisoned for a period of not less than three months without the option of a fine or been guilty of any conduct which the high court has declared to be reprehensible.

Disqualification from CCMS Council/DEC Membership

27. A person will be disqualified from being a Member of the CCMS Council/DEC if they:
- are employed by the CCMS (other than as a teacher) as a paid officer;
 - have been adjudged bankrupt or have made a composition with their creditors;
 - have, within the last five years immediately preceding the day of their appointment, or at any time thereafter, been convicted by a court in Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic or elsewhere in the British Islands of any offence and ordered to be imprisoned for a period of not less than three months without the option of a fine or been guilty of any conduct which the high court has declared to be reprehensible.
28. Appointments to the same position are restricted to two terms of four years. Those who have served two appointment terms - of whatever length - as a Member of the CCEA Council or CCMS Council/DEC are ineligible to apply for the same position.

Civil Servants – Rules on the acceptance of outside business appointments

29. Serving or former civil servants are not debarred from applying for public appointments. However, serving civil servants will require their Department's approval and former civil servants may require the approval of their last Department (depending on their grade and whether they left within the last two years) before taking up an appointment. Further information is available from Education Governance Team.

Timeframe for Process

30. The deadline for return of applications is 4pm BST on **Thursday 17 September 2026**. The eligibility sift and any short-listing required is expected to be completed by **19 October 2026**; interviews are expected to be held between the **4 and 6 November 2026** with the successful candidates being notified in the week commencing **23 November 2026** (subject to the satisfactory outcome of the necessary pre-appointment checks and Ministerial approval).

Pre-appointment Checks

31. Criminal History Record Check – These appointments are subject to a criminal history record check and will require an **AccessNI Basic Disclosure Certificate**. If you are selected by the Minister of Education for appointment, you will be asked to apply to AccessNI for a Basic Disclosure Certificate, using their online system. This disclosure is sought to assist with the decision-making process; however, a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position. Copies of DE's Storage and Retention of Disclosure Policy together with the Policy on the recruitment of Ex-offenders for DE public appointments, are available to all applicants on request. If you do not apply for the Basic Disclosure certificate through the AccessNI online system within the specified time, we will regard you as no longer interested in the post and your application will be withdrawn.
32. Other Public Appointments – Departments have a duty to satisfy themselves, as far as practicable, that those they appoint to their public bodies will carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner. For candidates who hold other public appointments, this means that we may approach other departments for confirmation that their performance in other public roles has been satisfactory.
33. Members should expect their performance to be appraised on an annual basis by the body's Chairperson.
34. For your appointment to continue your performance appraisal report must be satisfactory. An unsatisfactory appraisal report may contribute to certain actions being taken, which could ultimately lead to termination of your appointment.

Privacy

35. Your privacy is important to us and DE will process your personal data in line with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). A copy of DE's Public Appointment Privacy Notice, which should be read in the context of the Department of Education's Privacy Notice is available on our website www.education-ni.gov.uk.

How to Apply

36. An application pack can be obtained from the Department's website - <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/public-appointment-opportunities> or by contacting us by telephone or e-mail:

Contact names: Richard Fulton or Lynne Hackworth
Telephone: (028) 9127 9226 or 07783828893
Email: egt1@education-ni.gov.uk
Website: www.education-ni.gov.uk

37. If you require an application pack in a different format e.g. large print, please contact us as detailed above.

Closing date

38. The closing date for applications is **4pm BST on Thursday 17 September 2026**. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the form is received by the closing date. Late applications will not be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances. Applications must bear the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to delay in delivery and the closing date may be missed. All electronic applications must also be received by the Department by **4pm BST on 17 September 2026**
39. Applications will normally be acknowledged within one working day of receipt. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, either by email or by post, within three working days of submission please contact the Education Governance Team - see contact information above.
40. Any general queries about this public appointment competition should be addressed in the first instance to Lynne Hackworth, Educational Governance Team, Department of Education

Telephone: 07783828893

Email: Lynne.Hackworth@education-ni.gov.uk

SECTION 7: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints Procedure

1. DE is committed to getting this appointment process right first time. However, if you are not entirely satisfied with any aspect of our service, please tell us and we will do our best to resolve the matter. Our aim is to resolve any complaint quickly and you are invited to bring any matter of concern to the attention of the DE official named below. However, if you still feel dissatisfied after this approach, you may initiate a formal complaint in writing. Please direct your concerns in the first instance to:

Pearse McCann
Deputy Director of Governance
Department of Education
Room G12, Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Bangor
Co Down
BT19 7PR

E-mail: Pearse.McCann@education-ni.gov.uk

Telephone: 028 90257839

2. If after receiving a comprehensive response from DE, you remain dissatisfied, you can write to the office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, using the contact details below:

Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland
E5:08 Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SB

Email: info@publicappointmentsni.org

Tel: 028 9052 4820