

Higher Education Authority

National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Appointment process for the Chair of the Board

Background

The *National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (therein referred to as the *National Forum*) was announced by the Minister for Education and Skills in November 2012 and became fully operational in October 2013. The role of the National Forum is to enhance the teaching and learning for all students in higher education and to be an advisory body to the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The National Forum is academically-led and is the key system-level 'Centre of Excellence' infrastructure to support at national level, the implementation of the recommendations of the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* in respect of the teaching role of the higher education institutions (HEIs).

The staffing of the National Forum consists of a Director and four executive staff full time equivalents. It has a Board which consists of members nominated by key stakeholders in the sector, as well as two advisory groups including, an *International Advisors Group* and *National Forum Associates*.

Current situation

The inaugural Chair, was seconded on a half-time executive basis during the setup and development phase of the National Forum.

The National Forum is now moving into a new phase of its existence, and the new Chair will be a non-executive position. Therefore, they will not have an operational role in the organisation and the time commitment to the National Forum is generally limited to planning and attending Board meetings, as well as occasional attendance at National Forum events. It is envisaged that the Board would meet approximately six times per annum.

The University of Limerick (UL) is the Administrative Custodian for the National Forum, and has responsibility for supporting its day-to-day operations, particularly the administration of fund disbursement under the direction of the National Forum, as well as human resource management services. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) agreed between the HEA and UL is in place.

The offices of the National Forum are currently located in the Royal Irish Academy, Dawson Street, Dublin 2.

Board structure

The Board of the National Forum reports to the HEA and is accountable for governance and strategic oversight of National Forum activities (including staff appointments) and ensures

that the funding provided by the HEA is appropriately spent through delivery of an annual workplan and budget agreed with the HEA. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreed between the HEA and the Board is in place.

The Board comprises the following:

- Three nominees from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA), including one HEA organisational nominee;
- The Director General (DG) of the Irish Universities Association (IUA);
- Three IUA nominees;
- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA);
- Three THEA nominees;
- One nominee from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI);
- One nominee from Union of Students Ireland (USI);
- One nominee from the Higher Education College Association (HECA);
- Chair of the National Forum.

Membership of the Board of the National Forum is voluntary and non-remunerated. The term of office for Board members is for 3 years, and Board members will serve no more than two consecutive terms in office (except for the DG of the IUA and the CEO of THEA which remain for as long as they are in post). The aim is that there is adequate continuity in Board membership between 3-year cycles, with no fewer than 3–4 members (and no more than 8–9 members) remaining in office for two consecutive terms. The Chair will give a minimum of 6 months' notice of his / her intention to stand down from this office.

Appointment process for a new Chair of the National Forum Board

To ensure an open and transparent process for appointing a new Chair to the National Forum, the HEA proposes to establish a selection committee consisting of the following:

- A representative of DES;
- A representative of the HEA;
- An IUA Board member;
- A THEA Board member;
- A HEA Board member
- The Director of the National Forum.

The HEA will issue an invitation for expressions of interest for the position of Chair of the National Forum and prepare a list of candidates for the role of Chair.

The HEA will convene the selection committee to consider and shortlist the candidates and then invite two preferred candidates for an interview. The final recommendation for the role of Chair must be approved by the Board of the National Forum, with final sign off by the Board of the HEA.