



Department  
for Education

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Peter Phillips

Email enquiry form:

[www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe)

Via email to: [request-454917-5b11e759@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-454917-5b11e759@whatdotheyknow.com)

1 February 2018

Ref: 2018-0001328

Dear Mr Phillips,

Thank you for your request for information about the Office for Students Boards appointments which was received on 4 January 2018. You specifically requested data regarding:

- Q1** the advertising, shortlisting, selection, and appointment process of the new Board
- Q2** including job descriptions, person specifications
- Q3 along** with full gender, ethnicity, and other diversity stats.

I have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act").

**Q1.** All appointments to the OfS board are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Education. The appointment process was devised with regard to the Governance Code on Public Appointments. The Code is available at:  
<https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/regulating-appointments/governance-code/>

Two recruitment campaigns were run in parallel in the second half of 2017 to recruit up to six members to the Office for Students (OfS), One campaign focused on recruiting a member with experience of promoting or representing the interests of students (the "student experience" role). The other was for up to five other ordinary members (sometimes referred to as the non-executive director campaign).

Both processes included an open advertisement and applications process, an advert is attached. The applicant pack can be found at the following link,  
<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Applicant-Pack-OfS-Non-Executive-Directors.pdf> .

The processes also involved longlisting, shortlisting and interviews led by an assessment panel. The assessment panel then provided a report to Ministers including the appointable candidates. Ministers subsequently chose to appoint five of them to the vacancies for ordinary members. Ministers chose not to appoint anyone from the student experience

campaign, and subsequently made an interim appointment of one of the successful candidates appointed to the OfS Student Panel onto the OfS Board

**Q2:** A copy of the information you requested is contained in the applicant pack – see answer to question one.

**Q3:** A copy of the information you requested is enclosed.

We are not providing a breakdown of the gender and diversity data for those on the shortlisting and interview panels or the candidates shortlisted, invited to interview or, ultimately, appointed. Given the small number of people in these categories, it may be possible to use diversity data to identify individuals. This information is being withheld because the Section 40(2) exemption on personal information applies. Section 40(2) provides for personal data to be exempt from disclosure where its disclosure would infringe the rights of individuals and contravene any of the data protection principles under the Data Protection Act 1998. This is an absolute exemption in these circumstances, which means that it does not require a test to balance the public interest in releasing the information against that in withholding it.

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If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled, you should make a complaint to the Department by writing to me within two calendar months of the date of this letter. Your complaint will be considered by an independent review panel, which were not involved in the original consideration of your request.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint to the Department, you may then contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

Yours sincerely,

Nilufa Rahman  
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**Q3.**

<b>Generic' non-executive member applications</b>	<b>Number of applicants overall</b>
<b>Candidates</b>	221
<b>Diversity monitoring questionnaires returned</b>	173
<b>Male (% of forms returned)</b>	92 (53%)
<b>Female</b>	82 (47%)
<b>Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background</b>	11 (6%)
<b>Declared disability (diversity questionnaire or Interview Access Scheme form)*</b>	7 (4%)

<b>Student experience' position applications</b>	<b>Number of applicants overall</b>
Candidates	133
Diversity monitoring questionnaires returned	106
Male	53 (50%)
Female	52 (50%)
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background	24 (23%)
Declared disability (diversity questionnaire or Interview Access Scheme form)*	13 (12%)

Please note: the composite elements of the above dataset will routinely not sum to the total number of applicants. Applicants are not compelled to provide diversity data and, so, not all do.