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Education

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EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES BODY



INFORMATION PACK

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If you require this document in other formats (such as large print, Braille, on audio cassette, easy read or on computer disk) and/or other languages, or have any other queries, please contact School Access Team using the contact details above.

Section One

Introduction

1. The Department of Education wishes to appoint members to the new Exceptional Circumstances Body with effect from 01 June 2010. The term of appointment will be for 2 years. Further terms may be considered subject to a satisfactory performance assessment.
2. These appointments do not fall within the remit of the Commissioner of Public Appointments for Northern Ireland but the appointment process follows closely the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies published by the Commissioner of Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.
3. The Department is committed to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. The Department is also committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, race, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or whether or not they have dependants.

Exceptional Circumstances Body

4. Primary legislation (the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997) places a duty on the Department of Education to establish a new Exceptional Circumstances process and Body to which parents can apply in respect of post-primary school admissions.
5. The report of the Post-primary Review Working Group (The Costello Report) stated at paragraph 7.23;
 - *"No admissions criteria can deal with every eventuality and it will be important to have arrangements that are able to take account of 'compelling individual circumstances'. We believe that such arrangements should be restricted to the most exceptional circumstances and that these will require careful definition. To ensure consistency of approach, a central independent body with the necessary expertise (i.e. educational, medical, social) should consider these cases. 'Compelling individual circumstances' should not be included in schools' admission criteria."*
6. In response to this recommendation, Article 16A of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (as amended by the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), placed a duty on the Department to make Regulations that establish, for applications for admissions to

take place after July 2010, an exceptional circumstances process for post-primary transfer and a Body to operate that process.

7. Article 16A of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and the School Admissions (Exceptional Circumstances) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 make clear that the Exceptional Circumstances Body will consider cases where parents feel that, **for exceptional reasons**, there is only one post primary school that their child must attend and where their application to that post primary school using the normal route has not been successful. The Body will consider cases relating to applications for admission to post-primary school, where admission is to take place after July 2010. In practice this means that the first cases to be considered will be heard after the Transfer 2010 post primary placement letters have issued on 28 May 2010. The vast majority of the cases the Body will hear will relate to pupils who are transferring from primary to post primary school, however, as any pupil from years 8-12 will be entitled to apply, a small number of cases each year will relate to pupils from years other than year 8.

The Role of the Exceptional Circumstances Body – General

8. There are currently two routes by which children transfer to post-primary school:
 - **Route 1:** children in receipt of a Statement of Special Educational Need are placed in the suitable post-primary school by a review of that statement conducted by the Education and Library Board. Children placed in a post-primary school in this way are "supernumerary"; they do not count towards the total number of children (defined as their admissions/enrolment numbers) that a school is otherwise permitted in legislation to admit;
 - **Route 2:** all other children apply to schools for admission. Admission into post-primary school can take place at any point in the school year, but obviously, the main movement of pupils takes place during the transfer of year 7 primary school children to year 8 in post-primary school. Within this process, parents apply for places for their children, in order of preference, in the February before the September they are due to start post-primary school. Schools with more applicants than places available determine which applicants to admit up to their numbers-limit by the application of their published admissions criteria. This year the Education and Library Boards will inform parents and children on the 28th May 2010 of the school to which their child has been admitted.

On average 88% of a transferring cohort will at this point be told they have been placed in their first choice post-primary school. Parents are also told at this stage that, in respect of an application that has not been successful they may appeal to an Independent Admissions Appeals Tribunal (administered by the Education and Library Board) which,

in law, has the precisely defined remit to uphold appeals and reverse non-admission decisions where:

- a school has not applied or has incorrectly applied its published admissions criteria; and
 - where any such failure has denied admission to the appellant.
9. The primary legislation which establishes the Exceptional Circumstances Body requires that the Body cannot be a route accessed by a child in receipt of Statement of Special Educational Need as these pupils are placed in a suitable post-primary school by a review of their statement conducted by the Education and Library Board (Route 1). The Regulations which provide for the procedure and constitution of the Body further require that it cannot provide a route into a post-primary school for a child where the standard applications process (Route 2) has not been unsuccessfully attempted either within or without the large annual transfer process. As such, it will be complementary to but unable to duplicate the route into post-primary schools otherwise used by all non-statemented children (Route 2).

Importantly, as the bulk of the Body's workload will be when parents apply to it in response to an unsatisfactory transfer process placement, it will be running parallel to the Independent Admissions Appeals process. Parents will be able to apply to both.

The Role of the Exceptional Circumstances Body – specific

10. For the parents/guardians of non-statemented children whose child has failed to gain a place in a specific post-primary school through the normal transfer procedure, but who consider that their child's **exceptional circumstances** require admission to that specific post-primary school, there will, from June 2010, be a Body and a process to which they can apply with their case. Application to the Exceptional Circumstances Body will be made in writing. Further information may be required from the applicant. The specific functions of the body are as follows:
- This Body is statutorily obliged to provide a hearing in respect of each application made to it. The regulations provide that each case will be heard by a panel of 3 members of the Body. There is no limit to the number of panels that may be established for this purpose, and multiple panels will be able to operate at the same time as each other. The Regulations provide that hearings should be within 4 weeks of application and decisions communicated within 3 weeks of hearings.
 - Exceptional Circumstances Body members, from which panels will be drawn, will be appointed by the Department and will be people appearing to it to have the

necessary expertise (legally qualified, educational, child-welfare, social; for example, voluntary or community work, medical and others) to hear the kinds of the cases that are likely to be brought by parents (sexual abuse cases, looked after children, children who have been bullied etc).

- The Body will have the power to direct schools that are oversubscribed to admit a particular pupil as pupils who make a successful application to the Body will be admitted to the school on a supernumerary basis. This power will have significant implications for the education system, the transfer procedure, the post primary schools in question, the pupils who apply to the Exceptional Circumstances Body and the pupils who have not applied to the Body and who have accepted their post primary placement whether or not this placement is in the school of their first preference. It is essential therefore; that in face of immense pressure from parents, this power is used appropriately and exceptionally, to ensure that only those pupils with truly exceptional circumstances are granted a supernumerary place in the school they must attend.
- The Regulations define exceptional circumstances as: **"circumstances which are both exceptional and personal to the child in question and relate to admission to a specified school only"**. The Regulations state several cases which cannot be exceptional circumstances and these will remove from consideration cases based mainly on transport, educational suitability and academic ability. The Regulations also effectively require applicants hoping for success to have exhausted other existing admissions procedures (described in paragraphs 8 and 9). In other words, applicants should have applied for a place in the school in question in the normal way and been refused admission before they can apply to the Exceptional Circumstances Body or the Admissions Appeal Tribunal. In terms of positive definition, regulations provide two illustrations of what may be considered cases of exceptional circumstances (subject to the main definition) – and these are not intended to be exhaustive:
 - circumstances where in the opinion of a registered medical practitioner the child has been subjected to sexual abuse;
 - circumstances where a child is looked after by an authority (as defined in Article 25 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995).
- Panels will be supported by a Secretariat that will, among other things, receive and process the applications, convene panels and communicate the decisions of panels at the conclusion of each case.
- The Body must be in place for its directions to be able to secure admissions taking effect after July 31, 2010 (i.e. for the start of the 2010/11 school year).

- The Body must remain in place for the isolated and low number of cases that arise at other times, outside the annual transfer procedure.

Section 2

MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES – THE PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

1. Body members must operate and discharge their functions in accordance with the principles and values of public service. These principles are: -
 - Selflessness - Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
 - Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
 - Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merits.
 - Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
 - Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
 - Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.
 - Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Conflict of Interest

2. The Department must take account of actual, or perceived, conflict of interest. Therefore, applicants, in their application form, are required to disclose information or personal connections, which, if they were to be appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be misconstrued as such.

3. It is very important, therefore, that all applicants provide appropriate details on their application form of any interests which might be construed as being in conflict with the appointment for which they have applied. If it appears, from the information provided on the form, that a possible conflict might exist, or arise in the future, this will be fully explored with the applicant with a view to establishing whether it is sufficiently significant to prevent the individual from carrying out the duties of the post. The Panel will do this at interview stage.
4. The Commissioner of Public Appointments for Northern Ireland has drawn up a Guide for Candidates on Probity and Conflicts of Interest. The section of this guide which relates to conflicts of interest is as follows;

"To give you an idea of what might constitute a conflict of interest here are a few examples of areas which could lead to real or apparent conflict:

- *You are a director of a building firm and the board to which you are seeking appointment conducts regular procurement exercises for building material – you could benefit personally from decisions taken by the board*
- *You are a manager in a voluntary organisation, whose funding applications are considered by the board to which you are seeking appointment – the body for which you work could benefit financially from decisions taken by the board*
- *You have, in the past, contributed or lent significant funds to the political party to which the appointing Minister belongs – your appointment could be viewed as a reward for past favours*

These are examples only. Please remember that declaring a conflict won't necessarily stop you from being appointed. You should consider carefully your own circumstances to decide whether or not a real or perceived conflict exists and be ready to discuss it with the Selection panel at interview."

You should use this guide to help you to decide whether or not you should declare a conflict of interest on the application form.

Section 3

ROLE AND PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

The Role of Individual Body Members

1. Members will sit on panels convened to hear applications under the Exceptional Circumstances process. Using their knowledge, expertise and experience as appropriate and within the framework of the relevant legislation, they will reach a decision that will fairly reach a conclusion on the application.
2. Successful candidates must complete a course of training organised by the Department/ the secretariat before they may sit on their first hearing. Once this training has been completed they will be eligible to sit on hearings immediately. Members may be required to attend further training courses deemed necessary by the Department during their tenure in office. They will be expected to read and familiarise themselves with the decisions of other/all panels of the Exceptional Circumstances Body.

Person Specification

3. The person specification addresses the qualities, experience, background and competences sought. A criteria-based selection procedure is employed in accordance with Commissioner of Public Appointments for Northern Ireland guidance. The criteria are divided into two groups – essential and desirable.
4. 'Essential' criteria describe what you need to be able to do in order to be effective in the role being filled. **It is important that each candidate demonstrates how they meet the essential criteria as failure to do so may result in the application being rejected.** 'Desirable' criteria may be used in the event that there is a large field of candidates meeting all of the 'essential' criteria.
5. The information you provide will be used for eligibility, short-listing, assessment and selection purposes. The Department also welcomes applications from less traditional career patterns and experiences such as community involvement or voluntary work, as well as those experiences found within the employment field. Therefore, in your application form, you may provide 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. Make sure you take full advantage to provide practical evidence and examples of how you feel you are suitable for this appointment. Please note that Curriculum Vitae will not be accepted. A Guidance Note on criteria-based selection and completion of the Application Form is attached in Section Four.

Previous Public Appointments

6. The application form requires you to detail any public bodies you currently serve or have served in the past. Prior to making appointments, the Department will check with the body/bodies concerned as to whether there are/were any performance or probity issues of which the Department should be aware. Please also refer to Section 2 paragraphs 2-4.

Qualifications

7. In accordance with the School Admissions (Exceptional Circumstances) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, candidates must demonstrate relevant experience in education or welfare of children. Within the latter category the Department is seeking candidates with medical expertise as well as others with broader experience in child welfare.
8. The Department will also appoint persons who are solicitors or barristers entitled to practice in Northern Ireland, and applications from such candidates must demonstrate relevant qualifications in this field.
9. Candidates should indicate the nature of their expertise with reference to one of these specific areas, or any other area of expertise which may be relevant and provide details of the relevant qualifications they hold.

Time Commitment

10. As it is the Body's first year of operation, and no similar Body or facility currently exists within the system, it is extremely difficult to anticipate demand in the first year of operation. The Body, however, must be capable of dealing with a large concentrated volume of applications, should this situation arise, in order to meet its statutory commitments. In such circumstances each member may have to sit for around 25 full hearing days between mid-June and early September and around 10 full hearings days during the rest of the year.
11. Equally there is the possibility that the Body may not receive the number of applications the Department has anticipated. If this were to be the case it is possible that individual members may be called upon for no more than one day, or possibly not at all.
12. As a guide, it is likely that each hearing could last an average of half a day, but this will vary depending on the complexity of the case being heard.

Remuneration

13. Remuneration will be made in respect of days or part days on which a member sits on a panel convened to hear an application to the Body. Members are expected to have read all papers in preparation for hearings. Members will be entitled to the relevant attendance allowance (as set out below) plus travelling and subsistence allowances at the current Northern Ireland Civil Service travel and subsistence rates.

Attendance allowances:

Legally qualified members	£365 per day
All other members	£260 per day

All remuneration and expenses are subject to deduction of income tax and national insurance.

The Appointment Process

14. The key phases in the appointment process are:
- **Application** – The deadline for receipt of applications is 5pm on 09 April 2010.
 - **Short-listing** – Candidates will be shortlisted for interview on the basis of the information provided in their application forms in relation to the essential and desired criteria.
 - **Interview** – interviews will be held during the period 26 April – 21 May 2010.
 - **Decision and Appointment** – The Department will notify all candidates in writing of the outcome of the application. Appointments will be made in week commencing 01 June 2010 and will be conditional until all necessary checks, including references and Access NI checks, have been completed satisfactorily. On receipt of satisfactory checks, appointments will be confirmed.

References

15. You must complete section 7 of the application form which asks for the names, contact details and occupations of three referees we may contact in connection with your application. The first must relate to your last/current full time employment, the second to your most recent post involving working with children and young people and the third must be a personal referee. If you have not been in a post involving working with children and young people, you should provide a second referee relating to employment.

If your current employment involves working with children and young people, you should provide a second referee of your choice relating to either employment or another recent post involving working with children and young people.

16. Seeking this information at point of application will enable the Department to complete the appointment process more efficiently if your application is successful. The referees you identify will be contacted up to and during the interview process.

Essential Criteria

17. This post is regarded as a 'controlled activity' as provided for in The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. Your appointment, therefore, to the Body will be conditional on the Department being able to satisfy itself that you are not barred from working with children nor have any other convictions etc on your record making it inappropriate for you to act as a member of the Exceptional Circumstances Body. This will be established by means of an enhanced disclosure check through Access NI. If you do not agree to such a check, your application to the Body will be unsuccessful.
18. Please refer to Section Three paragraphs 7–9 of the Information Pack. A candidate is expected to demonstrate his/her ability, by way of examples, to meet all of the following criteria:

- **Professional qualifications and/or experience –**
 1. *If you are applying to Body for a position as a legal member, you must hold the professional qualification and professional experience detailed in paragraph 20 i)a).*
 2. *If you are applying for a position as a lay member, you must hold the level of experience detailed in paragraph 20 i)b).*
- **Committing to the role –** *Having an informed interest and understanding of the working environment in which you are making a contribution.*
- **Making an impact with others –** *Developing and maintaining cooperative working relationships to achieve high standards of service and results.*
- **Analytical thinking –** *Experience of making decisions and solving problems in a team. Retaining objectivity in the face of pressure*
- **Learning and development –** *Taking personal responsibility to further develop as a Member.*

Desirable Criterion

19. Where it is necessary to prepare a shortlist for interview, the desirable criterion will be applied. It is therefore important that application forms reflect how, and to what extent, you also meet this criterion. A candidate is expected to demonstrate his/her ability, by way of examples, to meet the criterion.

Essential criteria in detail

20. Please refer to Section Three paragraphs 7-9 of the Information Pack. You will note that the first criterion differs depending on whether you are applying for a position as a legally qualified or lay member. All other criteria apply to all candidates. A more detailed explanation of the competences required to meet the above criteria follows;

For candidates applying for the position of legally qualified member -

i) a) Professional Qualifications and experience -

Candidates applying for the position of legally qualified member must be entitled to practise as solicitors or barristers in Northern Ireland and have a minimum of 5 years experience in this area.

For candidates applying for the position of lay member -

i) b) Professional and other relevant experience -

The Department is seeking individuals with relevant experience in the education and welfare of children. The Body will benefit from having a varied membership from a wide spectrum of professional backgrounds, and could also include those with experience gained from working in the voluntary and community based sectors. Examples of such backgrounds and experience could include; social work; social services; medical; educational psychology; educational welfare; teaching; working with vulnerable or disadvantaged children in the voluntary sector; experience gained working in the education sector in a relevant capacity. This list is in no way exhaustive and is not intended to be. Each candidate should detail on their application form how their experience relates to the education and welfare of children. Regardless of the field of expertise each candidate must have a minimum of 5 years experience gained in that field.

For all candidates –

ii) Committing to the Role

Having an informed interest and understanding of the working environment in which you are making a contribution.

As a member of the Exceptional Circumstances Body you will be an integral part of the decision making role of the Body. It is important that you are aware of your responsibilities, both personally and organisationally, to assist the Body dispose fairly of applications made to it. You are expected not only to contribute to but also commit to decisions of the Body when taken.

The effective Member will, for example:

- understand his/her role as a member of the Body;
- set personal agenda aside when making Body decisions;
- treat other members, secretariat staff, and Department staff, as partners with common goals;
- genuinely care about people;
- be concerned about his/her work;
- support equal and fair treatment and opportunity for all;
- be available and ready to help;
- adhere to public service values at all times;
- act in line with those values;
- be widely trusted; and
- be seen as a direct and truthful individual.

iii) Making an Impact with Others

Developing and maintaining co-operative working relationships to achieve results

As a member of the Exceptional Circumstances Body you will hear applications as part of a panel of three. This will require you to communicate clearly with others, to listen to what others say, and to develop effective working relationships with panel members.

The effective Member will for example:

- build rapport well;
- be a good listener;
- be seen as a team player and co-operative;
- gain trust quickly of all parties before the panel;
- demonstrate self-confidence dealing with a wide range of situations and people at all levels;
- be confident to contribute in a team environment;
- share information and expertise willingly with other panel members;
- speak with authority and persuasiveness when necessary;
- take unpopular stands if necessary; and
- speak up when lacking understanding.

iv) Analytical thinking

Making decisions and solving problems in a team and organisational environment and approaching each case with impartiality.

As a Member you may need to assimilate large amounts of often detailed and complex information. This may have been presented in a written format which you would have had an opportunity to review, but may also be presented orally at a hearing. You will require the ability to look objectively at the evidence placed before you, analyse and extract from this evidence the key considerations in each application and bring the benefit of your experience to an issue in order that the case may be disposed of fairly.

As an effective Member you will for example:

- Approach all issues in an even-handed manner;
- Base any decision solely on the evidence brought before the panel;
- Respect the confidentiality of all parties to a hearing;
- Treat all parties in a sensitive manner;
- Respect the collective decision of the panel;
- Not be pressured into allowing irrelevant matters to be taken into consideration;
- seek feedback from other panel members;
- gain insight from mistakes;
- make decisions that adhere to the Exceptional Circumstances Body's remit;
- make decisions in a timely manner, using the information available and under tight deadlines;
- make good decisions based upon a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience and judgement;
- use rigorous logic and methods to solve difficult problems with effective rulings;
- probe all relevant sources for answers;
- be prepared to share knowledge and experience with fellow panel members;
- restate accurately the opinions of others, even when you disagree; and
- be sought out by others for advice and solutions.

v) Learning and self-development

Taking personal responsibility to further develop as a Member.

As a Member you will be expected to acquire knowledge and understanding during your tenure. You will need to have an appreciation of your development needs

and assess how these needs may best be met. You will require the confidence to approach others to acquire understanding and to ask for assistance and clarification where necessary.

The effective Member will for example:

- learn quickly when facing new problems;
- be open to change;
- quickly grasp the essence and the underlying structure of issues in an application;
- be personally committed, and actively work, to continuously improve your knowledge and understanding of the work of the Exceptional Circumstances Body in the context of the post-primary admissions processes;
- pick up on technical issues quickly; and
- learn new skills and knowledge.

Desirable criterion in detail

21. In the event of a large field of applicants, the essential requirement that candidates must have a minimum of 5 years relevant experience may be enhanced. Therefore it is vital that candidates provide all details of how their experience relates to the education and welfare of children and specify the number of years worked in your professional capacity or other relevant experience.

Section Four

CRITERIA BASED SELECTION – A GUIDANCE NOTE FOR APPLICANTS

Background

1. Criteria based selection is used as a means of ensuring that the best candidate is selected on the basis of their ability to do the job required. This method of selection requires individuals to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or competence through completion of an application form and, if selected, by attendance at a structured interview. Competence is the ability to perform a particular role or task. It is most easily demonstrated by reference to your personal experience.

What is Criteria Based Selection?

2. Criteria based selection tests applicants against a set of criteria, which have been drawn up and agreed as being necessary for a specific post. The criteria detail the knowledge, skills and competences that an individual will need to possess to be effective.
3. The 'Person Specification' details the criteria for the post. *Essential Criteria* reflects the essential competences and knowledge an applicant must possess in order to apply. *Essential Criteria* may thus be regarded as 'eligibility' criteria. Individuals must demonstrate that they satisfy these criteria fully in order to be shortlisted.
4. *Desirable Criteria* reflects the competence or knowledge which have been agreed as being desirable or advantageous for the successful applicant to possess. If the eligible field of applicants remains too large after the initial 'eligibility' shortlist, the *Desirable Criteria* may be applied to further shortlist for interview
5. The application form is an essential part of the process and allows you to use specific examples of past behaviour to demonstrate how you meet the eligibility criteria. Please note that Curriculum Vitae will not be accepted.

Writing your application

6. The aim of the application form is for you to demonstrate your ability to meet each of the essential criteria. Think about your knowledge, skills and attributes and choose examples which best demonstrate these criteria. Give examples about your personal experience where evidence of competence or ability is sought. Many people are not used to writing about themselves or thinking about what they have done as opposed to what a team has done. Before starting to complete the form, it is important you think about **your** role and

what **you** have done, either on your own or your contribution as a team member. It is your unique role the panel are interested in.

7. Below are some points to bear in mind: -

- take time to read the 'Person Specification' and understand the relationship between the examples you will use and the relevant selection criteria. At this stage, don't consider any one of the criteria to be less significant than another – they are all requirements of the job. (If certain criteria are considered to be more important than others, they will be 'weighted' at interview. Where this is the case you will normally be advised of the weighting applied when notified of your interview date);
- when completing section four of the application pack, don't write a long narrative – focus your mind and note important points before putting pen to paper. You must keep within the space provided on the application form – no additional pages are allowed;
- use actual examples, rather than 'how you would do something';
- you may use examples from your working life or personal life, (part-time activities or leisure etc), including any voluntary or community work in which you are or have been involved;
- avoid statements that describe your personal beliefs or philosophies – focus on specific challenges and results;
- if possible, quantify/qualify your accomplishments;
- use simple and easy to understand language in your examples to describe what you have done;
- avoid jargon – if it is necessary to use jargon or technical terms, explain them;
- typed or word processed applications are preferable. If completing in manuscript, please ensure your copy is legible;
- once you have completed your application, read and re-read it for any spelling errors and grammatical mistakes;
- remember to keep a copy for yourself;
- submit your application through the channels requested, by the closing date and time. As late applications will not be accepted, it is essential to allow plenty of time for this process to take place.

Previous Employment and/or Voluntary/Community Experience

8. The Department wishes to recognise less traditional career patterns and experiences such as community involvement or voluntary work, as well as those experiences found within the employment field. Therefore, in your application form, you may use examples from your working or personal life, for example part-time or leisure activities, including any voluntary or community work you are or have been involved in.

Structuring Your Responses

9. The key to a well-written application form is to give the selection panel specific information about your achievements. Therefore it is recommended that you use the following model to describe your accomplishments: -

Challenge: Describe a specific problem or goal

Context: Write about the individuals and groups you worked with and /or the environment in which you worked, to tackle a particular challenge (for example; colleagues, clients, shrinking budget, low morale).

Action: Discuss the specific actions you took to address the challenge.

Result: Give specific examples of the results of **your** actions. These accomplishments demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of what **you** did in relation to the selection criteria.

10. Please note that in following the model, most of your effort should be focused on recording Actions and Results.
11. Using this model to structure your examples will also benefit you greatly if you are selected for interview, as it will allow you to analyse and express your examples in a logical form.
12. When you have finished, ask someone (preferably an impartial and knowledgeable individual) to review your application form and give you feedback.
13. Completion of the form can be a time-consuming process, but it is a useful opportunity for you to review your ability to meet the selection criteria, which will be assessed, if you are selected, at interview. The criteria based interviewing approach means that all questions asked by the panel will be linked to the criteria.

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO: THE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES BODY

NAME

Please remember to:

- Read carefully the information pack and application form.
- Type or write clearly in **black** ink.
- Enclose any additional information.
- Ensure that the application form is signed and dated.
- Ensure that, if you choose to post the application form, the form bears the correct value of postage. A shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery and cause your application to miss the closing date.

Please send the completed application form to:

Telephone: (028) 9127 9723
Textphone: (028) 9127 9472
Fax: (028) 9127 9217
Email: peter.burns@deni.gov.uk

Address: Peter Burns
School Access Team
Department of Education
Room G3
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

To arrive NOT LATER THAN: 5PM 09 APRIL 2010

The above address and telephone number are also your contact point for any queries about the form.

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname:

Forename(s):

Known As:

Title (Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Dr / Other):

Honours / Decorations / Academic / Other letters used:

Home Address:

Postcode

Telephone No:

Mobile Telephone No:

Daytime Address:
(if different
from above)

Postcode

Telephone No:

E-mail Address:

Which address would you prefer us to use in correspondence?

Home

Daytime/Business

Which post are you applying for i.e. legally qualified member or lay member?

2. CAREER HISTORY

List your employment details for at least the past ten years, beginning with the most recent and working back. Continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

Dates		Organisation	Position/Main responsibilities
From	To		

3. PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS (APPOINTMENTS MADE BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS)

Please list all current and previous public appointments held, beginning with your present or most recent position and working back. Continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

Dates		Organisation & Sponsoring Department	Position / Main Responsibilities	Remuneration Fees Paid
From	To			

4. OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

List all other positions held, including voluntary/community experience, which may have some relevance to the appointment(s) for which you are applying. Start with the most recent and work back. Continue on a separate sheet of paper as necessary.

Dates		Organisation	Position/Main responsibilities
From	To		

5. CRITERIA

In this section we ask you to assess how, and to what extent, you meet each of the criteria set out in the person specification for the post, **by way of examples**. Please read both essential and desirable criteria carefully and then provide practical evidence and examples of how you feel you meet each of the criteria. Within this section, you must keep within the space provided on the application form – **no additional pages are allowed**. Please note, Curriculum Vitae will not be accepted. A Guidance Note on criteria-based selection and completion of the Application Form is attached in **Section Four of the Information Pack** which you should read carefully, paying particular attention to the paragraph on **'Structuring Your Responses'**.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

(i) Professional skills and/or experience in your field -

Use this space to detail your professional skills and qualifications and/or your experience in your field.

(ii) **Committing to the Role** – Having an informed interest and understanding of the working environment in which you are making a contribution.

Describe an example that demonstrates your ability to work according to a set of rules, values or principles.

(iii) **Making an Impact with Others - Developing and maintaining cooperative working relationships to achieve high standards of service and results**

Describe a team of which you are or have been a member, and the contribution you have made to the success of that team.

(iv) Analytical Thinking – Taking decisions and solving problems in a team and organisational environment

Describe an example that demonstrates your ability to agree a decision or solve a problem in a team and which demonstrates the consideration you gave to its related resource implications.

(v) **Learning and Self-Development** - Taking personal responsibility to further develop as a Member

Describe an example that demonstrates your ability to pick up understanding and knowledge quickly.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

Provide all details of how your experience relates to the education and welfare of children and specify the number of years worked in your professional capacity or other relevant experience.

6. AVAILABILITY

As explained in Section Three of the Recruitment Pack, members will be expected to be available for Exceptional Circumstances Body hearings approximately 25 full hearing days across end of June, July, August and early September and approximately 10 full hearing days during the rest of the year. This may include evening meetings.

Do you, to the best of your knowledge, expect to be able to meet this time commitment?

Yes

No

7. DISABILITY

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act, a person is disabled if they have, or have had, "a physical or mental impairment which has, or has had, a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities".

If you consider yourself to have a disability to have a disability please provide any relevant information about requirements you may have so that reasonable arrangements can be made for your attendance at interview (if short-listed)

8. PROBITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Any conflict of interest detailed below will not prevent you from being called for interview, but the Panel will explore with you at that time how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially to the Body and how this might be handled, if you were to be appointed.

Have you, or your immediate family, any business or other interests or personal connections that might be construed as being in conflict with the appointment for which you have applied, or any other probity issues, which might cause embarrassment if in future, they are raised in public?

Yes No

If yes, please provide details.

9. REFEREES

Please provide the names, addresses, telephone numbers and occupations of three referees we may contact in connection with your application. The first must relate to your last/current full time employment, the second to your most recent post involving working with children and young people and the third must be a personal referee. If you have not been in a post involving working with children and young people, you should provide a second referee relating to employment. If your current employment involves working with children and young people, you should provide a second referee of your choice relating to either employment or another recent post involving working with children and young people.

Name of First Referee: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Position [and Relationship]: _____

Name of Second Referee: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Position [and Relationship]: _____

Name of Third Referee: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Position [and Relationship]: _____

10. DECLARATION

I declare that the information I have given in support of my application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that, if I am appointed and the information I have provided is incorrect, or any of the statements made in the declaration are untrue, or subsequently circumstances arise at any time before the end of my term of office which would render any such statements untrue, then my tenure of office may be terminated.

I also confirm that:-

- a. I am not an employee of the Department of Education.
- b. I have not been adjudged bankrupt or have not made composition or arrangement with my creditors.
- c. I have not within the five years immediately preceding the day of my appointment or at any other time thereafter been convicted by a court in Northern Ireland or elsewhere in the British Islands of any offence or ordered to be imprisoned for a period of not less than three months without the option for a fine.
- d. I understand this post is (or may be) exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978 by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exemptions) Order (NI) 1987. In the event of my application being successful, I consent to a check being made with the Access NI to determine if there is any record of convictions, cautions or bind-overs against me.

I understand that, if appointed, I must raise with the appropriate Government Department any probity or conflict of interest issues that might arise during my term of appointment and that my failure to do so could lead to my appointment being terminated.

I understand and accept that the information I have provided in this form will be processed by the Department of Education, in accordance with its Data Protection Registration, for the purposes of making public appointments and that this may involve disclosing information to other Government Departments, the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland and anonymously in response to Parliamentary or Assembly Questions and other enquiries. I also understand that if appointed my name will be published in the Public Appointments Annual Report.

Signed _____

Date _____

MONITORING INFORMATION

Monitoring Reference Number:

Statutory Monitoring:

Since 1990, under Fair Employment Legislation, specified public authorities and registered employers have a legal duty to monitor the community composition and sex composition of their workforces.

The overriding consideration when making public appointments is the appointment of the most suitable person for any particular vacancy. Ministers and Departments are anxious to ensure that the pool of candidates from which appointments are made contains a fair and equitable representation of the Northern Ireland community and to allow this to be monitored, it is important to obtain appropriate data on applicants.

This information will not be made available to sifting and interview panels.

Community Background:

Regardless of whether we practice religion, most of us in Northern Ireland are seen as either Catholic or Protestant. Please indicate the community to which you belong or are perceived to belong to, by ticking the appropriate box below:

Protestant community

Roman Catholic community

Neither the Protestant nor
Roman Catholic community

Sex:

Please indicate your sex by ticking the appropriate box below:

Male

Female

Ethnic Group:

Please indicate which Ethnic Group you belong to:

Bangladeshi

Indian

Black African

Pakistani

Black Caribbean

White

Black Other

Irish Traveller

Chinese

Any other ethnic group:

My Nationality is:

In asking this question, we want to assure applicants that the information provided will only be used to promote equality of opportunity for applicants and employees on the basis of their Nationality.

Disability:

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Please note that it is the effect of the impairment, without treatment, which determines if an individual meets this definition of disability.

Do you consider that you meet this definition of disability?

Yes No

If yes, please state the type of disability

Mental Health Disability

Learning Disability

Physical Disability

Are there reasonable adjustments that we could make as part of our recruitment process that would enable you to enjoy equality of opportunity in getting a job/working with us?

Please specify:

Sexual Orientation:

My Sexual Orientation is towards someone:

- Of the same sex
- A different sex
- Both
- I do not wish to disclose this Information

Marital Status/Family Status:

Are you married?

Yes No

Are you in a civil partnership?

Yes No

Those With and Without Dependants:

Do you have:

Children? Yes No

If yes, are they at school? Yes No

Other relations, for whom you

have significant caring responsibilities? Yes No

Other caring responsibilities? Yes No

Please specify:

No caring responsibilities?

Age:

Please provide your date of birth or tick the Age Band to which you belong:

Date of Birth: _____

or

Age Band:

16-21 22-30 31-40 41-50

51-60 61-65 65 +

If the monitoring data you have provided us with changes please contact Peter Burns at:

Telephone: (028) 9127 9723
Textphone: (028) 9127 9472
Fax: (028) 9127 9217
Email: peter.burns@deni.gov.uk

Address: Peter Burns
School Access Team
Department of Education
Room G3
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

How did you become aware of this vacancy? Please specify the appropriate newspaper, website etc? _____

We wish to assure applicants and employees that the monitoring data they provide will be used to promote equality of opportunity for all applicants and employees regardless of their background.



**EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES BODY
INFORMATION PACK**