

matrix.

Northern Ireland
Science Industry Panel

APPOINTMENT OF MATRIX PANEL MEMBERS – INFORMATION PACK

Section One	2
Introduction	2
Background to Matrix	3
Section Two	3
Role of Panel Members	3
Seven Principles of Public Office	4
Time Commitment and Expenses	4
Person Specification	4
Selection Criteria	5
Sift and Short-listing	5
Interview Stage	6
Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)	6
Integrity & Conflicts of Interest	6
Disqualification	7
Section 3.....	7
How to Apply and Contact Details	7
Time frame - Important Dates	7
Presentation of Results to the Permanent Secretary	8
Pre-appointment Checks	8
ANNEX A	9
The Seven Principles of Public Life	9
ANNEX B.....	10
Integrity and Conflicts of Interest – Guide for Candidates.....	10

The Department for the Economy (DfE) and Matrix are committed to the principles of appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process. We are also committed to equality of opportunity and welcome application forms from all suitably qualified applicants irrespective of religious belief, gender, race, political opinion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether they have dependants.

We particularly welcome applications from minority ethnic communities, those with a declared disability or those aged under-30.

We operate the Guaranteed Interview Scheme which means that applicants with a disability who meet or exceed the pass-mark set for the criteria will proceed to the second stage of the process – an interview. Their application will not be subjected to short-listing.

The information pack and application form will be made available on request in other formats such as braille, large print, audio etc. All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of applicants with a disability.

Applicants are advised that reasonable travelling expenses will be paid to those called for an interview with the appointment panel and reimbursement of all reasonable receipted dependent carer expenses, including childcare can be provided.

Whilst Matrix currently includes academic representation through ex-officio membership from HE institutions and FE colleges the panel is primarily industry led and the panel must reflect that. Therefore, we are specifically seeking applications from the commercial sector.

The position of Matrix Panel Member is remunerated at a nominal rate of £150 per quarterly meeting. Additionally, role related expenses will be met.

Section One

Introduction

- 1. The Department for the Economy (DfE) is seeking to appoint six new members to the Matrix panel.** The successful candidates will contribute to the panel's mission to advise government, industry and academia on the commercial exploitation of R&D and science and technology in Northern Ireland.
- The role of a panel member is to provide strategic direction, support, constructive challenge, and guidance. An appointment to the Matrix panel gives individuals from different backgrounds and with specific skills and expertise a chance to help make decisions that affect all our lives. Appointments to the Matrix panel are a great opportunity to give something back to the community, whilst developing your own skills and networks.
- Appointment will be made on merit from those individuals who best satisfy the selection criteria. DfE and Matrix are primarily seeking candidates with expertise in:
 - **Sustainability including Circular Economy and Low Carbon Technologies;**
 - **Life and Health Sciences;**
 - **Advanced Manufacturing, Materials and Engineering;**
 - **Fintech/Financial Services and Software.**

However, applications from individuals with relevant experience in other fields of science, technology, or innovation that may not fit neatly into these categories are welcomed. DfE and Matrix are committed to considering a diverse range of expertise that can support the aims and objectives of Matrix,

promoting science and technology as a key driver of economic opportunity for Northern Ireland.

4. The appointment is for an initial term of up to five years which may be extended for a further defined period by agreement. The maximum total term of appointment is 10 years. The Department will conduct annual assessments of the panel members contribution during the term of appointment.

Background to Matrix

5. Matrix, the Northern Ireland Science Industry Panel, is a business led expert panel, formed primarily to advise government, industry and academia on achieving maximum financial gain utilising R&D and science and technology knowledge in Northern Ireland.
6. Matrix produces regular, in-depth reports which outline the work, findings and evidence-based recommendations of specialist panels. Matrix output is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in how new technologies and market opportunities can be developed within the Northern Ireland economy and beyond. All published Matrix reports, as well as many others related to our work can be found in the [Matrix Library](#).
7. The Matrix panel advises in three main areas:
 - a. Key R&D and science & technology issues affecting business innovation.
 - b. The emerging strategic technology priorities impacting on Northern Ireland's economy.
 - c. The promotion of a culture of innovation and the importance of R&D and science & technology in the future, particularly with business and regarding commercial exploitation activities.
8. For more information on Matrix, its role and current membership, visit www.matrixni.org
9. The current panel is at <http://matrixni.org/matrix-panel/>

Section Two

Role of Panel Members

10. Matrix panel members are expected to:
 - Establish the overall strategic direction of Matrix, in co-operation with the Chair and within the policy and resources framework agreed with the DfE;
 - Make a constructive contribution to the work of the panel and bring insight and original thoughts to group discussions;

- Promote and work for consensus in the decision-making processes of the panel providing constructive challenge when required;
- Ensure high standards of corporate governance are observed at all times;
- Ensure that, in reaching decisions, the panel has considered any guidance issued by DfE; and
- Bring a depth of understanding of their specialisms when providing advice to the panel.

Seven Principles of Public Office

11. To ensure that public service values remain at the heart of Matrix, the panel members will subscribe to the Seven Principles of Public Office detailed in the attached [Annex A](#)

Time Commitment and Expenses

12. Panel members are expected to attend the Matrix quarterly plenary meetings and to prepare in advance for the meetings. In addition to attending the meetings, panel members should commit to giving 3 additional days throughout the year in relation to other role related activities. For example, panel members may be asked to address issues on behalf of the panel by e-mail, telephone etc. Panel members will also occasionally be asked to represent Matrix at evening events and conferences in Northern Ireland and on some occasions at other UK and Rol events. They may also be requested to represent Matrix on other groups as the need arises. Panel members may also be asked to travel internationally on behalf of Matrix although this is not anticipated to be a regular occurrence.
13. **Panel members will be remunerated for attendance at the half-day quarterly meetings at £150 per day plus expenses. For all additional role-related activities, only expenses will be met.**

Person Specification

14. The person specification addresses the qualities, experience, background and competence sought. A criteria-based selection procedure is employed by the Department. This process requires applicants to provide evidence which demonstrates that they can meet the requirements. The mere mention of a skill or attribute is insufficient. Neither can the selection panel make assumptions from the title of a post or the nature of an organisation as to the

experience, qualities and skills gained. **For that reason, CVs will not be accepted.**

15. Make sure you provide practical evidence and example/s of how you feel you are suitable for this appointment. **It is strongly recommended that you read the booklet entitled '[Public Appointment Guide](#)' which contains guidance on the completion of criteria-based application forms.**

Selection Criteria

16. Applicants will be asked to provide practical example/s which demonstrate how they meet each of the three selection criteria. The selection criteria are:
 - A. **Industry experience within science, technology or R&D and Innovation.**
Please demonstrate that you have at least three years' experience in the last five years working in a commercial setting focused on science, technology, engineering or related R&D and Innovation. If writing about more than one role include how many years' experience you have gained in each role.
 - B. **Strategic Thinking.** Please demonstrate how you have made a significant contribution to a commercial organisation's objectives and performance in a challenging environment to ensure delivery of longer-term goals.
 - C. **Making an Impact with Others.** Please demonstrate how you have made a positive contribution to the performance of a commercial organisation you have worked for, including how you have developed constructive working relationships with both internal and external stakeholders.

Sift and Short-listing

17. A sift and short-listing process will be employed. When assessing each application against the selection criteria, panel members will use a marking frame to determine how the evidence provided meets each criterion. Applicants who meet all three criteria will be ranked in order of merit after marks from each of the three criteria are tallied. Applications which do not meet one or more of the selection criteria will be sifted out.
18. If short-listing is required the selection panel will use a cut-off mark as the initial pass mark to be invited for interview. The selection panel will take stock of the number of applicants to determine if there is sufficient number of applicants to invite to an interview. If necessary, the panel will consider reducing the required overall pass mark by one mark each time until a sufficient pool of candidates eligible to be invited to an interview is in place.
19. If shortlisting is required, the selection panel will prioritise candidates who have provided clear evidence of expertise in the following areas:

- Sustainability including Circular Economy and Low Carbon Technologies;
- Life and Health Sciences;
- Advanced Manufacturing, Materials and Engineering;
- Fintech/Financial Services and Software.

Interview Stage

20. Short-listed applicants will be invited to take part in an interview where they will be asked questions based on the same criteria A-C above.
21. Interviews will take place in Adelaide House in Belfast, although applicants may request that their interview is conducted remotely via video conferencing if they cannot attend in person. Applicants will be expected to provide ID for verification purposes. A valid driving license or passport is acceptable.
22. Interviews are provisionally scheduled to take place week commencing 16 September 2024 – applicants will be able to advise of their availability on the application form.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

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

Integrity & Conflicts of Interest

24. The Department must ensure that the individuals appointed are committed to the [principles and values of public service](#). These principles are **Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership**.
25. The Department must take account of actual, or perceived, conflicts of interest. Therefore, applicants, in their application form, must disclose information or personal connections, which, if they were to be appointed, could lead to a conflict of interest or be perceived as such. Conflicts of interest may not be a barrier to appointment but both real and perceived conflicts must be discussed with all candidates by the Interview Panel. This is to ensure that the public can have confidence in the panel's independence

and impartiality and the integrity of the potential appointee. Please refer to the attached [ANNEX B](#) for further information on this subject.

Disqualification

26. Individuals who are disqualified from holding Company Directorship either through an Order or an Undertaking, who are bankrupt or who are the subject of a Bankruptcy Restrictions Order are not eligible for consideration;
27. For the Department's consideration, applicants are asked to declare in the application form if they have been convicted of any offence (other than minor motoring offences) which are not spent in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978 or if any charges are outstanding;
28. Individuals who have served two terms as either a member or Chair of the Matrix panel may not apply for the same post.

Section 3

How to Apply and Contact Details

29. Email your completed application form to DFE's Futures Research and Development Unit, based in Adelaide House, 39-49 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8FD. Forms should be sent by email to:- info@matrix-ni.org
30. **You are advised to obtain confirmation of receipt of your application before 5pm on 13 August 2024 by requesting return email.**
31. If you have any questions about the appointment process, or require clarification on any aspect of the role, you should contact the Matrix secretariat by email: info@matrix-ni.org
32. To ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants:
 - CVs, letters, or any other supplementary material in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms will not be accepted;
 - Applicants should complete the application form in at least font size 12;
 - Applicants should keep to the limit of 400 words per criterion. Any information over and above this will be redacted by the Matrix secretariat before being submitted to the selection panel; and
 - Applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline.

Time Frame - Important Date

33. **The deadline for receipt in all cases is 5pm on 13 August 2024. Late applications will not be accepted.**

34. The short-listing process will take place in August 2024 with interviews **scheduled during week commencing 16 September 2024.**

35. Appointment of successful applicants is expected by **early October 2024.**

Presentation of Results to the Permanent Secretary

36. Candidates will be scored at interview and the names of those considered suitable presented to the departmental Permanent Secretary in merit order. A reserve list will be at the discretion of the Permanent Secretary.

Pre-appointment Checks

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

ANNEX A

The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public officeholder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public officeholders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

1.1 Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

1.2 Integrity

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

1.3 Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

1.4 Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

1.5 Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

1.6 Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

1.7 Leadership

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

ANNEX B

INTEGRITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES

Whilst the role of Matrix Chair is not a ‘regulated appointment’ and as such is not subject to the CPANI Code of Practice (CPANI), the Department for the Economy aims to ensure the appointment process will be undertaken in line with the principles and practices within the [CPANI Code](#).

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained at: [‘Guidance on Conflict of Interest, Integrity and How to raise a Complaint’](#) produced by CPANI which provides examples of the types of issues that may give rise to conflicts of interests.

1. In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way. These are:

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

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

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

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

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

Honesty: Members should be truthful.

Leadership: Members should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

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

What is a conflict of interest?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

into question the probity of the Matrix Panel or the appointment, they can withdraw your application from the competition.

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

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

9. Again, each case would be considered on its merits, but the Department may take the view that by concealing a conflict of interest, you would be deemed to have breached the Seven Principles of Conduct Underpinning Public Life and may terminate your appointment.
10. This situation may arise where the candidate is not familiar with the broad range of work which a body covers and therefore does not realise that a conflict might exist. In some cases, the appointment panel, with their wider knowledge of the body, might deduce that there is a potential conflict issue, based on the information on employment and experience provided by the candidate in the application form. They will then explore this at interview with the candidate.

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

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