

# MATRIX – THE NORTHERN IRELAND SCIENCE INDUSTRY PANEL

## APPOINTMENT OF PANEL CHAIR – INFORMATION PACK

<b>Section One</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Introduction .....	2
Background to MATRIX .....	2
<b>Section Two</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Role of Chair .....	3
Seven Principles of Public Office .....	3
Time Commitment and Expenses .....	3
Person Specification .....	3
Selection Criteria .....	4
Short-listing .....	4
Interview Stage .....	5
Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) .....	5
Integrity & Conflicts of Interest .....	5
Disqualification .....	5
<b>Section 3</b> .....	<b>6</b>
How to Apply and Contact Details .....	6
Time frame - important dates .....	6
Presentation of Results to the Permanent Secretary .....	6
Pre-appointment checks .....	6
<b>ANNEX</b> .....	<b>8</b>
INTEGRITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES .....	8

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 or not they have dependants.

**We particularly welcome applications from women as they are currently under-represented on the Panel.**

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 be offered an interview. Their application will not be subjected to short-listing.

An e-version of the application pack is available from [info@matrix-ni.org](mailto:info@matrix-ni.org). This material will also 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/candidates with a disability.

*We currently have academic representation through ex-officio membership from HE institutions and FE colleges. **We are specifically seeking applications from the commercial sector.***

The position of MATRIX Panel Chair is remunerated at a rate of £250 per quarterly meeting and costs and expenses will be met.

## Section One

### Introduction

1. The Department for the Economy (DfE), is seeking to appoint a Chair 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.
2. The role of Chair is to help provide effective leadership, 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. Appointment to Chair of the MATRIX panel is a great opportunity to give something back to the community, whilst developing your own skills and network.
3. Appointment will be made on merit from those individuals who best satisfy the selection criteria. It is important to note that the Chair is not there to represent any particular sector but must exhibit corporate responsibility and remember they have a wide and unified role.
4. The appointment is for an initial term of 5 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 Chair's 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 the commercial exploitation of R&D and science and technology in Northern Ireland.
6. MATRIX produces regular, in depth reports which outline the work, findings and recommendations of specialist panels. These reports are an invaluable resource for anyone interested in how new technologies and market opportunities can be developed within the Northern Ireland economy and beyond.
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 in regard to commercial exploitation activities.

8. For more information on MATRIX, its role and current membership, visit [www.matrixni.org](http://www.matrixni.org)
9. The current panel is at <http://matrixni.org/matrix-panel/>

## Section Two

### Role of Chair

10. MATRIX panel Chair is expected to:
  - Articulate the vision of MATRIX and establish the overall strategic direction of MATRIX, in co-operation with industry panel members, and within the policy and resources framework agreed with the DfE;
  - Instil a strong partnership approach within MATRIX and build a wide network of constructive working relationships from a wide range of constituencies and stakeholders;
  - Foster open dialogue, maximise contributions from others and bring his/her own depth of knowledge and expertise to formulate innovative proposals for change and challenge existing policy and outcomes;
  - Promote and work to bring about 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; and
  - Ensure that, in reaching decisions, the panel has taken into account any guidance issued by the DfE;

### Seven Principles of Public Office

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

### Time Commitment and Expenses

12. The Chair will be expected to give 4 half days per year to MATRIX meetings and at least 5 other days for related activities. They will be expected to prepare in advance of meetings and occasionally address issues on behalf of the panel by e-mail, telephone etc. The Chair will also occasionally be asked to represent MATRIX at evening events and conferences in Northern Ireland and infrequently at other UK and ROI events. They may also be expected to represent MATRIX on other groups as the need arises. From time to time they may also be asked to travel internationally on behalf of MATRIX.
13. The Chair is a remunerated position at £250 per quarterly meeting and additional costs and 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 take full advantage to provide practical evidence and examples 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. While you are asked to provide information on your education background at application, this will not be used for shortlisting purposes. The administration team will remove this information from your application and it will not be seen by the selection panel. Instead it will be used by the administration team to assure the Department that there is reasonable diversity of knowledge at application stage.
17. Selection criteria:
  - A. **Commercial Experience.** Please demonstrate that you are currently working in a commercial setting built on either science, technology, engineering or related R&D. You must set out clearly, with dates, your role and the nature of your experience and how many years' experience you have gained in each role.
  - B. **Leadership and Making an Impact with Others.** Please demonstrate your ability, by way of a practical example(s) of how you have shown leadership to make a positive contribution to the performance of a commercial organisation you have worked for or have been involved with. Your response, including role and dates, should include examples of how you have developed constructive working relationships both internal and external to an organisation you have worked for or been involved with.
  - C. **Analytical and Strategic Thinking.** Please demonstrate your ability, by way of a practical example(s) (including role and dates) of 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.
  - D. **Corporate Governance & Risk Management.** Please demonstrate your experience and/or ability, by way of practical examples (including role and dates) of how you have applied the principles of corporate governance in a commercial organisation you have worked for or have been involved with.

## Short-listing

18. A short-listing process will be employed, if found necessary. When assessing each application against the selection criteria, panel members will use a marking frame (0-7) to

determine how the evidence provided meets each criterion. Applicants who meet all 4 criteria will be ranked in order of merit after marks from each of the four criteria are tallied.

## Interview Stage

19. Applicants short-listed for interview will be asked questions based on the same criteria A-D above.

## Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

20. 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

21. 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**.
22. 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](#) for further information on this subject.

## Disqualification

23. 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;
24. 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;
25. Individuals who have served two terms as Chair of the MATRIX panel may not apply for the same post.

## Section 3

### How to Apply and Contact Details

26. Hard copy or electronic versions are acceptable. Completed application forms can be posted to DfE, Strategy Policy Division, Netherleigh, Massey Avenue, Belfast, BT4 2JP or may be delivered by hand into reception. The email address is [info@matrix-ni.org](mailto:info@matrix-ni.org) Telephone 028 9052 9635 Textrelay 08001 028 9052 9635
27. **You are advised to obtain confirmation of receipt of your application before 5pm on the 31st January 2019 either by requesting return email or by contacting the MATRIX secretariat at the telephone number above.**
28. Please note that the administrative team can provide further details about the appointment process in general or advise on the progress of an application. Should you require clarification on any aspect of the role, please contact Bernard McKeown [Bernard.McKeown@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Bernard.McKeown@economy-ni.gov.uk) Telephone 028 90 529302.
29. 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 or legible block capitals;
  - Applicants should keep to the limit of 400 words per criterion. Any information over and above this will be redacted by the admin team before being submitted to the selection panel; and
  - Applications will not be examined until after the closing deadline.

### Time frame - important dates

30. **The deadline for receipt in all cases is 5pm on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019.** Late applications will not be accepted.
31. The short-listing process will take place in January with **interviews scheduled during week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2019.**

### Presentation of Results to the Permanent Secretary

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

### Pre-appointment checks

33. 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

### INTEGRITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – GUIDE FOR CANDIDATES

*This guidance should be read in conjunction with the information contained in the leaflet ['Guidance on Conflict of Interest, Integrity and How to raise a Complaint'](#) produced by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Northern Ireland, 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 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 interview, the Panel will explore with you how far the conflict might affect your ability to contribute effectively and impartially on the 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 Panel believes that the conflict is too great and would call into question the probity of the 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 Minister 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 Minister 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 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 member's circumstances may change, for example, they may change jobs and in doing so, a conflict with their work on the Panel becomes apparent. The second is where a 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.