



## INDUSTRY SECTOR

# Public Appointments

### Overview

Public appointments in Scotland play a crucial role in shaping and influencing various public bodies, organisations and advisory groups. These appointments are made by Scottish Ministers to ensure that boards and committees are composed of individuals with diverse skills, expertise and backgrounds. This sector guide aims to provide an overview of the public appointments process in Scotland, highlighting key information and tips for prospective candidates.

### Public Bodies

Public bodies in Scotland cover a broad spectrum of sectors, including but not limited to: Health and Social Care Boards, Educational Bodies, Environmental Agencies, Justice and Law Enforcement Agencies, Cultural and Arts Organizations and Business Development Bodies.

### Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for public appointments in Scotland can vary depending on the specific role, public body and sector involved. However, certain general principles and requirements apply across most appointments to ensure that candidates possess the necessary qualifications, skills and attributes for effective governance and decision-making. Here are some key aspects of the eligibility criteria:

- Relevant skills, experience, and qualifications
- A commitment to public service
- Impartiality and independence
- An understanding of the public body's purpose and functions
- Diversity and inclusivity are encouraged, ensuring representation from different backgrounds.

Each appointment opportunity will outline the specific eligibility criteria and requirements, enabling candidates to determine their suitability for the role before submitting an application. The overall aim of the eligibility criteria is to ensure that the most qualified and capable individuals are appointed to public roles, promoting effective and inclusive governance in Scotland.

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## Skills and Attributes

Service leavers and veterans possess a wide range of valuable transferable skills that can be highly relevant and beneficial for public appointment positions. These skills are often developed during their military service and can be effectively applied to various roles in public bodies and advisory groups. When applying for public appointments, candidates should emphasise the following skills and attributes:

- Leadership
- Long term planning
- Strategic thinking
- Change Management
- Decision Making
- Analytical and problem-solving abilities
- Communication
- Interpersonal skills
- Influencing
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Knowledge of the sector and relevant issues

Further information about skills and attributes can be found in the Core Skills Framework.

## Application Process

The public appointments application process in Scotland follows a structured and transparent approach to ensure that individuals with the most suitable skills and expertise are selected for various public roles. The process is overseen by the Public Appointments Commissioner for Scotland to ensure fairness, impartiality and adherence to best practices.

## Vacancy Announcement

When a public appointment becomes available, the vacancy is advertised through various channels, including the Public Appointments website, government portals and relevant media outlets. The announcement provides detailed information about the role, person specification and the public body involved.

## Application

Prospective candidates are required to submit an application that addresses the requirements outlined in the person specification. Before applying for a public appointment, candidates should research the specific public body and its functions, understand the time commitment and responsibilities of the role, tailor their application to the role's requirements and seek advice from current or former appointees if possible. We recommend reading the application process guide; it will give an overview of the application process and a brief description of what happens at each stage. It is general information and it should be read in conjunction with the bespoke Applicant Information Pack for the public appointment that you are interested in.

## Stage 1: Initial Application

Most public appointments ask people to make an initial written application. This might be an application form, a letter of interest or career history that's specific to the Application Pack. Selection panels 'shortlist' on the basis of the initial application, scoring the applicant against the criteria in the Applicant Information Pack. Applications that are assessed as providing the strongest evidence and which most closely meet the requirements of the role are put through to the second stage of assessment. Selection panel decisions are based purely on the quality of the evidence provided by applicants.

## Stage 2: Interview/Activity

The second stage of the assessment will in most cases be an interview. Interviews are often combined with other assessment activities that simulate what a board member will be expected to do when in post. For example, applicants might be asked before the interview to read and assess a board paper. The applicant will then be questioned about their views on the content of the paper by the selection panel. The form of assessments will be described in the Applicant Information Pack. Interviews are designed to delve deeper into the candidates' skills, experiences and motivations for the role.

## References and Background Checks

Candidates who perform well during the interview and assessment stage may be subject to reference checks and background vetting to verify their qualifications and suitability for the role. These checks are essential for ensuring the integrity and credibility of the public appointments process.

## Recommendation to Scottish Ministers

The selection panel assesses the performance of all candidates and makes recommendations to the Scottish Ministers. The preferred candidate is put forward for approval.

## Appointment by Scottish Ministers

The Scottish Ministers review the recommendations and decide whether to approve the appointment. Once approved, the successful candidate is appointed to the public body or advisory group.

## Feedback to Candidates

Candidates who were not successful in their application can request feedback from the selection panel. Constructive feedback provides valuable insights for candidates to improve their future applications and enhance their chances in subsequent opportunities.

## Benefits

Public service appointments offer numerous benefits, both for the individuals appointed and for society as a whole.

**Impact on Society:** Public appointees have the opportunity to influence policies and initiatives that directly impact the lives of people in their communities and the broader society. They can contribute to positive change and the advancement of public interest.

**Fulfilling Civic Duty:** Serving in a public appointment is a form of civic duty, where individuals give back to their communities and contribute to the greater good. It provides a sense of fulfilment and personal satisfaction by making a meaningful difference in society.

**Professional Development:** Public appointees gain valuable experience, skills and insights through their involvement in decision-making processes. This experience can enhance their leadership abilities, strategic thinking and problem-solving skills.

**Networking Opportunities:** Public service appointments provide opportunities to network with other professionals, experts, and stakeholders in various fields. Building connections can lead to new perspectives, collaborations and potential career opportunities.

**Remuneration:** The remuneration for public appointments varies depending on the specific role, the public body or advisory group involved and the level of responsibility and time commitment required. In many cases, public appointees receive remuneration as compensation for their time, expertise and the responsibilities they undertake during their tenure.

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