

THE NORTHERN IRELAND AUTHORITY FOR UTILITY REGULATION

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

INFORMATION PACK

26 January 2012

Observations / Findings on the Public Appointment Recruitment Exercise for the above post.

In line with its approach of checking compliance against the Code of Practice, CPA NI has reviewed the Information Pack and Application Form for the competition for Chairperson to the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation Board currently being run by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

General Observations

Overall, the Application Form and Information Pack meet the standard required by the Code of Practice.

However, CPA NI has some critical observations as follows:

Code of Practice Section 3.21

- Role and Personal Specifications – Paragraph 13 of the Information Pack states that there are three essential criteria. However, in paragraph 17, the Information Pack provides further details of four essential criteria. This could cause confusion to an applicant who may consider only three out of four of the criteria to be essential.
- Interview dates - Paragraph 35 of the Information Pack states that interviews will be held in early 2012. CPA NI would maintain that it is not sufficient to provide applicants with such an indeterminate timeframe in which interviews may take place. Departments should be able to provide a more specific timeframe, or actual dates on which the interviews will take place.
- CPA NI Guidance on conflicts of Interest, Integrity and How to Raise a Complaint - the electronic link to the CPA NI guidance leaflet does not work, nor is a copy of the guidance included in the Information Pack available from the DFP website. Therefore, it is impossible for applicants to sign the declaration, in Section 6 of the Application form, and be assured that they are compliant.

Code of Practice Section 3.22

- A list of all public appointments has been requested, beginning with most recent. Also requested, are details of the remuneration. CPA NI would ask why it is necessary for applicants to disclose details of remuneration for posts they no longer hold. Section 3.22 of the code states that 'application forms must.....ask only what is truly required'.

Minor and Technical issues

- There are typing errors in the second paragraph of the Declaration, which may make the Application form appear unprofessional.

CPA NI would also like to make the following positive comments about the Information Pack:

Voluntary Experience

- The application form requests information relating to voluntary work experience. CPA NI considers this to be helpful if we are seriously trying to attract a more diverse field of applicants.

Role Description

- Clear guidance is given in the role description, enabling applicants to make an informed judgement on what the post will entail and their own suitability for it.

Conclusion

Overall, this Application Form and Information Pack presented by the Department meet the standards required by the CPA NI Code of Practice.

The Commissioner would ask the Department to take immediate note of the observations and issues above and address them prior to further competitions being conducted by the Department.