



Education Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 2370 Fax 020 7219 2370 Email: educom@parliament.uk

Website: www.parliament.uk/education-committee Twitter: [@CommonsEd](https://twitter.com/CommonsEd)

From Robert Halfon MP, Chair

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

7 August 2020

Recruitment of the Chair of the Office for Students: Pre-appointment process

Dear Gavin,

We are grateful to be involved at the start of the recruitment process for the new Chair of the Office for Students and welcome your suggestion that we are also consulted at the shortlist stage.

Given a key objective for the Office for Students is to ensure successful outcomes for all students, we believe the post-holder must be able to demonstrate a commitment and understanding of the culture shift needed in our universities where there has to be a greater joining up of higher and further education, to deliver the high-skilled, high-paid jobs that the country needs. The post-holder must have proven experience of delivering such a step change and a passion around the provision and take up of degree apprenticeships in all our universities, so that students are equipped to succeed at work and go on to have successful careers. In line with your plans for a further education white paper later this autumn, we recommend these are additional essential criteria for the post.

We believe a wider advertising of this position in the national press at the start of the campaign will guarantee a greater assurance of reaching a diverse field of high-calibre applicants for this role and ask that this happens in this case in addition to the dissemination through the networks suggested and via the Cabinet Office's public appointment's website. We also wish to see what measures are being taken in this recruitment to encourage applications from applicants of BAME backgrounds.

Separately, we understand that we are to be involved in the pre-appointment process for the new chair of the Social Mobility Commission. We would like to consider the draft job specification and criteria being set for this role too. We would be grateful if you could share both once they are ready in advance of that job being advertised.

Yours,

Robert Halfon MP
Chair of the Education Committee