

Jeremy Miles MS  
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

Dyddiad | Date: 10 May 2023

Pwnc | Subject: Appointment of Chief Executive, Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

Dear Jeremy,

At our Committee meeting on 3 May, we considered and agreed our approach to our forthcoming pre-appointment hearing for the preferred candidate for the Chief Executive of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research ("the Commission"). Following information provided by the Welsh Government on the appointment process, we discussed this further on 10 May, and agreed to seek some more information ahead of the hearing.

We have noted that on this occasion the process culminated in a direct appointment. This will warrant further consideration and scrutiny as part a transparent and rigorous pre-appointment process.

1. Prior to the panel making its formal recommendations to you, did they receive any feedback – either formally or informally, or any steers or indication from either you or someone acting on your behalf on the acceptability or otherwise of any of the candidates?
2. What involvement did you have in the process prior to your meeting in March, after the recruitment process had concluded, to discuss next steps?
3. Can you provide more information on why you decided to move to direct appointment and not re-advertise?
4. To what extent was the original recruitment panel involved in the decision to move to direct appointment, and the identification of potential candidates? The paper provided seems to suggest that one member of the panel was involved in these discussions, were other members involved? If the whole panel was not involved in these discussions and decisions can you outline why they were not, and who decided which members of the panel would be involved?

5. When you decided to move to direct appointment, how were potential candidates identified, and who led on this work?
6. Where any external bodies, such as recruitment agencies, involved in the process of identifying candidates?
7. How many possible candidates were approached as part of the direct recruitment process?
8. Were there any identified or potential perceived conflicts of interest between those people involved in the direct recruitment and the people identified as possible candidates through direct recruitment?
9. Has the preferred candidate declared any political activity or affiliation?

To inform our consideration of the appointment and the process, we would ask that this information is available ahead of the pre-appointment hearing, and no later than 19 May.

As a Committee and based on our experiences across three different public appointments, we continue to have some concerns about the limited role Senedd Committees have in these public appointment processes. We outlined in more detail these concerns in our [recent letter](#) to the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee. We note that this is a ministerial appointment, as opposed to a public appointment, but these concerns remain the same for this appointment.

The Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee is currently looking at the public appointments process. We are copying this letter to them in light of our broader views and recognition of the significance of the decision to move to a direct appointment following an unsuccessful recruitment process for such an important public role.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant MS

Chair

Cc: Mark Isherwood MS, Chair, Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.