



AMERICAS ASIA PACIFIC EMEA



Appointment of

President

April 2026





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National College of Ireland (NCI)

National College of Ireland (NCI) is a mission-driven, independent third-level higher education institution committed to changing lives through education.

A proud community of over 6,500 learners and staff NCI is proud to be celebrating its 75th Anniversary this year. Located in the heart of Dublin's Docklands, NCI plays a distinctive and valued role within the Irish higher education system through its strong focus on academic excellence, active applied research, access, inclusion, employability, lifelong learning, and industry engagement.

NCI has a long-standing commitment to widening access and participation, supporting learners from underrepresented backgrounds, and delivering high-quality, relevant programmes across business, social sciences, computing, psychology, education, and related disciplines. The College's academic provision is informed by applied research, close collaboration with employers, and a strong emphasis on learner success, flexibility, and innovation in delivery.

Consistent with the priorities set out in the NCI Strategic Plan [NCI-Strategic-Plan-2022-2027](#), the College is focused on strengthening academic quality and reputation, ensuring long-term financial sustainability, advancing equity of access and participation, and securing its appropriate positioning and recognition within the Irish higher education landscape.





The Role

The President is the most senior executive and academic leader of National College of Ireland. Reporting to the Chairperson on behalf of the Governing Body, the President is the Chief Officer and accountable person for the College and is responsible for providing excellent organisational, academic, strategic, and operational leadership to advance NCI's mission to change lives through education.

The President will lead NCI through its next phase of development as a mission-driven higher education institution, ensuring excellence in teaching, learning, research, and equity of access and participation, while maintaining financial sustainability and national and international relevance. The successful candidate should be able to anticipate and respond to future developments in higher education, ensuring that NCI is prepared and well-positioned and sustainably funded to meet these changes.

A central priority of the role is to secure NCI's distinctive position within higher education, equity of operational funding relative to other

HEA Institutions, achieve Delegated Authority to award qualifications directly, and attain Designated HEA Institution status, thereby positioning NCI appropriately and sustainably within the Irish higher education system.

The President will also act as a high-profile national advocate for NCI, articulating its distinctive academic value, societal impact, and contribution to learners, employers, policymakers, funders, other stakeholders and the wider public.





Strategic Priorities and Key Responsibilities

The President will be accountable for delivering the objectives of NCI's Strategic Plan and ensuring these are translated into measurable academic, institutional, and societal impact.

1. Organisational and Academic Leadership, Quality and Excellence

- Act as the College's principal executive and academic leader and standard-bearer, providing excellence in organisational leadership and on all academic quality and integrity matters.
- Champion excellence in teaching, learning, assessment, and research, ensuring all programmes are academically rigorous, learner-centred, and externally benchmarked.
- Ensure academic provision aligns with national and international standards, skills needs, and government and HEA priorities for higher education.
- Promote innovation in curriculum design, digital and hybrid learning, and applied education while safeguarding academic standards.
- Foster a strong, embedded quality culture focused on continuous improvement, student success, progression, and outcomes.

2. Student Success and the Learner Experience

- Embed student success as a core institutional priority across academic and professional functions.
- Support inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment strategies that respond to the needs of diverse learners.
- Use evidence and data to enhance retention, persistence, progression, completion, and graduate outcomes.
- Ensure learner voice and experience inform institutional decision-making.
- Champion the responsible and ethical use of and access to technology in the age of artificial intelligence to support the teaching and learning experience of NCI students.

3. Access, Equality, Diversity and Lifelong Learning

- Provide visible leadership for NCI's mission and national reputation in equity of access, equality, diversity, inclusion, and lifelong learning.
- Lead strategic delivery of national access and participation initiatives, ensuring alignment with academic quality and long-term sustainability.
- Strengthen pathways, supports, and flexible learning routes to enable learners from diverse backgrounds to access, participate in, and succeed in higher education.
- Champion social responsibility and civic engagement as core academic and institutional values.

4. Strategic Leadership, Governance and Sustainability

- Provide clear strategic direction in line with NCI's mission, values, and Strategic Plan.
- Lead the development, implementation, and monitoring of institutional strategy
- Ensure strong governance, compliance, and accountability in line with requirements in Higher Education and those stipulated by the Governing Body.
- Oversee financial planning, risk management, and long-term sustainability, ensuring resources support academic excellence and student success.



5. Positioning, Advocacy and External Engagement

- Lead NCI's strategic positioning within the Irish higher education system.
- Drive progress towards equity of operational funding, Delegated Authority, and Designated Institution status.
- Engage at senior level with external bodies such as QQI, DFHERIS, the HEA, government departments, regulators, and policymakers, drawing on strong leadership and academic credibility.
- Act as a national advocate for NCI, articulating its academic quality, public value, and contribution to social mobility, skills development, and economic growth.
- Provide visible leadership and advocacy for the Early Learning Initiative (ELI), working in close partnership with the ELI Director to provide strategic direction, institutional support, and external advocacy, ensuring the Initiative continues to deliver evidence-based impact for children, families, and communities.
- Strengthen relationships with employers, community partners, other stakeholders and international collaborators to enhance NCI's relevance and reputation.

6. Leadership, Culture and People

- Provide inspirational and academically credible executive leadership to staff and students.
- Foster a collegial, inclusive institutional culture that respects academic disciplines and professional expertise.
- Lead organisational change in an evidence based, transparent, consultative, and values-driven manner.
- Support staff engagement, development, performance, diversity and wellbeing to enable delivery of the Strategic Plan.





The Person

The successful candidate will be a distinguished academic leader with a strong record in teaching, research, and academic leadership, combined with substantial senior executive experience in a complex organisation. They will bring a deep understanding of higher education governance, regulation, and policy, ideally within Ireland or a comparable system.

They will combine academic credibility with proven CEO-level capability, demonstrating the ability to lead a mission-driven institution with strategic clarity, financial discipline, and organisational impact.

The Successful Candidate Will Bring:

- A strong academic track record and the credibility to lead on academic quality, standards, and integrity.
- Significant senior leadership experience, with accountability for strategy, performance, and organisational delivery.
- Deep understanding of higher education systems, including governance, quality assurance, and public funding.
- A track record of organisational growth, transformation, or strategic repositioning.
- Strong financial and commercial acumen, including experience managing budgets and ensuring sustainability.
- Proven ability to build strategic partnerships across government, industry, and international stakeholders.
- Experience engaging with policymakers, regulators, and funding bodies, with the ability to influence at system level.
- Demonstrated success in enhancing institutional reputation, positioning, or status.
- A data-informed approach to decision-making and performance management.

- Experience leading through complexity and change, with sound judgement and risk awareness.
- An inclusive, values-driven leadership style that fosters a high-performing, collegial culture.
- The presence and communication skills to represent the College effectively at Governing Body and national level.

Essential Requirements:

- A PhD (or equivalent doctoral qualification), with clear evidence of academic achievement and leadership.
- Significant senior management and institutional leadership experience within higher education.
- Demonstrated experience of academic governance, quality assurance, and institutional management.
- Proven financial management experience, including responsibility for significant budgets.
- Experience leading large academic and/or professional teams through progressive engagement in delivering impactful change.
- A strong commitment to academic quality, standards, and learner success.
- The ability to engage confidently with policymakers, regulators, funders and stakeholders on national policy matters which may impact on NCI.

Desirable Requirements:

- A strong national or international academic profile.



Conditions of Service

Tenure: This is a 5-year fixed-term contract, with the possibility of extension based on a strong record of achievement and performance

Salary: Executive salary band €154,657 - €202,903

Pension: Defined Contribution Pension Scheme.

Probation: Subject to a six-month probationary period.

Location: Based at Mayor Street Lower, International Financial Services Centre, Dublin 1.

Working Hours: Minimum of 35 hours per week (five-day week), with potential evening and weekend work as required.

Annual Leave: The annual leave allowance is 36 days.

National College of Ireland's mission is to change lives through education. Its vision is to provide an inspiring educational experience that is innovative, responsive and enterprise focused.

Note: The functions and responsibilities assigned to the President of NCI are based on the current stated role and strategy of the College. These functions, tasks and responsibilities may alter or be added to in line with any change in the role and strategic objectives of the NCI or that may otherwise be necessary or directed by the College from time to time.

National College of Ireland is committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace where all individuals are valued and respected. We encourage applications from candidates of all backgrounds and provide equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, or any other protected grounds.

Additional Important Information

- The successful applicant will be subject to Garda vetting and must not have any convictions under the Sex Offenders Act 2001.
- The functions and responsibilities assigned to the President are based on the current stated role and objectives of the College. These functions and responsibilities may alter in line with operational and strategic plans, and priorities of NCI.





How To Apply

The National College of Ireland will be supported in this appointment process by the executive search firm Perrett Laver. Enquiries can be made directly to Callum Conway, Research Associate within Perrett Laver (callum.conway@perrettlaver.com).

Applications should consist of a full curriculum vitae detailing academic and professional qualifications and experience. CVs should be accompanied by a covering letter describing briefly how candidates meet the criteria outlined in the job description, why the appointment is of interest and what they believe they can bring to the role.

Completed applications should be uploaded at: www.plusportal.perrettlaver.com/, quoting reference **8414**.

The closing date for applications will be **Wednesday 27th May 2026**. Candidates who are longlisted by the Committee will be invited to first round interview with Perrett Laver in early June. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for formal interviews with the Selection Committee in late June/early July.

The appointment will be made subject to satisfactory references and the formal interview process may include additional assessments such as psychometric assessments.

As defined under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Perrett Laver is a Data Controller and a Data Processor, and our legal basis for processing your personal data is 'Legitimate Interest'. For more information about this, your rights, and our approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please visit our website www.perrettlaver.com/information/privacy.



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