

Executive Director (Framkvæmdastjóri)

JOB DESCRIPTION

The role of Executive Director (framkvæmdastjóri) for the Secretariat of the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education (the Quality Board) requires a highly motivated professional who will be responsible for supporting and coordinating all activities related to promoting the quality and standards of Icelandic higher education.

The Quality Board is an independent national body, responsible for managing its own human and financial resources. The Board outsources its accounting and payment of staff salaries to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (the Ministry). For that reason, the Executive Director is part of the Icelandic civil service (Stjórnarráð) but reports directly to the Quality Board Chair. The Quality Board is described more fully later in this document.

At the present time, the Secretariat comprises the Executive Director and a full-time Senior Adviser who reports to the Executive Director. Other individuals may be brought in under short-term consultancy arrangements to support specific projects.

The Secretariat's core work involves (i) managing and overseeing the cycle of quality review processes and other activities constituting the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) for Higher Education in Iceland and (ii) supporting special *ad hoc* projects undertaken by the Board (there are usually one or two of these running at any time).

The QEF runs over a cycle of several years with annual cycles of activities that that need to be planned, managed and reported. Generally, this includes setting up, training, and supporting international review teams. The Secretariat also supports the preparation of the review reports.

The Secretariat supports the Quality Board, a group of six international experts, who meet in Iceland at least four times a year and additionally online as required. The Board members are variously involved in specific projects, and represent the Board at annual dialogues, on site, with the Icelandic universities. The Secretariat coordinates the meetings and activities of the Quality Board. It provides all the standing papers (for example on the progress and outcomes of the QEF cycle of activities) and other reports and analyses for Board meetings and produces minutes of those meetings. In addition, the Executive Director manages the financial reports for the Board, in coordination with the chair.

The Secretariat also coordinates arrangements for an annual Quality Board conference in Iceland and supports the Research Evaluation Advisory Committee (REAC), chaired by a Quality Board member.

The Board membership does not include any Icelandic members. Therefore, it is imperative that the Executive Director is not only based in Iceland, but also has, or develops, strong links within the Icelandic Higher Education system. As the first point of contact with key stakeholder communities (including the universities, research bodies and the Ministry), the Executive Director effectively provides the eyes and ears for, and is the voice of, the Quality Board in Iceland. Effective stakeholder engagement at all levels, information gathering, and horizon scanning are key aspects of the Executive Director's role.

A particularly important aspect of engagement is maintaining a close and supportive working relationship with the quality officers at the universities. This is achieved through individual dialogue

and through the Quality Council, the forum where the quality officers meet collectively to discuss quality-related issues and developments in Iceland and internationally. The Executive Director attends Quality Council meetings on behalf of the Quality Board.

The Quality Board also seeks to develop strong international links, notably with the European and Nordic quality assurance agencies, and to recruit international review team members. Therefore, the Executive Director will be required to engage internationally, to both represent the Quality Board's interests and for ongoing professional development.

This is a demanding, complex, but highly rewarding role for an individual who has an interest in supporting and engaging with the Icelandic higher education sector.

The work of the Quality Board and the operation of key elements of the Quality Enhancement Framework are conducted in English. The postholder will need to be fluent in Icelandic and English, both written and spoken.

Summary of key responsibilities for Executive Director:

- Leading and managing all activities related to the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) (<https://qef.is/assets/QEF2-Handbook-for-website.pdf>) and special projects within the guidance established by the Quality Board.
- Leading and managing the Secretariat, including human and financial resources.
- Preparing for and supporting all meetings of the Quality Board, the Research Evaluation Advisory Committee, and any other such meetings as determined by the Quality Board and following up on any decisions taken.
- Proactively maintaining effective stakeholder engagement as necessary in relation to all the above and representing the Quality Board in Iceland and abroad.
- Being a primary advocate and maintaining awareness of all issues relevant to higher education, research and academic quality in Iceland and contributing, as required, to Quality Board initiatives in response to these issues.
- With input from the Quality Board, developing and monitoring appropriate strategic solutions and plans, and periodic reporting on these to the Board.
- Preparing reports and analyses in English, proof reading and drafting to a high standard.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications and experience

Essential requirements

- A higher education degree at master's level or above
- Demonstrable record of achievement at management level, including experience of providing business and financial management, and strategic leadership, in a complex and changing environment
- A proven track record of working effectively with stakeholder groups
- Excellent written and oral presentational skills, including experience of producing complex written analyses, reports and guidance materials

Desirable

- Experience of working within higher education in a managerial capacity

- Experience of quality-related work within higher education
- Experience of working with both public and private sector stakeholder groups, including high-level liaison at ministry/government level
- Experience of working internationally

Knowledge and skills

Essential requirements

- Fluent in Icelandic and English (both oral and written)
- Broad based knowledge of political, cultural, social, economic and educational matters in Iceland
- Well-developed leadership and interpersonal skills, including in communicating and negotiating with colleagues and stakeholder groups at all levels
- Ability to line-manage staff in an effective and supportive manner
- Problem solving and analytical skills and ability to employ strategic thinking and forward planning

Desirable

Knowledge of higher education in an international context

Personal qualities

Enthusiasm, self-discipline and confidence in stakeholder engagement and in developing role-related networks nationally and internationally

Other Circumstances

Essential requirements

Willingness to travel throughout Iceland and internationally as required (this will involve trips of several days duration)

Desirable

Possession of a current driving licence

OTHER INFORMATION/APPLICATION

Salaries will be determined according to the current collective bargaining agreement made by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and the relevant trade union (FHSS). This is a full-time (100%) post.

Applications should be sent to Þorgerður Edda Hall (teh@gef.is) by 30 September 2022. Applications must be accompanied by a CV, names of two referees, copies of relevant diplomas and a cover letter outlining the applicant's fit for the position with reference to the full role description and the criteria set out in the person specification (above).