

Board Appointments Checklist

September 2026

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A robust board appointment process is one of a board's most important governance responsibilities. Appointments should be strategic rather than reactive, building the skills, experience, diversity of thought and personal attributes the board needs over the medium to long term.

A good process is, transparent, rigorous and aligned to the organisation's future needs, board culture and succession plans. This checklist can be used by nomination committees, chairs and governance teams to plan and manage board appointments.

1 Clarify the board's needs

Confirm the organisation's purpose, strategy and governance context.

Review current and future board composition needs, tenure, succession plans and upcoming vacancies.

Use a skills matrix to identify current and emerging collective capability needs.

Agree the essential skills, experience and attributes required - including any constitutional requirements

Consider the diversity of perspectives and backgrounds needed, including experience, gender, ethnicity or cultural age, geography and diversity of thought.

Confirm the term, remuneration, time commitment and committee requirements.

Confirm the appointment complies with the organisation's constitution, governing documents and applicable legislation.

2 Set up the appointment process

Confirm who has authority to appoint and approve the decision.

Establish the appointment panel and clarify roles, including whether independent support is needed.

Identify and manage any conflicts among people running the appointment process.

Agree selection criteria, assessment method and scoring before reviewing applications.

Approve appointment timeline and decision-making process.

3 Prepare the role and go to market

Prepare a clear role description and candidate information pack.

Draft your advertisement – explain the organisation, board context, expectations and opportunity clearly.

Choose appropriate channels to reach a strong and diverse candidate pool, considering advertising, governance and industry networks, direct search and specialist search agencies.

Apply consistent application management, confidentiality and record-keeping requirements.

Complete the appointment with confidence

4 Assess candidates consistently

Assess candidates against the agreed criteria, eligibility requirements, board skills matrix and any applicable independence requirements.

Use a structured and consistent process for longlisting, shortlisting and the interview process.

Declare and manage any conflicts arising during the candidate assessment and use a conflict management plan if required.

Test candidates against the required skills, experience and attributes.

Test judgement, integrity, independence of thought and ability to work constructively.

Consider what each candidate would add to the capability, balance and culture of the whole board.

Ensure a consistent approach to interview assessment.

Record the reasons for shortlisting and selection.

5 Assess candidates consistently Complete due diligence

Verify identity, qualifications and relevant experience.

Complete robust reference checks and agreed probity/background checks.

Confirm statutory, regulatory and director-disqualification requirements.

Assess actual, potential and perceived candidate interests and conflicts relevant to appointment.

Document checks completed, issues considered and reasons for proceeding.

Provide reasonable opportunities for candidates to undertake their own due diligence, including meeting relevant directors and key executives.

6 Make and document the appointment

Ensure the decision is formally approved and minuted.

Confirm term, remuneration, meeting expectations and time commitment.

Issue a formal letter of appointment and supporting documentation.

Complete all required registers, disclosures, filings and notifications.

Advise unsuccessful candidates promptly and respectfully.

7 Set the director up for success

Put a structured induction programme in place.

Provide the board charter, strategy, key policies and relevant board papers.

Brief the director on the organisation, its operating environment, finances, key risks, regulatory obligations and stakeholders.

Clarify board–management roles, delegations, behaviours and board culture.

Update the interests register and explain ongoing disclosure expectations.

Agree expectations for development, contribution and performance review.

FINAL GOVERNANCE CHECK

Before confirming the appointment, can the board answer yes to each of these questions?

Does the appointment strengthen the capability and balance of the board as a whole?

Was the process fair, transparent and properly documented?

Are any conflicts or independence issues understood and manageable?

Does the candidate have the judgement, motivation, capacity and commitment to contribute fully?

Have we undertaken sufficient due diligence to support the appointment decision?

Does this appointment align with our succession plan and long-term governance requirements?

We can help you recruit for your next board vacancy.

The IoD's Board Appointments team provide specialist expertise in director recruitment and are connected into New Zealand's director network. Appointments services can be tailored to suit your needs, whether it's promoting your board vacancy, supporting nominations panels, or providing end-to-end director search and selection processes. Find out [more](#), or contact our [Governance Services team](#).