

## **Applicant Information Pack**

# **Newbattle Abbey College Board of Directors**



**Closing date: 12.00 noon 9 August 2024**

**Interviews: Between 27 and 30 August 2024**

## Contents

- Introduction
- About Newbattle Abbey College
- About the role of the Board Director
- Application and Assessment Information
- Board Director remit and person specification



Thank you for your interest in becoming a Board Director of Newbattle Abbey College. The enclosed information will answer many of the questions you may have about the value of this role in shaping the future of Newbattle Abbey College and also Scotland's college system.

Newbattle Abbey College is an incredibly special place set within an historic 16th century building and 125-acre heritage estate. It is one of the smallest of Scotland's colleges, offering residential and non-residential opportunities. The College has a long history of providing routes into, and back into, further and higher education in a way that fits with individuals' needs and circumstances. Our dedicated and skilled teaching and specialist staff work closely with our students, providing teaching not only in subject specialism but also on a personal level with a focus on their well-being and personal confidence.

Our [Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#) sets out our ambition to expand and enrich the curriculum, fully utilising our historic and beautiful estate whilst recognising the challenges ahead. It is a time of significant change and challenge within the Further Education Sector but also a time where Education and Learning - no matter what level - is a priority in contributing to the creation of opportunities for people and in supporting the wider economy. Our core purpose of changing lives through exceptional learning experiences is therefore more important than ever.

The role of the Board Director is pivotal in supporting us to do this, achieving our strategic ambitions and ensuring sound stewardship and best practice in corporate governance. The role is also hugely rewarding, where, as a positive Ambassador for Newbattle Abbey College, you will meet and engage with the workforce of the future, future leaders, and potential entrepreneurs and support the continued progression of our historic and beautiful estate.

We welcome applications from those who have the necessary skills, experience, and commitment to join us in addressing the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead.

If this role is of interest to you and you believe you can contribute to the delivery of our ambition - we really want to hear from you.

# Newbattle Abbey College

## About our College

Newbattle Abbey College is unique. It is Scotland's adult education residential college, set within an historic 16th century building and 125-acre heritage estate. The College provides a high standard of education to the local community and to wider communities across Scotland and the UK. Newbattle offers extensive support to adults returning to education and to younger learners at points of transition in their lives. The College also plays a major national role in the strategic development of adult learning in partnership with a range of agencies. You can view a recent promotional video for the College on our [corporate web pages](#).

As one of Scotland's smallest colleges, Newbattle offers access to further and higher education in social sciences and humanities as well as rural skills. The College also runs short courses and is the national accreditation centre for two innovative award programmes:

- Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards
- Adult Achievement Awards

To achieve this, we work closely with partners who include national agencies, colleges, universities, schools, local authorities, employers, and the voluntary sector.

Our curriculum currently includes the following further education (FE) courses which are funded through the core grant from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC):

- SWAP Access to Higher Education Courses in Arts & Humanities
- National Certificate in Social Sciences
- National Certificate in Rural Skills
- Preparation for Employment and Learning

We also deliver higher education (HE) via a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Social Sciences run as an *Associate Degree* course in partnership with, and funded by, Queen Margaret University (QMU). Students on the programme are dual enrolled with Newbattle and QMU and, on graduating, articulate into second year of a range of degree courses at QMU.

We are actively working with university and industry partners to develop further our curriculum for 2024-25 and beyond. The College also has an international dimension. Our international language school partners provide residential courses for students from across the globe and our exciting new, long-term partnership with Wisconsin University means that the College will be home to students and Faculty on the Experience Scotland programme throughout the year.

The College also operates a commercial business, taking advantage of the estate for commercial opportunities as a heritage venue for conferences, meetings, international visitors, and weddings. This is an area we plan to grow in the coming years. The College also maintains the Newbattle Abbey Business Park, which is home to approximately 40 businesses and organisations.

The Principal of the College is Roddy Henry and he is joined by Kirsty Adamson as Depute Principal and Director of Academic Development and Mary Slater as Director of Operations to form the Senior

Management Team. We currently have around 42 members of staff, almost one third of which are members of the Learning and Teaching Team.

## About our Strategic Direction

Our Strategic Plan 2023-2026 sets out our ambition to expand and enrich the curriculum, fully utilising our historic and beautiful estate. The Plan recognises the challenges ahead as well as setting out how we will continue to provide exceptional learning experiences and change lives.

The Plan sets out our Purpose, Vision, and Values within three broad aspects:

### Our Purpose

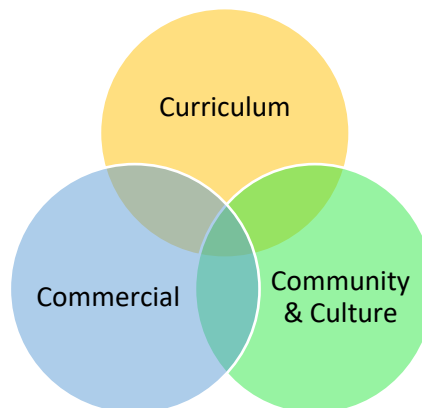
- To be a nurturing learning community that changes and enriches lives
- To champion lifelong learning and access to education for all
- To be a progressive custodian of our historic and beautiful estate

### Our Vision

- To change lives and unlock opportunity
- To be a wonderful place to learn, work and visit
- To thrive as a model of sustainability and worth

### Our Values

- Inclusive
- Caring
- Forward-thinking
- Empowering
- Collaborative



## About our performance

The College has an annual turnover of circa £2.5m, of which Scottish Funding Council (SFC) grant funding makes up approximately 51%. The remainder is from commercial and other income sources. Continued commercial growth and sound financial management will underpin delivery of our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and support development and delivery of the curriculum. The College's overall financial objective is to generate resources to fulfil its strategic plan, resource its estate and improve and expand education provision to our students.

The College has a significant responsibility to engage with Education Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council to implement the Quality Framework as part of the arrangements for assuring and improving the quality of provision delivered by Scotland's colleges. As part of the outcome agreement with SFC the College has a credit threshold of 822 credits. At November 2023, there were 66 enrolments in total.

The 2022-23 Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES) for the College reported an overall satisfaction rate of 93% with a return rate of 69.5% of eligible students.

## About our Governance Framework

### Deed of Trust

The College was originally established under a Governing Deed of Trust set up in 1937 by Philip Kerr, 11th Marquis of Lothian. The Marquis of Lothian conveyed 125 acres of land, known as Newbattle Abbey, to a Trust. The Trust was originally governed by the Marquis and the Principals of the ancient universities of Scotland (Aberdeen, St Andrews, Glasgow, Edinburgh).

### Newbattle Abbey College

Since 2004 Newbattle Abbey College has been a company limited by guarantee, without share capital, registered at Companies House, and incorporated under the Companies Act 1985 (Company Number 262968). \*The Memorandum and Articles of Association are as set out in the registration documents. The Company is a registered charity (SCO35294) operating under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulated by [OSCR | The Scottish Charity Regulator](#).

As a College set up by a Trust Deed rather than the normal statutory provisions for colleges in Scotland, (Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992/2005; Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013), the College can operate with a degree of flexibility albeit within its Memorandum and Articles of Association. Of course, the College seeks to always demonstrate good standards of governance.

In addition, as a body that is funded by the Scottish Funding Council, the College is required to comply with the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges, as a prerequisite of continued funding. The College is required to comply also with the Scottish Public Finance Manual in conducting and reporting on financial management of the College.

### Newbattle Abbey College Trust Ltd

The Memorandum and Articles of Association are as set out in the registration documents. The Company is a registered charity (SC048902) operating under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulated by OSCR | The Scottish Charity Regulator.

The Trustees established in 1937 retain ultimate responsibility for the Estate as legal owner of the heritable property, administering the estate, providing the College Board with the necessary land, buildings, and, if required, additional funding so that it could run the College. In 2017, the Trustees modernised their constitution by setting up a company limited by guarantee, without share capital, which is currently The Newbattle Abbey College Trust Ltd, registered at Companies House operating under the Companies Act 2006 (Company Number 615027).

The Trust and the College share a joint objective to maximise the net revenue from the Newbattle estate and thereby to achieve greater financial stability for the Trust and the College.

### The College Board of Directors

As currently constituted, the Board of Directors can consist of a maximum of up to 18

members including the Principal, staff members and student members.

Under the leadership of the Chair, the role of the Board of Directors is to provide leadership, direction, support, and guidance and to always ensure the College acts in accordance with good governance. The Board of Directors is responsible for driving the organisation forward to achieve its purpose and vision, for setting the strategic direction, for shaping the culture and values and ensuring effective management and financial controls to support the student experience within a framework of accountability and transparency.

The Board meets, as a minimum, four times per year for the purposes of conducting Board business including also an Annual General Meeting. The Board may meet at other times throughout the year for specific purposes related to their remit. The work of the Board is supported by several sub-committees to which members are expected to participate; Chairs' Committee, Audit and Risk Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee and Finance and Resources Committee.

The Members of the Board, as well as the Chair, serve on a voluntary basis, without remuneration.

# About the Role of the Board Director

The role of the Board is to provide leadership, direction, support, and guidance to ensure Newbattle Abbey College acts in accordance with good governance. The Board is committed to delivering its functions effectively and efficiently, providing value for money. The Board has corporate responsibility, under the leadership of the Chair.

Responsibilities include (but are not limited to):

- Ensuring, through the Executive Leadership Team, the creation and delivery of high quality and effective learning and curriculum aligned to strategic priorities.
- Ensuring best use of the estate in order to maximise income generation in keeping with the objects of the Company and charity.
- Approving the strategic aims and objectives of the College for agreement annually with the SFC through the College Outcome Agreement.
- In reaching decisions, taking into account relevant guidance issued by the Scottish Government and/or SFC and ensuring adherence with company and charity law.
- Ensuring regular receipt and review of all pertinent information concerning the management and performance of the College; being informed in a timely manner about any concerns.
- Determining the steps needed to deal with factors likely to impact on the outcomes of the strategic aims and objectives of the College or on the attainability of its operational targets and outcomes, including the quality of the student experience.
- Promoting the effective use of all resources consistent with the principles of Best Value.
- Ensuring that effective arrangements are in place to provide assurance on risk management, governance, and internal control.
- Demonstrating high standards of corporate governance at all times, including openness and transparency in its decision making.
- Promoting the College with stakeholders.

## Individual Board Directors' Responsibilities

All individual Board Directors must act in accordance with the responsibilities of the Board as a whole and always comply with company, as well as the sector's Code of Conduct, including the rules relating to the use of public funds and the registration of conflicts of interest. In this context "public funds" means funds provided to the College by the Scottish Funding Council and other funds falling within the stewardship of the Newbattle Abbey College Board of Directors.

In addition, the College, is a registered charity. Accordingly, Board Directors are also charity trustees, governed by charities legislation under the auspices of the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR).

All new Board Directors will undergo induction training on the responsibilities of their roles (as listed below). This training is provided internally by the College and, separately, externally by the College Development Network. Training is integral to being able to undertake the role of a Board Director and, as such, is a compulsory aspect of and a



condition of appointment.

### **Board Directors should:**

- Understand the governance framework of Newbattle Abbey College, including the role, relationship and responsibilities between the Trustees, the College and the Board of Directors.
- Understand the operational environment in which the College operates within the context of the wider FE/HE sector in Scotland and the public sector.
- Endeavour to attend all Board meetings and be well prepared by reading relevant papers in advance and, if necessary, seek further information to ensure their understanding.
- Attend all relevant training events and keep up to date with the work of the College.
- Make a full contribution to the work of those Committees of the Board to which they are appointed.
- Represent the Board as required and when able to do so.
- Contribute to strategic development and decision-making.
- Monitor the reporting of performance and hold College management to account through purposeful and constructive challenge and scrutiny.
- As necessary, seek further information than that which is provided to give assurance on organisational performance.
- Question and, as necessary, respectfully challenge proposals made by fellow Board Directors and the Executive Leadership Team of the College.

**Skills and experience required are noted at Appendix 1 (Person Specification).**

### **Valuing Diversity**

Newbattle Abbey College is committed to supporting diversity and equality. We value the benefits of having different points of view and experiences represented on our Board. Accordingly, we hope to receive applications from a wide range of talented people irrespective of their religion or belief, gender, age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, relationship status or caring responsibilities.

We particularly welcome applications from individuals representing all aspects of the community and would therefore welcome applications from small businesses and those who are currently under-represented at Board level in Scotland, such as women, disabled people, LGBTI+ people, those from minority ethnic communities and people aged under 50.

### **Time Commitment**

Board Directors will be expected to attend all Board meetings and those Board Committees to which they are appointed. Usually there are four Board meetings per year, which normally take place at the College Campus. Board Directors are normally also appointed to a Board committee which will meet, at the most, on a quarterly basis. The majority of meetings are in person but may be held online from time to time.

Board Directors are also expected to contribute to other Board business and activities as their availability dictates.

There are normally three additional days per annum set aside as Board Induction/Development and Board Strategy days. There are invites to other events such as Graduations and employer engagement events where attendance is optional.

Board Directors will be expected to contribute around 10 days per year to Board business. This includes time spent reading the papers outside of meetings.

### **Remuneration**

Board Director appointments are not remunerated and are undertaken on a voluntary basis. Board Directors are entitled to the reimbursement of all reasonable travel and subsistence costs, including reasonable receipted dependent's carer costs.

### **Length of Appointment**

Board Directors will be appointed for a period of four years. Following which their first appointment may be renewed for a maximum further four years by the Board subject to satisfactory performance appraisal and the skills, knowledge, and experience requirements of the Board at the time of renewal. Reappointment is not automatic.

### **Fit & Proper Person Test**

Scottish Ministers and the public must feel confident that people appointed to the Boards of public bodies are fit and proper persons to take up these positions. In the context of Board Director appointments, a Fit and Proper Person is an individual who is suitable for appointment because they meet the requirements of the role, and their past or present activities (and/or behaviour) mean that they are suitable for appointment.

### **Conduct & Ethical Standards**

Newbattle Abbey College works within a framework of conduct and ethical standards. These are based around the Nine Principles of Public Life in Scotland: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability; Openness; Honesty; Leadership, Public Service and Respect. The College Code of Conduct sets out the conduct expected of those who serve on boards in Scotland.

### **Conflicts of interest**

Your current employment or other position you might hold may give rise to a conflict of interest which could affect your suitability for appointment to this post. It is important that you consider this possibility when you make your application. We will seek confirmation that applicants have no inappropriate or unmanageable conflicts of interest in respect of appointment to the College Board.

Please let us know in your application of any potential conflicts of interest.

If you want to know before applying if you have a conflict that would bar you from being a Board Director of the Newbattle Abbey College you should contact Ingrid Earp, Board Secretary, by email at: [ingridearp@nac.ac.uk](mailto:ingridearp@nac.ac.uk)

### **Vetting**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Scotland) Order 2003 (as amended) applies to roles where there may be substantial contact with young or vulnerable people. Through appointment to the College as a Board Director, you will be required to complete a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme Application before taking up your appointment. This requirement extends to all College members of staff and Board Directors.

## Disqualification

Legislation stipulates circumstances which prevent some people from becoming Board Directors. ***Please note, these roles are not open to anyone who has been or becomes:***

- Bankrupt
- Disqualified from holding a Directorship in a Limited Company
- Disqualified from being a Charity Trustee
- Suspended or removed as a Charity Trustee
- Convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty

Important - please note that by submitting your completed application you are declaring:

- That the information provided is, to the best of your knowledge and belief, true and complete.
- That you are able to meet the time commitment required of the role.
- That you agree to apply and work within the Principles of Public Life in Scotland.
- That you agree to be bound by the Board Directors' Code of Conduct and other relevant Legislative or Regulatory Framework as is required by the Board of Directors.
- That you have no unmanageable conflict of interests in respect of the appointment.
- That you are aware of the terms of disqualification and that you are not disqualified from taking up appointment.

# Application and Assessment Information

Your application is the key document which will determine whether you will be short-listed for interview. You must be able to demonstrate within your application how you meet the skills as laid out in the Person Specification. Your application should consist of the College application form and a supporting statement for your application. **CVs alone will not be accepted in application for the role.**

The application also has a declaration statement, and by submitting your form, you are declaring that the information you have provided is true and complete and that you confirm your understanding of the terms of appointment as a Board Director.

## How to apply online

Our dedicated website allows you to apply online: [Work for Us](#)

## Closing date for applications:

**12.00 noon 9 August 2024**

## Interview dates:

**27-30 August 2024**

For further information about Newbattle Abbey College, to arrange an informal discussion about the role, or to receive documentation in an alternative format please contact Ingrid Earp, Board Secretary, [ingridearp@nac.ac.uk](mailto:ingridearp@nac.ac.uk).

## Equalities Monitoring Form

Newbattle Abbey College is committed to appointment on merit, diversity, and equality. The Equalities Monitoring information is not provided to the interview panel.

The information gathered from equalities monitoring is very important and helps to determine how the College embeds a culture of equality and diversity, ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and without discrimination.

All information supplied will be non-attributable, completely anonymous and will be treated in the strictest confidence, in line with the principles of Data Protection legislation.

## Shortlisting

Anonymity at the short-listing stage is used to ensure that the key principles of merit, equality, openness, and transparency are upheld. The Personal Information and the Monitoring Information sections will not be seen by the short-listing panel, and they are not used to assess your suitability for appointment.

The remainder of your application form is made available to those involved in short-listing and selection for interview. The selection panel will only be informed of interviewees names after they have decided on whom to invite for interview. Once the names are known, to make sure that the process is transparent, and the appointment is made on merit, the Panel will declare if they know anyone who has applied for appointment.

## Interview and Assessment Process and Outcomes

In the interview, the Panel will ask competency-based questions to assess whether applicants can demonstrate that they meet all the required skills and experience as set out in the person

specification.

If invited for interview and you have a disability and require adjustments to be made, for example physical accessibility, and/or sign language interpretation, you should advise the Board Secretary, Ingrid Earp via email [ingridearp@nac.ac.uk](mailto:ingridearp@nac.ac.uk)

Candidates will be notified in writing of the outcome of the interview process.

### **Notes on skills & experience requirements**

While we need people with a variety of general skills and personal qualities to enable the Board to work effectively, the Board also needs individual members who bring some specific additional priority skills/experience. Please note you are not required to have these priority skills in order to make an application. However, the Board will be looking to have these skills available in its overall skills mix at this time. The General Skills and Priority Skills are set out in Appendix 1 below.

The general skills and personal qualities we are looking for do not have to have been gained by working in a management post or at a senior level. You may just have a natural aptitude in these areas, or you may have gained them from being active in your community, in a voluntary capacity or just through your life experience.

General skills and personal qualities are the same for every vacancy we seek to fill and are listed below in the 'General skills & personal qualities' section.

In addition to the general skills and personal qualities, we are also looking for people who have one of the sets of priority skills/experience listed in the 'Priority skills/experience' section below.

**To be clear** – It is not necessary for you to have any of the Priority Skills/Experience listed below in order to make an application. However, it is equally important that you are able to demonstrate **all** of the General Skills & Personal Qualities listed below.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS REMIT**

### **1. PRINCIPAL ROLE**

As a Director of the Board, you will promote the highest standards of corporate governance and accountability, influencing the strategic direction of the College to serve learners, local communities, address business needs and support the College Management in achieving its objectives.

### **2. SUMMARISED REMIT**

The Board of Directors will:

- Work at a senior level, maintaining and developing excellent corporate governance.
- Provide strategic leadership, vision, direction, support and guidance for the College.
- Promote commitment to the College's core values, policies and procedures.
- Engage and communicate effectively and act as ambassadors and advocates for the College with a wide range of individuals and organisations.
- Understand the context within which the College operates, namely in terms of providing education and improving public services.
- Ensure the overall proper functioning of the College.
- Ensure the College provides suitable, efficient, and effective further education to its students.
- Ensure regularity and efficacy in the expenditure of funds received from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).
- Ensure the proper stewardship of funds, ensuring probity of spend and delivery of value for money in the use of the College's resources.

## Appendix 1 – Person Specification

**General skills and personal qualities** (You should be able demonstrate **all** of these):

Skills/Personal qualities	Descriptors
<p><b>Ability to work effectively in a team setting.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with colleagues to deliver objectives.</li> <li>• Actively seeks out the views of colleagues.</li> <li>• Prepared to take on a task or role for the 'good of the organisation.'</li> <li>• Seeks opportunities to build constructive relationships both within the organisation and with external stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ability to critically examine proposals and their supporting analysis.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise the information required to make a decision.</li> <li>• Sound evaluation of the information with a good range of conclusions being reached, which are clearly explained.</li> <li>• Comfortable working with both numerical and written data.</li> <li>• Making decisions which have had a positive impact at departmental, functional, or organisational level.</li> <li>• Using 'hard' evidence as well as seeking the views of others.</li> <li>• Able to make decisions when the information available is complicated and made up of several components which have to be analysed and assessed and may contain conflicting information or indicators.</li> <li>• Thinking through the implications of decisions before coming to a final position.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Constructive and supportive challenge – you will need to be able to challenge without causing conflict.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct evidence of challenging effectively within a diverse team or committee situation.</li> <li>• Evidence of where challenge has changed the views of others and influenced decisions without causing rancor or resentment.</li> </ul>

Skills/Personal qualities	Descriptors
<b>Communicating effectively.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being persuasive, able to influence within a committee/meeting setting or perhaps other stakeholders.</li> <li>• An understanding of the need for a flexible influencing style.</li> <li>• Being engaging &amp; enthusiastic.</li> <li>• Good written skills.</li> <li>• Able to adapt style appropriately for different audiences.</li> </ul>

**Priority skills/experience** (You are **not** required to demonstrate any of these, but if you are able to demonstrate experience in **one (or more)** of these, that would be helpful to the selection and interview process)

Skills/Experience	Descriptors
<b>Industry and/or SME business skills and experience.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of applying your own knowledge to achieve business goals, highlighting your own role.</li> <li>• Examples of awareness of particular challenges faced by SMEs.</li> </ul>
<b>Operational experience in a financial role and/or as a qualified accountant, either within financial operations or in an auditing capacity or both.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of applying relevant knowledge and skills within an income/expenditure, recording and monitoring context.</li> <li>• Experience and understanding of the audit process and how it provides independent advice and assurance on the effectiveness of the internal financial management, control, and risk management systems of an organisation.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience of Human Resource (HR) management and the ability to find solutions to HR matters, including the creation of a successful employee relations culture.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of HR issues and evidence of ability to develop solutions, strategy, culture, and policy to address those issues.</li> <li>• Understand how overarching HR strategy successfully integrates with business delivery and is solutions focused, including delivery of a healthy employee relations culture.</li> <li>• Experience in creating a performance management culture centered on positive health &amp; wellbeing.</li> </ul>



Skills/Experience	Descriptors
<b>Experience of developing new business and/or driving income growth in the third sector.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of working with stakeholders to develop a company or organisation.</li> <li>• Success in applying for funding and delivering reports to funders.</li> </ul>
<b>Legal knowledge or professional law background.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of the Scottish legal system.</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Infrastructure knowledge and/or experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of dealing with cyber security.</li> <li>• Experience of digital infrastructure provision across an organisation.</li> </ul>