



**ISEB**

Independent Schools  
Examinations Board

**THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS  
EXAMINATION BOARD (ISEB)**

**APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR - FOR 2026**

**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

# ABOUT THE ISEB



## INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT SINCE 1904

The Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB) provides the most well-known and respected examinations and assessments for pupils transitioning from prep and junior schools to senior schools in the UK. Used by the UK's leading schools, ISEB's assessments are designed to help pupils demonstrate their potential across a wide range of subjects at 11+ and 13+. As well as being the organisation behind the well known Common Entrance assessments, and the online, adaptive ISEB Pre-Tests, ISEB also offers the innovative ISEB Project Qualification (iPQ), a programme for schools that focuses on pupil-led, project-based learning.

### Some key statistics:

- +520,000 examination papers taken by candidates in the last 5 years
- +620 prep, junior and senior schools which have used ISEB examinations
- +50 countries worldwide where children have sat ISEB examinations

In recent times, ISEB has developed significantly beyond the development of Common Entrance. This includes the development of ISEB's Project Qualification (iPQ) which encourages pupils to explore and communicate their personal interests through self-defined and pupil-led projects. ISEB's suite of robust assessments are supported by world-leading academic research and are used by young people across the independent, international and state sectors. In addition to its assessments, ISEB now provides more information to support schools, teachers, pupils and families with preparation and development than ever before.

In April 2024, educators, researchers, and industry leaders converged for a forward-thinking event dedicated to shaping the landscape of education. This conference wasn't just a celebration of ISEB's rich history—it was a testament to the organisation's ongoing commitment to pushing the boundaries of educational practices. Together with representatives from over 90 leading independent schools, ISEB is pioneering the future of assessment to ensure the best possible experience for pupils.

# ABOUT THE ISEB



The Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB) was created in 1903 to design and deliver a 'common' form of entrance examination for entry to independent senior schools, the Common Entrance (CE) examinations and curriculum. The first CE exams were delivered in the summer of 1904 and are still relied upon by top independent schools today, 120 years later. ISEB was established as a joint venture by HMC, the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS) and the Girls' Schools Association (GSA). Since then, ISEB has devised, curated and produced CE papers yearly alongside a growing portfolio of assessments and qualifications for candidates seeking entry to leading independent senior schools, such as the ISEB Project Qualification.

The ISEB Project Qualification (iPQ) provides a framework for teaching and assessing the development of independent, pupil-led project-learning skills, taking the form of a 15-20 hour project. It can be used as a stand-alone addition to an existing curriculum, or as an alternative to one or more curriculum subjects. The iPQ is usually completed in Years 7 or 8, but schools may start preparing pupils for the iPQ through smaller scale project work in Years 5 or 6.

## ISEB Leadership and Governance

ISEB is led by Chief Executive, Julia Martin, who is supported by a small team of ten people, from an office in Ringwood, Hampshire. Board meetings are typically held in central London, with Committee meetings being run online.

The names of the current Directors can be found here: [ISEB LIMITED people - Find and update company information - GOV.UK](#). The Board comprises representatives of the three main shareholders, alongside two independent directors, and the Chair, who is also an independent appointment. In total, there are 11 Board Members.

# CHAIR OF THE BOARD – THE ROLE



The current Chair, Wendy Griffiths, is due to complete her term of office in August 2026, having served four years as Chair of the Board. Candidates for the role will recognise the potential for ISEB and be able to work with the Board and ISEB's leadership team to articulate a vision, develop the next strategic plan and support the team in its delivery. The Chair will be financially and commercially literate, have an understanding of the markets in which ISEB operates, demonstrate strong stakeholder management skills.

The Chair will work two days a week for 36 weeks of the year plus 0.5 of a day in the Easter and summer holidays in order to maintain contact with the CEO and have oversight of activities. The half day may be more if there is an issue to resolve. The two days are flexible, unless there are events which are out of ISEB's control such as conferences. This role is remunerated, with a pension of 10% employer contribution. The Chair will be appointed for a term of three years which could be extended with mutual agreement.

## THE ROLE

The key role of the ISEB Chair is to represent the Board and act as its ambassador. They are required to lead the Board in its decision-making and to represent ISEB in its political work, networking with schools served by ISEB and other professional organisations. The Chair is responsible to the full Board of ISEB.

### **The Board as a whole is collectively responsible for the success of the Company. The Board's role is to:**

- Provide entrepreneurial leadership of the Company within a framework of prudent and effective controls which enable risk to be assessed and managed.
- Set the Company's strategic aims, ensure that the necessary financial and human resources are in place for the Company to meet its objectives, and review management performance.
- Set the Company's values and standards and ensure that its obligations to its shareholders and others are understood and met.

### **In your role as a Director, you shall also be required to:**

- Constructively challenge and help develop proposals on strategy, marketing and communications.
- Scrutinise the performance of management in meeting agreed goals and objectives and monitor the reporting of performance.
- Satisfy yourself on the integrity of financial information and that financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and defensible.
- Have a prime role in appointing and, where necessary, removing senior management and in succession planning.
- Take into account the views of shareholders and other stakeholders where appropriate.
- Exercise relevant powers under, and abide by, the Articles.
- Be in regular contact with the CEO in support of their work, as well as with other Board Members as required.
- Support and mentor the CEO and their team as required.
- Disclose the nature and extent of any direct or indirect interest you may have in any matter being considered at a Board or Committee meeting and, except as permitted under the Articles you will not vote on any.

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR



## Primary tasks include:

### Strategy

- Ensure that strategy, once determined by the Board, is regularly reviewed.
- Ensure that the Board determines the nature and extent of the significant risks that the Company is willing to embrace in implementing its strategy.
- Set up regular opportunities for the Board to discuss strategy, oversee the development of the Company's business potential, being alert to and exploring new opportunities for the Company to diversify its business in appropriate ways to ensure several income streams.
- Participate in company strategy days.
- Maintain and oversee effective governance and financial management of the Company.
- Play a prominent part in ensuring the Company is at the forefront of educational developments.

### Board leadership

- Chair the Board meetings of the Company.
- Set the Board's agenda (primarily focused on strategy, performance, value creation and accountability) and ensure that adequate time is available for discussion of all agenda items, in particular strategic issues.
- Set clear expectations concerning the Company's culture, values and behaviours and the style and tone of Board discussions.
- Ensure that the Board has effective decision-making processes and applies sufficient challenge to major proposals.
- Ensure that Board Committees are properly structured with appropriate terms of reference.
- Encourage all Board Members to engage in Board and Committee meetings by drawing on their skills, experience, knowledge and, where appropriate, independence.
- Ensure that the Board receives accurate, timely and clear information.
- Review the performance of Board members on an annual basis.
- Review the performance of the Board on a regular basis.
- Review and develop the terms of reference for all Committees and the Board on a regular basis.
- Schedule and publish the dates of all Board and Committee meetings giving appropriate notice for all members.
- Oversee the selection of all Board and Committee Members.
- Induct all new Board Members.

**It is likely that the successful candidate will demonstrate many of the following:**

## **Experience and skills**

- Senior level leadership experience, including at Board level.
- A track record of having chaired meetings, be it at leadership, Committee or Board level.
- Experience of developing strategy and overseeing its implementation to move organisations forward.
- The ability to work well with an Executive team, as a Non-Executive; understands the boundaries between governance and delivery.
- Interested in and experienced at developing others and managing performance; skilled at building and harnessing the value from Non-Executive teams.
- Financial and commercial acumen with a strong appreciation of robust resource management.
- Comfortable with technology and can see the role digitalisation has to play in the examination and assessment sector.
- Knowledge of how well-run organisations operate and of good governance.
- Knowledge of the landscape in which ISEB operates, which is likely to include experience within the education sector.
- Strong listening skills, alongside excellent communication skills.
- Knowledge of international sales.

## **Personal attributes**

- Able to establish credibility with the Patron Associations, ISEB's staff body, its CEO and other key stakeholders.
- Logical, with clarity of thought and the ability to make decisions.
- Outstanding judgement, firm and resilient.
- Excellent relationship builder.
- Comfortable in an ambassadorial, externally facing role; enjoys networking and working in a representative role.
- Understands organisations with a complex stakeholder landscape.
- Comfortable working in regulated environments and committed to working in a way that ensures ISEB is operating in a way that is compliant and appropriate.
- Demonstrable integrity.
- Comfortable in their own skin.
- Genuinely interested in education and the development of children and young people, and keeps abreast of developments and innovation in the sector at large.

# HOW TO APPLY



Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to ISEB on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through Saxton Bampfylde's website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code LBVCA.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV, and cover letter, addressed to Alex Peterken, who is chairing the selection committee for this appointment. The letter should be no longer than two pages.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Tuesday 28 October 2025**.

For a confidential conversation please contact Jo Ogilvy, Consultant, via [jo.ogilvy@saxbam.com](mailto:jo.ogilvy@saxbam.com)

## **GDPR personal data notice:**

According to GDPR guidelines, Saxton Bampfylde Ltd are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.