



**Ambition  
Institute**

# **CEO CANDIDATE INFORMATION**

**MAY 2019**

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## CONTACT

For further information contact John Dodd  
at Dodd Partners quoting **reference A2991**.

✉ [2991@doddpartners.com](mailto:2991@doddpartners.com)

☎ 0754 543 1848

☎ 0151 342 5244

**Dear candidate,**

Thank you for your interest in the role of CEO at Ambition Institute. I hope that you will find this document a helpful way to find out more about the role and our organisation.

Ambition Institute was launched in March 2019 following the merger of Ambition School Leadership and Institute for Teaching, two leading organisations in the education sector.

As one organisation, we want to build an education system where every child can thrive, no matter what their background. Our mission is to help educators serving children from disadvantaged backgrounds to keep getting better.

Ambition Institute is a graduate school of education. Our approach combines the mission-focus of a charity, the academic rigour of a traditional university and the essential classroom connection of a teaching school. Our programmes are designed for educators at every stage, from classroom teachers to CEOs steering multiple schools, and all the crucial roles in between. We want to ensure there are expert teachers in every classroom being led by exceptional school leaders at all levels.

Our predecessor organisations have supported over 14,000 educators across 2,800 schools and trusts. In the next three years Ambition Institute will expand our reach to a further 15,000 educators, helping them to give more children the best education.

The Board and the executive leadership team are proud of the profile Ambition Institute has established for itself since the launch, excited by the possibilities generated by the merger and driven by the potential to achieve even more in the future.

The CEO will of course be pivotal to delivery of the agreed goals. Our previous CEO, James Toop, left the organisation in February after eight successful years in which he led the merger of The Future Leaders Trust and Teaching Leaders to form Ambition School Leadership, as well as the recent merger of Ambition School Leadership with Institute for Teaching. We were sorry to see him go but applaud his legacy: he has created a remarkable team and Ambition Institute is now widely recognised as a leading provider of educator development in England.

We are now looking for a worthy successor to build on the strong foundations James has laid. Relevant experience may have been gained in a range of settings: we welcome applications from leaders in the education sector well as those from broader professional backgrounds. The key requirements for our incoming CEO will be the quality of their leadership, strategic capability, and passion for school improvement and education equality.

The role of Ambition Institute's CEO will be a challenging but rewarding one. If, having read the brief, you feel this is the job for you, we look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,



**Baroness Sally Morgan,**  
Chair of the Board of Trustees,  
Ambition Institute



## WHY WE EXIST

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds don't do as well as their peers at school. We know that improving teaching and school leadership is the best way to address this gap. No other aspects of the school system have as much influence on pupil achievement, particularly the achievement of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ambition Institute has one purpose: to help educators serving children from disadvantaged backgrounds to keep getting better.

## HOW WE'RE DIFFERENT

**With our new scale, and more than ten years of collective experience working with educators at all levels, we believe that exciting opportunities lie ahead.**

### WE ARE A GRADUATE SCHOOL

Teachers and school leaders deserve the best professional development. At Ambition Institute we prioritise learning from experience and we continually adapt our programmes so that they have the biggest impact. As a graduate school for educators we apply academic rigour to our learning design, drawing on frontline insights from schools into what works in practice.

Our programmes leverage the latest evidence from international experts, the experience of our faculty and the work of great teachers and school leaders. This means we think carefully about what is taught, how, and in what sequence. We apply this expertise to support schools, trusts and alliances to improve pupil outcomes and retain their educators. We work collaboratively to enable school improvement for the benefit of pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### OUR DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

Ambition Institute offers flexible development pathways that meet the needs of schools. Rather than streaming educators into one pathway early in their career, our curriculum offers the chance to build a sustainable, high-impact career that is right for each individual as they develop.

You can find out more about our [current programmes](#) on our website, although it's important to highlight that our offer is under review as we explore the most effective route to delivering impact for schools. We are re-focusing our portfolio and diversifying our delivery models, including making even better use of technology to support our participants.

### HAVING VITAL CONVERSATIONS

We want to challenge thinking about educator development and be challenged in return. Everyone benefits when we share and debate ideas. As a centre of learning we want to spark conversations that lead to new innovations and breakthroughs in educator development, for the benefit of the schools we serve.

We will always talk about the crucial role of teachers, school leaders and system leaders in closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their wealthier peers. Only by working in dialogue with schools, government and sector partners to embed teaching and leadership expertise in our education system will we end the inequality that still faces young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.



## THE ROLE

This is an exciting time to join Ambition Institute as CEO. We need a clear strategic thinker who can also implement flawlessly. This role requires the ability to respond to changing market needs, along with a laser focus on financial sustainability. Our goal continues to be to increase our impact and ensure that we are a sustainable organisation getting the best return from every penny spent in service of our mission.

# WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

**The role is London based, but travel to other locations will be required.**

It is vital that the new CEO can provide open, confident leadership, managing a complex network of relationships and motivating a talented team of programme managers and experts. They also need the ability to re-imagine digital technology's potential to help achieve our aims. They must have credible experience of running an organisation.

In particular, our new CEO must have successfully completed a major transformation and/ or turnaround, and be able to draw on that experience to inform their leadership.

Ambition Institute is at a critical stage. Having completed the merger, we are undertaking an almost complete transformation of our commercial model. The predecessor organisations provided training programmes subsidised by the Department for Education. In the future, the charity will design, market and sell compelling development programmes to schools, taking account of cash-strapped school budgets.

The CEO will take overall accountability for performance, focusing activity in areas where the greatest impact will be achieved and making sure that Ambition Institute's offer is relevant and valued.

The CEO will ensure we have an affordable, effective infrastructure, whilst developing a pipeline of new products, delivery models and funding opportunities. They will understand cost management, as well as how to generate sales. In short, they will be confident in their all-round financial skills, deploying those skills to build a sustainable, growing entity.

The CEO will lead relationships with funders, senior educational leaders and government departments, particularly the Department for Education. The CEO will need intellectual agility, superb diplomatic skills and be a natural collaborator in order to sustain the confidence of these key stakeholders.

We welcome expressions of interest from people from a range of professional backgrounds. Deep prior experience in education is not essential, but the CEO will need the commitment and enthusiasm to build knowledge quickly. To illustrate experience that might be particularly relevant, we are particularly interested in hearing from people with a track record in managing an educational system e.g. a multi-academy trust, a training provider, or an apprenticeship organisation.

Our successful candidate will need considerable resilience to navigate a tough market, a recent re-structure and a recently re-shaped strategy. But the opportunity is huge: we believe that, for the right candidate, this is an irresistible role with enormous scope to drive things forward and to deliver at a significant level.

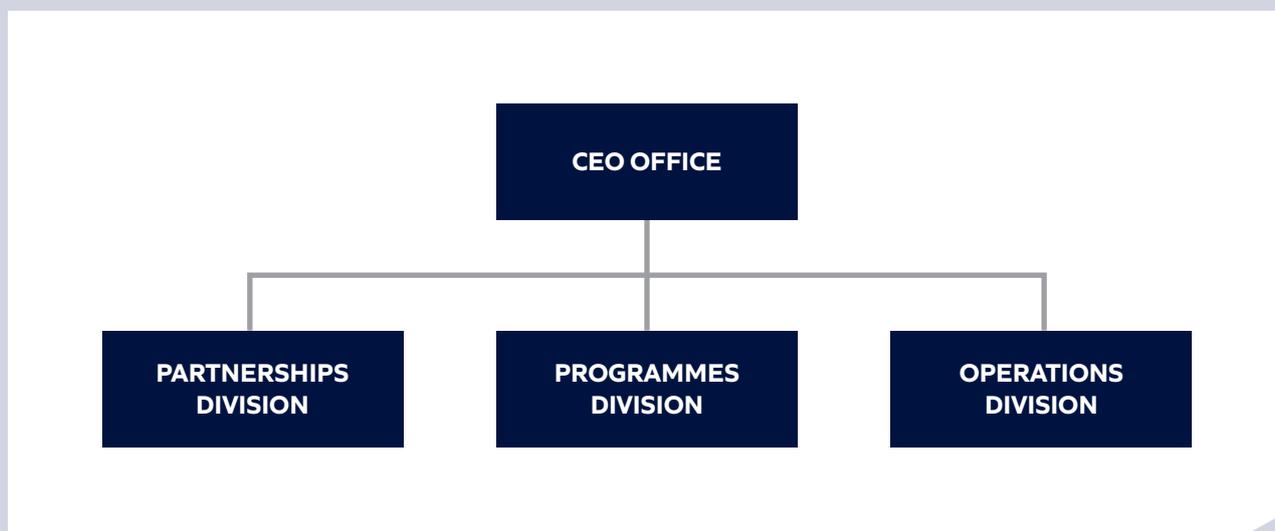
If you have the range of skills needed to succeed in this demanding role, and the drive to lead a nationally-recognised charity that makes a sustainable impact on education, we look forward to hearing from you. This could be the most exciting professional challenge of your life.

# AMBITION INSTITUTE STRUCTURE

Our Board of Trustees is chaired by Baroness Sally Morgan. You can find more information [about the Board](#) on our website.

The CEO reports to the Chair of the Board and is supported by the [Executive Committee](#). The Executive Committee, led by the CEO, oversees all aspects of strategic and operational management through a team of talented executive directors and directors.

Our overall headcount is c. 200, with staff based in the London central office and also in Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle.



## MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

**This is an exciting time to join Ambition Institute as CEO. We need a clear strategic thinker who can also implement flawlessly. This role requires the ability to flex focus depending on need, along with a relentless focus on financial sustainability. Our priorities continue to be to increase our impact and ensure that we are a sustainable organisation getting the best return from every penny spent in service of our mission.**

Indicatively, the CEO will:

Provide clear and confident leadership to develop the organisational strategy, and ensure a financially sustainable business model

Build a strong executive team and a high-performing organisation with the right culture, systems and processes

Develop a coherent marketing and sales strategy including market segmentation, account management, and effective relationship management

Deliver financial sustainability by growing revenue from programmes and fundraising, and managing the organisation's cost base

Build the organisation's reputation and profile with key stakeholders including customers, educators, and funders

Achieve impact, ensuring programmes are rigorously measured and evaluated, and deliver improved outcomes for pupils from disadvantaged background

## KEY SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

**Our successful candidate will, of course, demonstrate their commitment to the mission to improve the education and outcomes of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.**

**They will also have a demonstrable track record of leadership success and, in particular, be able to evidence:**

Grasp of effective commercial strategy which delivers revenue growth and financial sustainability, and how this works in a not for profit

Sales and marketing experience in high value services

Enthusiasm for leading transformational organisational change

Experience of leading high quality, autonomous executive teams building team motivation, fostering trusting relationships that empower colleagues to do their best work and nurturing a brand based on excellence, collective responsibilities and individual strengths

Credibility in the educational sector, or ability to rapidly to build such credibility, adept at holding top-level policy discussions and debates; building alliances

Effective relationship management at multiple levels including team, funders, and clients and a wide range of stakeholders in a complex political landscape

Track record of successful working with trustees/boards

Excellent oral and written presentational skills, appropriate to a range of audiences



## OUR OFFER

**A competitive salary, appropriate for a role of this seniority and impact, will be offered. Other benefits are:**

25 days' annual leave, plus bank holidays

A generous employer pension contribution of 11% (10% pension plus 1% national insurance rebate)

Life assurance

Interest free season ticket and bike loans

A progressive approach to learning to support career development

An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which gives staff confidential support and personalised information and resources as required

We also promote agile working, with a dynamic and flexible internal culture which encourages all staff to take control over how they work and promotes their wellbeing

# APPOINTMENT PROCESS, TERMS AND HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be submitted by forwarding a full CV and two-page covering statement to our retained search partners, Dodd Partners, at [2991@doddpartners.com](mailto:2991@doddpartners.com) quoting [reference A2991](#).

Candidates are asked to provide suitable daytime and evening contact numbers and email addresses.

The closing date for applications is **9am (GMT) on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019**.

First round interviews are likely to be held in the week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> June. Final round interviews are planned for the week of 17<sup>th</sup> June. These dates will be confirmed as soon as possible.

It is not necessary to be a UK citizen for this role although a candidate who does not currently have the right to work in the UK will need to secure an appropriate visa.

The appointment will be made subject to receipt of satisfactory references and other pre-employment checks including an enhanced DBS check.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Should you wish to have a confidential discussion regarding this post, please contact our advising consultant, John Dodd, quoting reference A2991:

✉ [2991@doddpartners.com](mailto:2991@doddpartners.com)  
☎ [0754 543 1848](tel:07545431848)  
☎ [0151 342 5244](tel:01513425244)

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🌐 [ambition.org.uk](https://ambition.org.uk)

🐦 @Ambition\_Inst

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Ambition Institute  
is a registered charity,  
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