Appointment of an External Accountant by the Board of Management

This guideline supersedes Financial Guideline P06 – 2018/2019

Introduction

In line with the requirements of Section 18 of the Education Act 1998, boards of management of recognised schools are required to ensure that annual accounts are prepared in accordance with best accounting practice. Under circulars 0060/2017 and 0002/2018, annual accounts are to be prepared and submitted in a format outlined by the FSSU. It is therefore necessary that all boards of management engage an external accountant.

The advice outlined in this financial guideline is to assist a board of management to appoint an external accountant for the first time, or to assist a board of management who may wish to change their current external accountant. Please ensure that appointment of an external accountant is in line with requirements of the patron/trustee.

Guidance on engaging an external school accountant

➢ **The following criteria are essential for the external accountant selected by the board:**

I. The external accountant must belong to a Prescribed Accountancy Body that comes within the supervisory remit of the Irish Auditing and Accountancy Supervisory Authority (IAASA).

II. The external accountant must hold a Practicing Certificate.

III. The external accountant must provide proof of professional indemnity insurance of a minimum of €50,000.

To help with the selection of the external accountant, the FSSU suggests that the following questions are included in the request for quotation:

- Has the external accountant experience of preparing primary school accounts?
- What is the availability to provide support by phone or email?
- What are the fees for the service?
- Is the external accountant familiar with the Education Act 1998, Charities Act 2009 and the FSSU's filing requirements?
- Has the external accountant a Practicing Certificate?
- Has the external accountant professional indemnity insurance of a minimum of €50,000?

The external accountant must:

- Prepare annual school accounts in accordance with the FSSU prescribed template and timeline.
- Prepare a summary financial report for parents.
- Submit the school's annual return on the FSSU secure online cloud-based system. The school's annual return consists of inputting the school's trial balance, uploading the approved annual schools accounts, and completing the information required by the Charities Regulator on the online system.
- Prepare necessary adjustments to the school's trial balance to be posted on the school's accounts package.
- The Department of Education and the Charities Regulator requests that where an external accountant becomes aware of fraud or misappropriation of school funds in the course of their work with a recognised school, the external accountant will inform the FSSU immediately.

Quotation Process

- Competitive quotation procedures should be followed for the selection of the external accountant. The invitation to quote may be issued directly to the external accountant practices which would be capable of carrying out the contract and are of good professional standing. The Request for Quotation form is available here.

- A minimum of three quotes must be obtained.

- The invitation should be standard for all external accountant practices invited and contain adequate information concerning the scope and nature of the contract.

- Quotations should be evaluated according to the principle of obtaining best value for money and in line with the criteria stated in the request for quotations and the date of receipt of quote must be specified.

- The opening of quotations should take place in the presence of at least three persons designated by the board for the purpose, one of whom must be the Principal.

- Unsuccessful quoters should be provided with bespoke feedback without undue delay as to why they have been unsuccessful. Template results letters are available on https://www.spu.ie/notification-of-award-letters-templates/

Appointment of the external school accountant

- Ensure you have a clear understanding of the fee structure.

- Once the board of management has selected an external accountant, a letter of engagement should be agreed and signed by the board of management. This will be provided by your external accountant and should cover the responsibilities of the board of management and the external accountant. It should also set out the services provided by the accountant e.g. prepare annual year-end accounts, payroll services etc.

- The board should obtain a copy of the professional indemnity insurance and written confirmation of membership with the Prescribed Accountancy Body.

Further information or clarification on any of the issues raised in this guideline can be obtained from the FSSU.

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22nd May 2024

Ceapadh Cuntasóra Sheachtraigh ag an mBord Bainistíochta

Tagann an treoirlíne seo in ionad Threoirlíne Airgeadais P06 – 2018/2019

Réamhrá

Ar aon dul le ceanglais Alt 18 den Acht Oideachais, 1998, éilítear ar bhoird bhainistíochta scoileanna aitheanta a chinntiú go n-ullmhaítear cuntais bhliantúla de réir an dea-chleachtais cuntasaíochta. Sonraítear i gCiorcláin 0060/2017 agus 0002/2018, go gcaithfear na cuntais bhliantúla a ullmhú agus a chur isteach i bhformáid atá leagtha amach ag FSSU. Dá bhrí sin, ní mór do na boird bhainistíochta uile cuntasóir seachtrach a fhostú.

Cabhróidh an chomhairle atá leagtha amach sa treoirlíne airgeadais seo le bord bainistíochta cuntasóir seachtrach a cheapadh den chéad uair, nó cabhrú le bord bainistíochta ar mhian leo an cuntasóir seachtrach atá acu faoi láthair a athrú. Iarrtar ort a chinntiú go gceaptar an cuntasóir seachtrach i gcomhréir le riachtanais an phátrúin/iontaobhaí.

Treoir maidir le cuntasóir seachtrach scoile a fhostú

➢ **Tá na critéir seo a leanas bunriachtanach don chuntasóir seachtrach a roghnaíonn an bord:**

I. Is gá don chuntasóir seachtrach a bheith ina b(h)all de Chomhlacht Cuntasaíochta Forordaithe atá faoi shainchúram maoirseachta Údarás Maoirseachta Iniúchta agus Cuntasaíochta na hÉireann (IAASA).

II. Ní mór don chuntasóir seachtrach Deimhniú Cleachtaigh a bheith aige nó aici.

III. Ní mór don chuntasóir seachtrach cruthúnas a sholáthar go bhfuil nach lú ná €50,000 d'árachas slánaíochta gairmiúla aige nó aici.

Chun roghnú an chuntasóra sheachtraigh a éascú, molann FSSU go gcuirfí na ceisteanna seo a leanas san áireamh san iarratas ar luachan:

- An bhfuil taithí ag an gcuntasóir seachtrach ar chuntais bhunscoile a ullmhú?
- An mbeidh sé/sí ar fáil chun tacú libh ar an bhfón nó trí ríomhphost?
- Cad iad na táillí a bheidh i gceist don tseirbhís?
- An bhfuil an cuntasóir seachtrach eolach ar an Acht Oideachais 1998, an tAcht Carthanas 2009 agus riachtanais chomhdaithe FSSU?
- An bhfuil Deimhniú Cleachtaigh ag an gcuntasóir seachtrach?
- An bhfuil árachas slánaíochta gairmiúla de €50,000 ar a laghad ag an gcuntasóir seachtrach?

Ní mór don chuntasóir seachtrach:

- Cuntais bhliantúla scoile a ullmhú de réir an teimpléid agus an sceidil atá ordaithe ag FSSU.
- Tuarascáil airgeadais achomair a ullmhú do na tuismitheoirí.
- Tuairisceán bliantúil na scoile a chur isteach trí chóras slán néalbhunaithe ar líne FSSU. Is éard atá i gceist le tuairisceán bliantúil na scoile ná comhardú trialach na scoile a iontráil, cuntais bhliantúla faofa na scoile a uaslódáil agus an fhaisnéis a éilíonn an Rialtóir Carthanas a chomhlánú ar an gcóras ar líne.
- Coigeartuithe riachtanacha ar iarmhéid trialach na scoile a ullmhú le cur ar phacáiste cuntais na scoile.
- Sa chás go dtagann cuntasóir seachtrach ar chalaois nó míleithreasú i leith cistí scoile agus é/í i mbun a chuid/cuid oibre le scoil aitheanta, éilíonn an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna agus an Rialtóir Carthanas nach mór don chuntasóir seachtrach a leithéid a chur in iúl do FSSU láithreach.

Próiseas Luachana

- Ba cheart cloí le nósanna imeachta luachana iomaíocha chun cuntasóir seachtrach a cheapadh. Is féidir an cuireadh chun luachana a eisiúint go díreach chuig cleachtais cuntasóirí seachtracha a bheadh in ann an conradh a chomhlíonadh agus a bhfuil dea-stádas gairmiúil acu. Tá an fhoirm 'Iarratas ar Luachan' ar fáil anseo.

- Ní mór trí luachan ar a laghad a fháil.

- Ba cheart cuireadh caighdeánach a chur chuig na cleachtais cuntasóirí/iniúchóirí seachtracha uile a dtugtar cuireadh dóibh agus ní mór faisnéis leordhóthanach a bheith ann maidir le raon feidhme an chonartha agus maidir leis an gcineál conartha.

- Ba cheart luachana a mheas de réir an phrionsabail um an luach is fearr ar airgead a fháil agus de réir na gcritéar a sonraíodh san Iarratas ar Luachana agus ní mór an dáta a fhaightear an luachan a shonrú.

- Ba cheart na luachana a oscailt i láthair triúr ar a laghad, arna n-ainmniú ag an mbord chun na críche sin, agus ní mór don Phríomhoide a bheith ar dhuine acu.

- I gcás daoine a sheol luachan isteach ach nár éirigh leo, ba cheart aiseolas saincheaptha a chur ar fáil dóibh siúd gan mhoill mhíchuí. Tá teimpléid litreach le fáil chuige sin ar https://www.spu.ie/notification-of-award-letters-templates/

Ceapadh an chuntasóra sheachtraigh scoile

- Deimhnigh go bhfuil tuiscint shoiléir agat ar struchtúr na dtáillí.

- Chomh luath is a bheidh cuntasóir seachtrach roghnaithe ag an mBord Bainistíochta, ba cheart don Bhord Bainistíochta Litir Rannpháirtíochta a chomhaontú agus a shíniú. Cuirfidh do chuntasóir seachtrach an litir sin ar fáil agus ba chóir go gclúdódh sé freagrachtaí an Bhoird Bhainistíochta agus an chuntasóra sheachtraigh léi. Ba cheart go leagfaí amach ann freisin na seirbhísí a sholáthraíonn an cuntasóir m.sh. cuntais bhliantúla dheireadh na bliana a ullmhú, seirbhísí párolla srl.

- Ba cheart don bhord cóip a fháil den árachas slánaíochta gairmiúla, chomh maith le deimhniú i scríbhinn ar an mballraíocht sa Chomhlacht Cuntasaíochta Forordaithe.

Is féidir tuilleadh eolais nó soiléiriú ar aon cheann de na saincheisteanna a ardaítear sa treoirlíne seo a fháil ón FSSU.

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22 Bealtaine 2024