

# New chair of the Skills and Productivity Board confirmed

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has today (29 September) announced that Stephen van Rooyen will be the new chair of the Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).

The SPB – which was first announced in [October 2019](#) – will play a central role in driving forward the government's ambitious FE reform programme. The Board will provide expert advice on how to make sure the courses and qualifications on offer to students across the country are high-quality, and aligned to the skills that employers need for the future and that will help grow our economy after the coronavirus outbreak.

Stephen van Rooyen has been selected as Chair of the SPB due to his extensive business experience, and as a thought leader in technology, engineering and communications. In Stephen's current role as EVP and CEO, UK and Europe at Sky he has been a strong advocate for apprenticeships, launching ambitious schemes across technology, journalism and business functions.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I'm delighted to announce the appointment of Stephen van Rooyen as the chair of the Skills and Productivity Board.

Stephen has a wealth of experience across the technology, engineering and communications sectors and will be able to share his vital insight and leadership with the panel. He also a keen and proud champion of apprentices, having taken Sky's apprenticeship programme from strength to strength.

He will lead an expert panel who will provide important advice on how to tackle the nation's skill challenges. The board will play a key role in helping us to rebuild our economy post-Covid-19 and deliver our bold skills agenda. I look forward to working with him to level up opportunity across the country ensuring people have the skills they need to progress.

Stephen van Rooyen, EVP & CEO, UK and Europe at Sky said:

Given the pace of change in business and in workplaces today, and the economic challenges of COVID, the new Skills and Productivity Board has a key role to play in developing our skills economy for current and future generations. It is a privilege to contribute, and I'm looking forward to working with the panel and the government to drive this important agenda

The work of the SPB will be carried out by a panel of five leading skills and labour market economists, supported by Department for Education officials. The panel will undertake independent research and analysis in response to questions set out by the Secretary of State and Chair. Applications for panel members closed earlier this month and appointments will be made in due course.

The government's forthcoming FE White Paper will set out detailed plans to build a high-quality further education system – one that unlocks potential, levels up skills and boosts opportunities for people across the country.