

Governor Recruitment and Succession Planning Policy

Background

This policy applied to all governors. Its purpose is to ensure a good standard of governor recruitment and succession planning.

Policy Statement

The College of West Anglia aims to keep a balance between refreshing its membership and maintaining experience, knowledge, and skills to have the right people on the Corporation to fulfil the college's strategy and goals. It will keep its recruitment, membership, and succession under regular review for these purposes.

With students and staff from a wide range of backgrounds, the college values the differences and similarities of diversity. The dynamic mix of people and ideas underpins the college's reputation for excellence and makes studying and working at the college a unique and enriching experience.

In support of the ongoing success of students, staff and the wider community, the college is committed and accountable for advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion in all its forms. The college believes that diversity is critical to maintaining excellence in all its endeavours.

The Corporation endorses the commitment of the college and seeks to enable all to achieve their full potential in an environment characterised by equality of respect and opportunity. With due regard the duties under the Equality Act 2010, and to the protected characteristics the corporation seeks to fulfil this commitment by ensuring that its work reflects the principles laid down in this statement, as well as fulfilling its obligations under the law.

The college is committed to forward planning and ensuring by effective succession planning that it is always able to sustain continuity of college leadership of the highest quality.

This policy sets out how this intention is put into practice and will itself be kept under review.

Governor Recruitment, Selection and Assessment

The Head of Governance will maintain a Corporation composition record that provides details of current membership, including categories of membership, and terms of office. This will be used to ensure that forthcoming vacancies due because of the term of office of a Governor being due to expire are reported to the Search and Governance Committee on a timely basis.

A governor may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to the Head of Governance. All Governors will be encouraged at their induction to provide sufficient notice of resignation to allow for vacancies resulting from resignation to be reported to the Search and Governance Committee promptly.

The Search and Governance Committee will, at each meeting, review the membership position, vacancies and any future dates at which there may be changes to crucial offices such as Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporation or any of its committees.

The Head of Governance will hold a personnel file containing for example, governor application forms, EDI monitoring, GDPR privacy notice, declarations of interest, and skills audit.

The Head of Governance will maintain a register of interests disclosed and completed by all governors. This is reviewed/updated annually and is available for public inspection on request.

All governors will be asked to complete a skills audit as part of their application to be a governor and to update it annually. The Head of Governance will use this information to undertake an analysis of the current skills on the Corporation and report the findings to the Search and Governance Committee.

The Search and Governance Committee will use the analysis of the skills audit to match the skills and experience of candidates, identified on their application form, to any skills gaps that may exist on the Corporation at the time of a particular vacancy.

The Search and Governance Committee will consider the skills, experience, background, and personal characteristics which are desirable to be met in filling any vacancy. Consideration will be given to identifying potential future leaders from within the Corporation membership, as well as the possibility of new recruitment to fill a future Committee Chair vacancy.

The Search and Governance Committee will pursue possibilities for new Governors based on this needs assessment. Personal contacts, advertising, approaches to professionals, trade or community organisations, and local businesses and employers, the use of volunteer bureaus and Governor recruitment agencies will all be considered for use. The Search and Governance Committee will agree on the method or methods most appropriate for the vacancy.

To ensure positive recruitment practice and to increase the diversity of the Corporation, any advertisement for Governors will specify the skills and benefits of being a member and include clear messages indicating that the college strongly encourages applications from all sections of the community.

Information about becoming a Governor will be kept up to date and will be available on the college website and provided to those interested in becoming a Governor.

Anyone interested in joining the Corporation as an independent Governor, or a co-opted member of a committee, will be asked to submit their expression of interest.

All approaches/interest are reported to the Search and Governance Committee.

Interviews for independent governors or co-opted members of a committee will be called by a panel comprising two governors, supported by the Head of Governance. The composition of the panel will be dependent upon the vacancy to be recruited. Appointments are subject to approval of the Corporation, on the recommendation of the panel. Where the recommendation to appoint does not swiftly fit with the schedule of meetings of the Corporation Instrument 13(4) of the Instrument and Articles of Government will apply for the appointment to be reached by a majority of members supporting by written resolution circulated by the Head of Governance.

An individual may not be appointed to the Corporation if they are ineligible for membership under the Instrument and Articles of Government. Applicants are required to declare their eligibility in a form prescribed by the Head of Governance at the point of application.

Arrangements for staff and governor appointments are set out in the college's Standing Orders.

Induction

All new Governors will be provided with a comprehensive induction to the role via the Head of Governance, who will also arrange for induction meetings with the Chair of Governors, Principal, and members of the Senior Management Team as appropriate to provide an introduction into the life of the college.

Further specific induction training will be provided to Staff and Student Governors, tailored to their needs.

Version 5	March 2024	Corporation Approval:	20 March 2024
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All governors will be subject to a DBS check and will complete mandatory training on Safeguarding, Prevent and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Student Governors will be mentored by an existing Governor, as well as supported by the Head of Governance.

New Governors will be offered the opportunity for a six-month review meeting or telephone discussion with the Chair of Governors.

Training and Development

The skills audit undertaken on application will identify potential areas of training/development.

Governors will also be asked to consider their training requirements as part of annual assessment of governance effectiveness. Feedback will be evaluated and used to inform the annual programme of training and events.

Governors are encouraged to attend and engage in college activities and events to increase their knowledge of the college and its work. Information about such activities and events will be shared with Governors by the Head of Governance.

The Head of Governance will disseminate learning and development opportunities, relevant sector briefings and information from external organisations including the Association of Colleges (AoC) and Government agencies to Governors as appropriate.

Governors are encouraged to establish a link to curriculum or business support areas of the college and conduct one visit, as a minimum, each term. Where possible Governors are also encouraged to attend remote Area Performance Review and annual self-assessment meetings for their linked area.

Succession Planning and Business Continuity, supported by Self-Assessment

The Search and Governance Committee will consider succession planning at each of its meetings in the academic year.

The expiry dates of terms of office of existing governors, where possible, are staggered to assist effective succession planning and to reduce the number of forthcoming vacancies at any time.

Terms of office are limited to two consecutive terms of four years that a Governor may undertake. This ensures that independence is maintained and assists the aim of having a balance of new and experienced Governors.

Where a future Committee Chair vacancy has been identified, opportunities for shadowing by, and mentoring of, a prospective future Chair, to allow for development and knowledge sharing before an office is taken up will be considered.

The Search and Governance Committee will keep under review the determination of membership of the Corporation, including the composition of Committees. Recommendations will be submitted to the Corporation accordingly.

A Special Meeting of the Search and Governance Committee will be convened as a matter of urgency, to consider any unforeseen vacancies arising where it would not be expedient to delay such until the next ordinary scheduled meeting, e.g., two or more Governors resigning at short notice.

The Corporation collectively will undertake annual self-assessment. This provides the opportunity for Governors to identify how they would like to develop their role and their aspirations as a Governor and what support to develop would be useful.

Version 5	March 2024	Corporation Approval:	20 March 2024
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