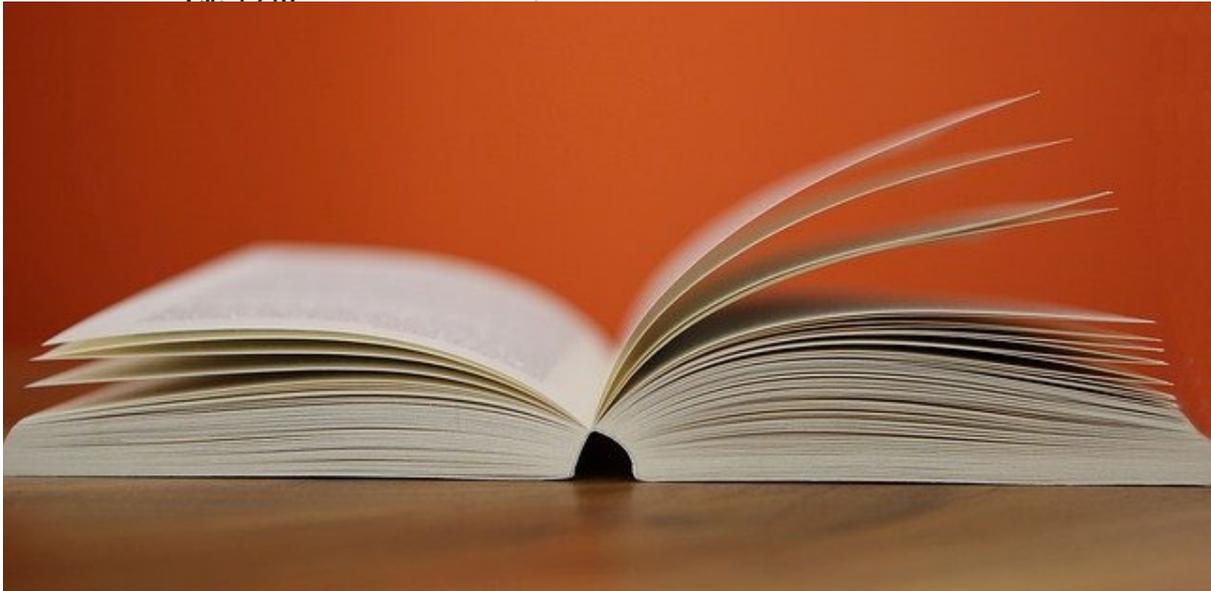


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# Governor Induction Booklet

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Governors are one of the biggest voluntary forces in the country and are an essential part of the contribution to improving the life chances of young people today.

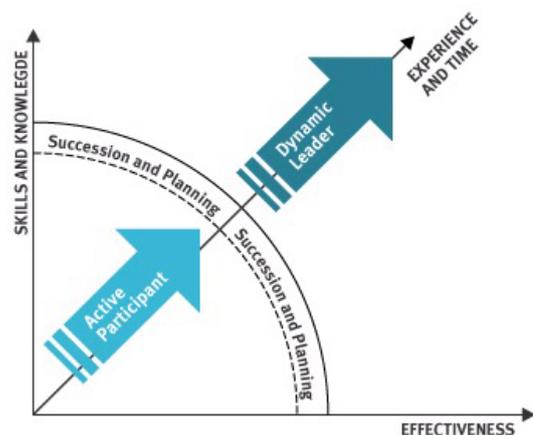
At any one time, there are approximately 4500 governors in the college sector across the country, often struggling to grapple with the increasing demands on their time, knowledge, and experience. Working collectively, college governors represent an impressive network, meeting either physically or virtually, to exchange ideas and experiences, whilst supporting each other through challenging times, developing networks, and forging relationships with providers and other stakeholders.

The effectiveness of governing bodies relies on optimum procedural governance and behavioural governance taking place, both amongst governors, and their work with the senior leadership team.

High-quality governance, as stated in the Association of Colleges Code of Good Governance 2024, will command public confidence, and promote the reputation of individual colleges and the sector. Such high-quality governance must rest on several shared values. By implementing such values, the board can:

- ensure quality education and training for its students
- demonstrate public benefit
- provide the basis for its effectiveness
- support college autonomy
- support the sustainability of the service and enhance the reputation of the sector
- and, by example, demonstrate dynamic leadership.

As a new governor, you will be wondering what is expected of you, how much time the role will demand, and how you can most effectively contribute. Getting off to a positive start will mean that you can contribute effectively and more quickly; preparation is one of the keys to being a successful governor, as well as gaining a personal reward. Whatever your motivation for being a governor, there are some key fundamentals to get right, particularly at the start of your journey.



## Key activities

The key fundamentals of effective governance apply to all new governors. In the first few months of your time with the college, these activities must take place:

- a. Build an understanding of the nature of your college, its core business, the markets and context in which it operates, and how it adds value
- b. Build a link with the college's senior leaders
- c. Build an understanding of the college's key stakeholders

These, together with gaining an understanding of:

- a. the role of a governor and,
- b. the framework within which the board operates,

will set you on the road to being an effective governor. As an effective governor, you will:

- Attend regularly (including training events)
- Come well-prepared
- Be ambitious for the College
- Have clarity of your role
- Challenge, test, enquire
- Be a team worker but independent thinker
- Have the needs of the learners at heart
- Champion the College

The Aim for your role, over time, is to:

- know the college and the learners it serves
- know the data, including how different groups of learners perform
- know about the quality of teaching and learning
- know the key strengths and areas for improvement
- know about differences in performance and why
- be able to demonstrate your part in the board's impact in improving quality and standards
- give examples of how you play a part in challenging leaders and managers and how you use the information you receive to do this
- demonstrate how you play a part in strengthening leadership and strategic direction
- demonstrate how you play a part in the board systematically fulfilling its statutory duties



## THE ETHOS OF COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

The Association of Colleges Code of Good Governance 2024 sets out core values that build on the Nolan Seven Principles of Public Life set out below:

**Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity:** Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity:** Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness:** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty:** Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership: Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

The Association of Colleges Code of Good Governance 2024 provides an ethical framework for the personal behaviour of governors. The Code is based on the following expectations of good governance, which illustrate the values and beliefs of college governors and trustees:

Do take a moment to familiarise yourself with the Code as this has been adopted by the Corporation. The Code is not mandatory, but it will give you a basic understanding of the elements of governance that the board is expected to explore.

1. Determination of aims and strategic oversight
2. Responsibility and accountability
3. Leadership and integrity
4. Collaboration and stakeholder engagement
5. Regulatory compliance
6. Board and organisational effectiveness

## THE ROLE OF A COLLEGE GOVERNOR

As set out under the [Instruments and Articles of government](#), the core functions of our corporation board include:

- setting and communicating our college's educational character, strategy and goals
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance and quality of our college, and the performance of staff
- exercising effective control to ensure that funds and assets are protected, and legal obligations are met

College governors have a strategic oversight role, ensuring the College's long-term success by focusing on areas like academic quality, financial performance, and strategic direction. Governors do not manage the College's day to day operations, but rather set the overall direction and hold the executive team accountable.

As well as being a governor, college governors are trustees. Your responsibilities as a trustee are to:

- Ensure our corporation carries out its purpose for the public benefit (included in your [Induction Pack](#))
- Comply with our corporation's governing document and the [law](#)
- Act in our corporation's best interests
- Manage our corporation's resources responsibly

- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure our corporation is accountable

For more information on your responsibilities, you can read the Charity Commission's guide The Essential Trust which is included in your [Induction Pack](#)

## WHAT YOU NEED TO DO ON JOINING THE BOARD

- Provide the Clerk to Governors with your full contact details including your date of birth, telephone number, email and postal address
- Ensure you submitted all the required documents for your membership of the governing body
- Within 14 days of appointment, provide the relevant completed forms and ID for a DBS check to be undertaken
- Make sure you have all the governing board meeting dates in your diary
- Familiarise yourself with the college's safeguarding policy
- **Complete the online Safeguarding and Prevent training via [Skillgate](#) this is statutory and must be completed**
- Complete the ETF Being an Effective Board Member training on line here: [Being an effective board member | Learning | Education and Training Foundation \(etfoundation.co.uk\)](#)
- Complete the Association of Colleges South West Regional Induction Training on line here: [Events | Association of Colleges \(aoc.co.uk\)](#)
- Read, complete, sign (where relevant) and return to Clerk to Governors:
  - Your declaration of interests
  - Letter of Engagement

## SUPPORT AVAILABLE

What the Clerk to Governors will do to support you

- Notify key staff and the Chair to arrange an induction
- Notify key staff to organise a tour of the site/s
- Ask the Chair to assign a governor as a mentor
- Provide you with access to any online [governor portal](#)
- [Provide induction materials](#)

### What your mentor will do to support you

- Provide you with guidance on governor visits protocol and induct you into the programme
- Discuss the college improvement plan and self-evaluation form
- Discuss the latest Ofsted report
- Explain the workings of the governance structure

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT



	ACTIVE PARTICIPATION			
	New governors must be empowered and supported during their first year to enable them to be effective			
Recommended activity	Within one month	Within two months	Within twelve months	Ongoing
Governor led support	College induction – meeting with governance professional, chair and principal	Meeting with governor mentor	Meeting with senior leaders	Meetings with stakeholders
Sector body membership	Signed up to receive training	Attend governor induction and safeguarding training	Attend the annual College Strategy Day	Participate in governor training
Essential reading	College strategic plan	College improvement plan and management accounts	Governance code Recent governance reviews & Board improvement plan Latest Ofsted report	News, advice, and guidance provided by sector outlets
Networking	The governance professional will direct you to online networks, area forums and networking sessions.			