

Macclesfield College
Code of Conduct for Corporation
Members

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Macclesfield College Code of Conduct for Corporation Members

1. INTRODUCTION

This Code is intended as a guide, to indicate the standards of conduct and accountability which are expected of Corporation Members, to enable them to understand their legal and ethical duties and to assist them both in carrying out those duties, and in managing their relationship with the Corporation and Principal as the Chief Executive. This Code is therefore aimed at promoting effective, well-informed and accountable college governance. It is not intended to be a definitive or authoritative statement of the law or good practice.

In addition to this Code, Corporation Members are recommended to familiarise themselves with the source documents listed in **Appendix 1**.

If a Corporation Member is in doubt about the provisions of this Code or any of the source documents, the Director of Governance should be consulted and, if necessary, professional advice should be obtained. Ultimate responsibility for the appropriateness of conduct as a Corporation Member of the College and for any act or omission in that capacity however rests with the individual Corporation Member.

By accepting appointment to the Corporation, each Corporation Member agrees to abide by the provisions of this Code.

Each Corporation Member by accepting the provisions of this Code agrees that any breach of the Code by them may lead to the termination of their appointment as a Member in accordance with clause [10] of the Corporation's Instrument of Government.

This Code applies to every committee or working party of the Corporation and to every subsidiary company or joint venture of the College to which Corporation Members may be appointed.

2. INTERPRETATION

In this Code the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- “**Accountability Agreement**” means the accountability framework document used by the DfE to set out National skills priorities as well as the essential terms and conditions that providers are required to meet in return for funds;
- “**Accountability Statement**” means the annual statement of curriculum target areas required to be signed off by the Corporation as a condition of **receiving** funding;
- “**College**” means this **College**;
- “**College Mission Statement**” means the **statement** [set out/referred to] at **clause 3** of this Code or such other mission statement as may be agreed by the Corporation from time to time;
- “**College Core Values**” means those Core Values set out at **clause 3** of this Code or such other core values as may be agreed by the Corporation from time to time, **for** example in a Public Value Statement;
- “**Corporation**” means the college **corporation** which was established and designated by the Secretary of State for the purpose of conducting the College;
- “**Corporation Member**”, “**Chair**”, “**Principal**” and “**Director of Governance**” mean respectively the Member of the Corporation of the College, the Chair of the Corporation, the Principal/Chief Executive of the College and the Director of Governance of the Corporation;
- “**DfE**” means the Department **for** Education;
- “**ESFA**” means the Education and Skills **Funding** Agency or any successor body;
- “**Secretary of State**” means the Secretary of State for Education.
- “**Standing Orders**” means any standing orders created by the Corporation from time to time.

All other definitions have the same meanings as given in the College's Instrument and Articles of Government. Words importing one gender should be taken to import any gender.

3. AIMS AND VALUES

The College's Mission Statement is 'Empowerment through Learning'.

The College values are:

- Accountability
- Ambition
- Integrity
- Passion
- Respect

The College Mission Statement, the curriculum intent and the corporate objectives of the College agreed by the Corporation from time to time and including those set out in its Accountability Statement, seek to encapsulate the core purposes, and aims of the College. Corporation Members, should have due regard to these purposes and aims [and to the Core Values] when conducting the business of the Corporation and considering the activities and proposed activities of the College.

The Corporation recognises its obligations to all those with whom it and/or the College have dealings, including students, employees, suppliers, other educational institutions, and the wider community. In particular, the Corporation is committed to:

- having close regard to the voice of the learner;
- combating any discrimination within the College on the grounds of the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act") and promoting equality in accordance with its duty under the 2010 Act;
- upholding the principles set out in the College's Student Charter;
- engaging with the community which the College serves in order to understand and meet its needs; and
- observing its duty to take reasonable steps to ensure freedom of speech for members of the College community and visiting speakers and its duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have regard to the need, when exercising its functions, to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

The Corporation is also committed to ensuring that it conducts its business in accordance with the highest ethical standards as set out in more detail in this Code.

4. DUTIES

Corporation Members are in the position of charity trustees and as such owe a fiduciary duty to the College. This means that they should show it the highest loyalty and act in good faith in its best interests. Each Corporation Member should act honestly, diligently and (subject to the provisions appearing in clause 10 of this Code relating to collective responsibility) independently. The actions of Corporation Members should promote and protect the good reputation of the College and the trust and confidence of those with whom it deals.

Decisions taken by Corporation Members at meetings of the Corporation and its committees must not be for any improper purpose or personal motive. Decisions taken must always be for the benefit of the College, its students and staff and other users of the College and must be taken with a view to safeguarding public funds. Accordingly, Corporation Members must not be bound in their speaking and voting by mandates given to them by other bodies or persons (including the bodies that elected them).

Corporation Members must observe the provisions of the College's Instrument and Articles of Government and in particular the duty to give immediate notice to the Director of Governance should they become disqualified from continuing to hold office and also the responsibilities given to the Corporation by the College's Articles of Government. Those responsibilities, including a list of "reserved" responsibilities which are so important that they must not be delegated, are set out in **Appendix 4**.

Corporation Members should comply with the Standing Orders and terms of reference of the Corporation and its committees to ensure that the Corporation conducts itself in an orderly, fair, open, and transparent manner. Corporation Members must keep those Standing Orders and terms of reference under periodic review.

Corporation Members should also have regard to the different, but complementary, responsibilities given to the Principal as the College's Chief Executive. The responsibilities given to the Principal by the College's Articles of Government are set out in **Appendix 4**. Whereas it is the Corporation's function to decide strategic policy and overall

direction and to monitor the performance of the Principal and any other senior post holders, it is the Principal's role to implement the Corporation's decisions, and to manage the College's affairs within the budgets and framework fixed by the Corporation. Corporation Members should work together so that the Corporation and the Principal as Chief Executive perform their respective roles effectively.

Corporation Members should refer to the Director of Governance for advice relating to the governance functions which are set out in **Schedule 4** and have regard to the Director of Governance's independent advisory role.

5. STATUTORY ACCOUNTABILITY

Corporation Members are collectively responsible for observing the duties set out in the Accountability Agreement which the College has entered into with the ESFA as a condition of receiving public funds. A brief summary of the ESFA's funding framework is set out in **Appendix 5**.

From November 2022 colleges were reclassified into the central government sector. This decision had immediate effect. Following the reclassification, colleges (and their subsidiaries) are now part of central government. They continue to be self-governing charities regulated by the Secretary of State, but are now subject to the framework for financial management set out in Managing Public Money (MPM). MPM and its associated guidance sets out requirements for everyone working in central government to manage and deploy public resources responsibly in the public interest.

Although the ESFA is the main provider of funds to the College, Corporation Members should note that they are also responsible for the proper use of income derived from other sources, such as the Office for Students (OfS), and for the control and monitoring of expenditure of such income, in order to meet the requirements of the relevant funding body and public audit. Where funding is received directly from OfS the College will have a funding agreement with OfS, as set out in the OfS's terms and conditions of funding, which confirms the basis on which such funding is provided. Where OfS funding is received indirectly via a collaboration with an OfS funded institution such funding will be subject to obligations contained in the memorandum of co-operation between the College and that institution.

As accounting officer for the ESFA, its Chief Executive is directly responsible and accountable to Parliament for ensuring that the uses to which the ESFA puts its funds are consistent with the purposes for which the funds were given and comply with the conditions attached to them. The Principal, as accounting officer for the College, is also directly responsible and accountable to Parliament, through the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), for the effective stewardship by the College of public funds. The Principal may be required to appear before the PAC, alongside the ESFA's Chief Executive, to give an account of the use made by the College of such funds. The Corporation is accountable to Parliament for ensuring the financial health of the College, and to the Courts for ensuring that the College is conducted in accordance with the Education Acts and the general law.

6. PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES

Public service values are at the heart of the further education service. High standards of personal and corporate conduct, based on the principles set out in **Appendix 2**, and the recognition that students and other users of the College's services come first, are a requirement of being a member and should underpin all decisions taken by the Board.

7. SKILL, CARE AND DILIGENCE

A Corporation Member should in all their work for the College exercise such skill as they possess and such care and diligence as would be expected from a reasonable person in the circumstances. This will be particularly relevant when Corporation Members act as agents of the College, e.g. when functions are delegated to a committee of the Corporation or to the Chair. Corporation Members should be careful to act within the terms of reference of any committees on which they serve.

8. POWERS

Corporation Members are responsible for taking decisions which are within the powers given to the Corporation by Parliament under sections 33E and 33F of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Education Act 2011. A summary of those powers is set out in **Appendix 6**. If a Corporation Member thinks that the Corporation is likely to exceed its powers by taking a particular decision, they should immediately refer the matter to the Director of Governance for advice.

9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Like other persons who owe a fiduciary duty, Corporation Members should seek to avoid putting themselves in a position where there is a conflict (actual or potential) between their personal interests and their duties to the Corporation. They should not allow any conflict of interest to arise which might interfere with the exercise of their independent judgement.

Corporation Members are reminded that under the College's Instrument of Government [and its policy on Conflicts of Interest] and the general law they must disclose to the Corporation any direct or indirect financial interest they have, or may have, in the supply of work to the College or the supply of goods for the purposes of the College, or in

any contract or proposed contract concerning the College, or in any other matter relating to the College or any other interest of a type specified by the Corporation in any matter relating to the College, or any duty which is material and which conflicts or may conflict with the interests of the Corporation.

If an interest of any kind (including an interest of a spouse, partner, or business associate of a Corporation Member or of a close relative of the Corporation Member or their spouse, partner, or business associate) is likely or would, if publicly known, be perceived as being likely to interfere with the exercise of a Corporation Member's independent judgement, then:

- the interest, financial or otherwise, should be reported to the Director of Governance;
- the nature and extent of the interest should be fully disclosed to the Corporation before the matter giving rise to the interest is considered.

If the Corporation Member concerned is present at a meeting of the Corporation, or any of its committees, at which such supply, contract or other matter constituting the interest is to be considered, they should:

- not take part in the consideration or vote on any question with respect to it and shall not be counted in the quorum for that meeting; and
- withdraw from that Corporation or committee meeting where required to do so by a majority of the Members of the Corporation or committee present at the meeting.

Where it is proposed that the Corporation should grant a member a financial interest (such as a contract for the supply of goods or services) the Corporation must observe the requirements of the Charities Act 2011. The Corporation may wish to take legal advice before granting such an interest to a member.

Corporation Members must not receive gifts, hospitality, or benefits of any kind from a third party which might be in breach of the Bribery Act 2010 and the College's anti-bribery policy [and the College's policy on receiving gifts] or be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity. Any offer or receipt of such gifts, hospitality or benefits should immediately be reported to, and recorded by, the Director of Governance.

The Director of Governance will maintain a Register of Corporation Members' Interests which will be open for public inspection. Corporation Members must disclose routinely to the Corporation all business interests, financial or otherwise, which they or persons associated with them may have, and the Director of Governance will enter such interests on the Register. Corporation Members must give sufficient details to allow the nature of the interests to be understood by enquirers. Corporation Members should inform the Director of Governance whenever their circumstances change, and interests are acquired or lost.

For the purposes of this **clause 9** "*close relative*" includes but is not limited to a father, mother, brother, sister, child, grandchild and step-father/mother/brother/sister/child.

If a Corporation Member is in any doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed, they should seek advice from the Director of Governance.

10. COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The Corporation operates by Corporation Members taking majority decisions in a corporate manner at quorate meetings, including meetings held by telephone, via a virtual platform and by alternative methods such as written resolutions, in all cases only if so provided for in the Instrument and Articles. Therefore, a decision of the Corporation, even when it is not unanimous, is a decision taken by the Corporation Members collectively and each individual Corporation Member has a duty to stand by it, whether or not they were present at the meeting of the Corporation when the decision was taken.

If a Corporation Member disagrees with a decision taken by the Corporation, their first duty is to have any disagreement discussed and minuted. If the Corporation Member strongly disagrees, they should consult the Chair and, if necessary, then raise the matter with the Corporation when it next meets. If no meeting is scheduled, the Corporation Member should refer to the power of the Chair or of any [five] Corporation Members under the College's Instrument of Government to call a special meeting and, if appropriate, exercise it, requesting the Director of Governance to circulate the Corporation Member's views in advance to the other Corporation Members. Alternatively, as a final resort, the Corporation Member may decide to offer their resignation from office, after consulting the Chair.

11. OPENNESS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Because of the Corporation's public accountability and the importance of conducting its business openly and transparently, Corporation Members should ensure that, as a general principle, students and staff of the College have free access to information about the proceedings of the Corporation. Accordingly, agendas, minutes and other

papers relating to meetings of the Corporation are normally available for public inspection when they have been approved for publication by the Chair.

There will be occasions when the record of discussions and decisions will not be made available for public inspection; e.g., when the Corporation considers sensitive issues or named individuals and for other good reasons. Such excluded items will be kept in a confidential folder by the Director of Governance, and will be circulated in confidence to Corporation Members save for those Members who have a conflicting interest in the particular sensitive matter. Some confidential items are likely to be of a sensitive nature for a certain period of time only (for example information relating to a proposed commercial transaction or collaboration with another institution). The Corporation should specify how long such items should be treated as confidential or, if this is not possible, such items should be regularly reviewed to consider whether the confidential status should be removed or whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs that confidential status and the item made available for public inspection. The Corporation Members must also consider the personal data that is contained within the excluded items in accordance with the Corporation's obligations under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 ("Data Protection Laws") and whether or not disclosure of that personal data would be in breach of the Data Protection Laws or the rights and freedoms of the individual(s) in question. When considering such issues the Corporation Members must also consider the College's publication scheme issued under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Nothing in this section overrides the College's obligation to disclose in response to a request received under these information law regimes (unless an appropriate exemption applies in each case). [Refer to any College policy on Access to Information, if appropriate].

Staff and student Corporation Members have, however, no right of access to minutes dealing with matters in respect of which they are required to withdraw from meetings under the College's Instrument of Government.

It is important that the Corporation and its committees have full and frank discussions in order to take decisions collectively. To do so, there must be trust between Corporation Members with a shared corporate responsibility for decisions. Corporation Members should keep confidential any matter which, by reason of its nature, the Chair, or members of any committee of the Corporation are satisfied should be dealt with on a confidential basis.

Corporation Members should not make statements to the press or media or at any public meeting relating to the proceedings of the Corporation or its committees without first having obtained the approval of the Chair or, in their absence, the Vice Chair. It is unethical for Corporation Members publicly to criticise, canvass or reveal the views of other Corporation Members which have been expressed at meetings of the Corporation or its committees.

12. COMPLAINTS

In order to ensure that the affairs of the College are conducted in an open and transparent manner and that the College is accountable for its use of public funds but also to its employees, its students, and the community it serves, it is important for there to be appropriate complaints procedures in place and for these to be well publicised. Corporation Members are reminded of their specific responsibility under the Articles of Government to make rules specifying the procedures in accordance with which employees may seek redress of any grievances relating to their employment, of the importance of having formal complaints procedures in place to handle issues raised by students, former students and third parties and of the legal requirement to have a whistleblowing procedure in place.

Students, employers and other third parties have a right to make a complaint to the ESFA in respect of the College or of any of its decisions. Corporation Members in particular are reminded that under the ESFA's procedure for dealing with complaints about post 16 education and training provision funded by the ESFA (November 2018) the ESFA can investigate complaints about:

- quality, management or experience of education and training;
- undue delay or non-compliance with published complaints procedures;
- poor administration;
- the quality of assessments;
- equality and diversity issues (except where there is a more appropriate mechanism for dealing with the matter through the courts or tribunals or other organisations);
- advanced learner loans;
- apprenticeship providers from employers; and
- from employers, parents or other third parties on behalf of apprentice(s).

The ESFA will not investigate complaints about:

- issues that are more than 12 months old (except for exceptional cases related to advanced learner loans);
- examination results, grades, marks, assessment outcomes or curriculum content;
- individual employment issues;
- governor or other voluntary employment issues;
- contractual or commercial disputes or arrangements;
- disputes between an employer and a provider in relation to the apprenticeship levy;
- matters which are the subject of legal action or matters that are better investigated by the police;
- the cancellation or reimbursement of advanced learner loans (which should be referred to the student loan company);
- claims for compensation, a refund of fees or costs incurred when a learner has to transfer to another provider;
- issues classified as serial; or
- allegations of fraud, financial irregularity, whistleblowing and allegations of incentives and inducements (which should be directed to the allegations team); and
- safeguarding concerns.

Complaints made by learners following HE courses in FE colleges are directed to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for HE.

13. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

A high level of attendance at meetings of the Corporation is expected so that Corporation Members can perform their functions properly.

14. GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT

The Corporation shall seek to ensure that all Corporation Members are appointed on merit, in accordance with an open selection procedure carried out by the Corporation's Search Committee, and are drawn widely from the community which the College serves so as to be representative of that community. The Corporation should have regard to the provisions relating to the membership of the Corporation in the College's Instrument of Government, the need to combat discrimination and to promote equality, and the need to make available a range of necessary skills and experience to ensure that the Corporation carries out its functions under the College's Articles of Government.

Corporation Members must obtain a thorough grounding in their duties and responsibilities by participating in the College's governance induction and training programmes, including regular refresher workshops.

In order to promote more effective governance, Corporation Members are required to commission an external review of governance every three years and to carry out an annual review of the performance by the Corporation of its duties and responsibilities, including a review of their own performance as part of a continuing and critical process of self-evaluation.

Appendix 1

List of Source Documents

1. The College's Instrument of Government.
2. The College's Articles of Government.
3. The Standing Orders and terms of reference of the Corporation and its committees.
4. The College's Mission Statement and corporate objectives.
5. The College's Strategic Plan.
6. The College's policies that extend to Corporation members, including the College's policies on equal opportunities and freedom of speech, the anti-bribery policy as required by the Bribery Act 2010, [the College's policy on receiving gifts,] [the College's policy on conflicts of interest,] [the College's policy on safeguarding learners] and the College's policy on preventing people being drawn into terrorism.
7. The principles laid down by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (Nolan Committee) for those holding public office. An extract from the report of the Nolan Committee setting out these Principles in more detail is set out at Schedule 2.
8. The Accountability Agreement (Part 1 accountability framework and Part 2 annual Accountability Statement).
9. The Post 16 Audit Code of Practice issued by the ESFA.
10. Managing Public Money and associated guidance.
11. The AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges as amended from time to time.
12. The Charity Governance Code as amended from time to time.
13. The UK Corporate Governance Code as amended from time to time.
14. The Department for Education's Further education corporations and sixth-form college corporations: governance guide.
15. The Good Governance Standard for Public Services published by the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services (Good Governance Standard). An extract from the Good Governance Standard setting out the six core principles of good governance is set out at Schedule 3.

Appendix 2

The Seven Principles of Public Life

The following is an extract from the Second Report of the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life, May 1996:

SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

INTEGRITY

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Appendix 3

Six Core Principles of Good Governance

The following is an extract from the Good Governance Standard for Public Services published by the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services, January 2005:

- 1. Good governance means focusing on the organisation's purposes and on outcomes for citizens and service users**
 - Being clear about the organisation's purposes and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users;
 - Making sure that users receive a high quality service;
 - Making sure that taxpayers receive value for money.
- 2. Good governance means performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles**
 - Being clear about the functions of the governing body;
 - Being clear about the responsibilities of the non-executives and the executive, and making sure that those responsibilities are carried out;
 - Being clear about relationships between the governors and the public.
- 3. Good governance means promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour**
 - Putting organisational values into practice;
 - Individual governors behaving in ways that uphold and exemplify effective governance.
- 4. Good Governance means taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk**
 - Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken;
 - Having and using good quality information, advice and support;
 - Making sure that an effective risk management systems is in operation.
- 5. Good governance means developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective**
 - Making sure that appointed and elected governors have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well;
 - Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group;
 - Striking a balance, in the membership of the governing body, between continuity and renewal.
- 6. Good governance means engaging stakeholders and making accountability real**
 - Understanding formal and informal accountability relationships;
 - Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with accountability to the public;
 - Taking an active and planned approach to responsibility to staff;
 - Engaging effectively.

Appendix 4

Summary of main responsibilities under the Articles of Government

Corporation Members

- The determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the institution and for oversight of its activities.
- Publishing arrangements for obtaining the views of staff and students on the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the institution and the oversight of its activities.
- Approving the quality strategy of the institution.
- The effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the Corporation and for safeguarding their assets.
- Approving annual estimates of income and expenditure.
- The appointment, grading, suspension, dismissal and determination of the pay and conditions of service of the holders of senior posts and the Director of Governance, including, where the Director of Governance is, or is to be appointed as, a member of staff, the Director of Governance appointment, grading, suspension, dismissal and determination of pay in the capacity as a member of staff.
- Setting a framework for the pay and conditions of service of all other staff.
- Setting the policy by which the tuition and other fees payable to the College are determined (subject to any terms and conditions attached to grants, loans or other payments paid or made by the ESFA).
- Responsibilities which must not be delegated by the Corporation:
 - the determination of the educational character and mission of the institution;
 - the approval of the annual estimates of income and expenditure;
 - the responsibility for ensuring the solvency of the institution and the Corporation and the safeguarding of their assets;
 - the appointment of the Principal or holder of a senior post;
 - the appointment of the Director of Governance (including, where the Director of Governance is, or is to be, appointed as a member of staff the Director of Governance's appointment in the capacity as member of staff);
 - the modifying or revoking of the Articles of Government;
 - the consideration of the case for dismissal, of the Principal, the Director of Governance or the holder of a senior post unless such function is delegated to a committee of Members of the Corporation;
 - the power to determine an appeal in connection with the dismissal of the Principal, the Director of Governance or the holder of a senior post unless such power is delegated to a committee of Members of the Corporation

Principal

- Making proposals to the Corporation about the educational character and mission of the institution, and for implementing the decisions of the Corporation.
- The determination, of the institution's academic activities and the determination of its other activities.
- Preparing annual estimates of income and expenditure, for consideration and approval by the Corporation, and the management of budget and resources within the estimates approved by the Corporation.
- The organisation, direction and management of the institution and leadership of the staff.
- The appointment, assignment, grading, appraisal, suspension, dismissal, and determination, within the framework set by the Corporation, of the pay and conditions of service of staff, other than the holders of senior posts or the Director of Governance, where the Director of Governance is also a member of the staff.
- Maintaining student discipline and, within the rules and procedures provided for within the Articles, suspending or expelling students on disciplinary grounds and expelling students for academic reasons.

Director of Governance

- The operation of the Corporation's powers.
- Procedural matters.
- The conduct of Corporation business.
- Matters of governance practice.

Appendix 5

College Funding Framework

The Skills for Jobs White Paper set out the government's vision to transform further education. This was followed by two funding and accountability consultations which described how the system would be reformed.

Accountability agreements were introduced in 2023 to set out DfE expectations and what colleges will deliver in return for their funding.

Part 1 of the agreement (the accountability framework) replaces the existing, annual, grant funding agreement. It will be used to set out National skills priorities as well as the essential terms and conditions that providers need to meet in return for funds. It also retains the required levers to ensure the effective management and assurance of public funds, the protection of learners as well as requiring sound governance.

One of the stated aims of the new document is to remove complexity and duplication where appropriate, e.g. by avoiding extensive references to policies or legislation where these are contained and published elsewhere.

Colleges should expect to receive information about the content and structure of the revised part 1 in line with the regular business cycle.

According to the DfE the accountability agreement forms part of a wider set of reforms underway to transform the skills system, so it better supports young people and adults to develop the skills they need to get a good job and ensuring a clearer focus on the delivery of outcomes.

Schedule 7 of the accountability agreement sets out relevant governance requirements. Corporation members should familiarise themselves with these arrangements.

Appendix 6

Summary of the statutory powers of the Corporation

1. “Principal Powers”

Under section 33E of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 a sixth form college corporation may:

- provide further and higher education;
- provide secondary education suitable to the requirements of persons who have attained the age of 14 years, or provide secondary education or participate in the provision of secondary education at a school (subject to the consultation with the appropriate local education authority); and
- supply goods or services in connection with their provision of education.

2. “Supplementary Powers”

Under section 33F of the 1992 Act as amended the Corporation may do anything which appears to it to be necessary or expedient for the purpose of or in connection with the exercise of any of the principal powers conferred by section 33E of the Act, including in particular the following:

- the power to acquire and dispose of land and other property;
- the power to enter into contracts, including in particular:
 - contracts for the employment of teachers and other staff for the purposes of or in connection with carrying on any activities undertaken in the exercise of the Corporation’s principal powers; and
 - contracts with respect to the carrying on by the Corporation of any such activities;
- the power to form, participate in forming or invest in a company or become a member of a charitable incorporated organisation.
- the power to borrow such sums as the Corporation thinks fit for the purposes of carrying on any activities it has power to carry on or to meet any liability transferred to it under sections 23 to 27 of the 1992 Act (i.e. when the College achieved its corporate independence on 1 April 1993) and, in connection with such borrowing, the power to grant any mortgage, charge or other security in respect of any land or other property of the Corporation;
- power to invest any sums not immediately required for the purposes of carrying on any activities the Corporation has power to carry on;
- power to accept gifts of money, land or other property and apply it, or hold and administer it on trust for, any of those purposes;
- power to do anything incidental to the conduct of an educational institution providing further or higher education, including founding scholarships or exhibitions, making grants and giving prizes; and
- provide advice or assistance to any other person where it appears to the Corporation to be appropriate for them to do so for the purpose of or in connection with the provision of education by the other person.

The Corporation may also provide facilities of any description (including boarding accommodation and recreational facilities for students and staff and facilities to meet the needs of students having learning difficulties) which appear to be necessary or desirable for the purposes of or in connection with the carrying on of the principal powers.

Summary of key changes from previous edition

| Provision | Change |
|--|--|
| Clause 1 - Introduction | Replacement of "Clerk" with "Director of Governance" (throughout). |
| Clause 2 - Interpretation | Definitions added: "Accountability Agreement"; "Accountability Statement"; "Standing Orders". |
| Clause 3 - Aims and Values | Added reference to Accountability Statement in para 3. |
| Clause 5 - Statutory Accountability | New paragraph added re ONS reclassification. |
| Clause 6 - Public Service Values | Removal of reference to colleges being classified as part of the private not for profit sector (following ONS reclassification). |
| Clause 9 - Conflicts of Interest | Reordering of paragraphs. Addition of reference to seeking advice from the Director of Governance if a member is in any doubt about whether an interest should be disclosed. |
| Clause 12 - Complaints | Removal of reference to ESFA Conditions of Funding Agreement in second paragraph. |
| Clause 14- Governance Development | Added reference to external reviews of governance in final paragraph. |
| Schedule 1 – List of Source Documents | Removal of reference to Conditions of Funding Agreement. Add references to: Accountability Agreement; Managing Public Money; OfS memorandum of co-operation. |
| Schedule 5 – Funding Framework | Revised commentary to reflect introduction of Accountability Agreements. |