

West Suffolk College

Role Description and Person Specification for Chair of the Corporation

Role Description

The Corporation has legal oversight of the College, including responsibility for meeting statutory requirements and reporting to the Department for Education (DfE), Companies House and the Charity Commission.

The Corporation also has strategic oversight of the College, ensuring that ambitious strategic goals are set and worked towards effectively.

The Corporation works in collaboration with the CEO and Executive to make decisions on key issues, offering support and challenge as part of this.

The Corporation also acts as a point of escalation for internal and external stakeholders, for example any complaints or grievances.

The Chair is responsible for guiding the effective working of the Corporation, ensuring that Governors consider decisions objectively and seek to reach consensus where possible.

The Chair oversees decision-making processes that include ensuring that the Corporation is quorate and a simple majority of votes are passed for any substantive decisions to be formally agreed.

The Chair may also exercise a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

Chair responsibilities

- Ensuring the effective functioning of your board
- Setting expectations for high standards of governance
- Providing leadership and direction, and keeping it focused on its core functions
- Ensuring all governance members understand what is expected of them, and receive appropriate induction, training and development
- Ensuring that student governors are supported and engaged
- Conducting reviews with governance members and addressing any attendance or other issues which arise
- Leading the recruitment and performance management of the CEO and the Governance Professional
- Being the main conduit for communication between governance members and the CEO
- Building effective relations with the CEO, the Governance Professional and the Senior Executive Team
- Champion positive board behaviours by creating the right conditions where governance members:
 - feel comfortable questioning or challenging decisions
 - actively contribute skills and experience
 - participate constructively in meetings, whether face-to-face or virtual
 - feel included and valued and are motivated to remain for their full-term

The Chair must exemplify the following characteristics expected of all Board members:

- To uphold the Corporation's values and adhere to core principles of decision-making;
- To comply with all applicable terms of reference and laws;
- To follow education, charity and company law duties as exemplified in the College's Instrument and Articles of Government;
- To make sufficient time available to exercise their duties;
- To follow up promptly on all actions and requests;
- To offer support and challenge to the CEO and Executive team;
- To support risk management, safeguarding and data protection;
- To use appropriate channels for communication and data sharing;
- To promote and support the College externally;
- To share resources and opportunities from within their network.

In addition, the Chair is asked to commit to the following:

- To provide leadership of the College and the Corporation, including acting as an external ambassador and champion for the College;
- To ensure that all Governors uphold their key responsibilities;
- To ensure that Governors collectively provide the experience, knowledge and skills required to govern the College effectively;
- To ensure that the composition of the Corporation is fulfilled (including nomination, induction, appraisal and end-of-term processes) and lead on long-term succession planning;
- To act as a point of escalation for internal and external matters as required, including resolving disputes, conflicts and complaints;
- To Chair meetings and oversee other governance processes in line with the College's governing documents and any relevant terms of reference;
- To work closely with the CEO to develop board-level strategy, decision making and operational effectiveness;
- To develop a strong and constructive working relationship with the CEO, as well as the Executive where applicable;
- To encourage regular self-evaluation by the Corporation including inviting external reviews of governance at periodic intervals;
- To build strong relationships with the Vice-Chair(s) and Chairs of the Corporation's Committees.

As well as the general experience, knowledge and skills expected of all Governors, the Chair is expected to demonstrate the following:

- Significant experience of leadership and management, in line with the scale and ambition of the College;
- The experience, gravitas and relationship skills to inspire confidence in internal and external stakeholders;
- Tact, diplomacy and the ability to resolve challenging issues, including disputes, conflicts and complaints;
- Experience of governance, including financial management, risk management and safeguarding;
- Experience of managing governance processes, including shaping the agenda, chairing meetings, ensuring actions are followed up, hosting events.