

SWINDON COLLEGE: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Title:	Governing Body Self Assessment and Quality Improvement Planning
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1. Objectives

- 1.1 To provide guidance to the Governing Body in the conduct of its annual performance assessment, review and future planning.
- 1.2 To ensure that governance self assessment and quality improvement planning are seen as important aspects of 'good governance' and, therefore, as an end in themselves but also to demonstrate the Governing Body's commitment to the College's annual cycle of self assessment and improvement planning.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The requirement for colleges to undertake a detailed self-assessment was, initially, in preparation for 4-yearly inspection (Ofsted) but developed into an annual process as required by the LSC. Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework (CIF) is the basis of college self-assessment. The CIF is structured around 5 key questions (KQs), KQ5 being: 'How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners'?
- 2.2 The Governing Body and all its committees will undertake an annual self assessment of their performance, key outcomes of which will be a performance grade and short commentary on the performance of the Governing Body for inclusion in the Leadership and Management section of the College's annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR), an improvement plan for the next academic year and a governor training plan.
- 2.3 In addition to the annual review, the Governing Body and its committees will also carry out formative reviews of their performance at the conclusion of all meetings.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The chair of the Governing Body and the chairs of all committees will ensure that the annual and in-year reviews will be conducted.
- 3.2 The Search and Governance Committee is responsible for overseeing this aspect of 'good governance', reporting as necessary to the Governing Body on process and procedure.
- 3.3 However, the Governing Body might ask the chairs of its committees to meet to review evidence of the Governing Body's strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement and report back to the Board.
- 3.4 Finally, the Governing Body might ask, from time to time, a working group of governors to conduct a formative review of aspects of governance and report back via the Search and Governance Committee or directly to the Board with its findings and recommendations. This evidence would be taken into account in the summative self-assessment.

4. The Procedure

THE GOVERNING BODY

- 4.1 The Search and Governance Committee, on behalf of the Governing Body, or a designated group such as the Chairs of Committees, carries out an annual assessment of the performance of the Governing Body at a designated meeting(s) either in the final term of the academic year or early in the first term of the new academic year. The findings are then presented to a subsequent full board meeting, at which a performance grade is agreed.
- 4.2 The Ofsted Common Inspection Framework is used as the basis of this process. The specific challenge for Governing Bodies within Ofsted's KQ5 is: 'The effectiveness with which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities'. In seeking evidence of their effectiveness, Ofsted inspectors are asked to focus on:
 - 'how well the governors direct the college, measure its performance and require improvements'.

This might be summed up in one word which is very important to Ofsted, namely 'impact'. Inspectors also look at:

- how well informed governors are about the college
- whether they recognise the college's and their own strengths and areas for improvement
- whether the membership reflects the gender and ethnic profile of the local community and student body
- how effectively the governors address key issues facing the college, in particular the appointment and removal of senior post holders.

4.3 Not part of the LSC/Ofsted regulatory framework, but a useful national standard, is the 'Good Governance Standard for Public Services' which identifies 6 broad standards against which to assess performance:

- focusing on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for citizens and service users
- performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles
- promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour
- taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk
- developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective
- engaging stakeholders and making accountability real.

4.4 The Search and Governance Committee or Chairs' Committee have these overarching quality frameworks to work within when assessing the performance of the Governing Body. In determining exactly how to measure and grade performance, there is a fairly well-established broad process which most College Governing Bodies adopt, which is set out below, but there is scope for local innovation and preferences.

- Obtain the individual views of governors via a self-assessment questionnaire, which is likely to be based on the original 'Governance Health Check'
- Review the outcomes of the previous year's quality improvement plan. A mid-year review is good practice
- Measure performance against other objectives/targets/KPIs which were agreed for the previous year
- Review the outcomes of the annual update of the LSC's Self-Assessment Review Questionnaire (SARQ)
- Assess performance against the KQ5 criteria and the Good Governance Standard
- Summate the evidence of 1-4 above into a Strengths and Areas for Improvement assessment – last year's is in annex A
- Award a grade, using Ofsted's rating scale of 1-4.

GOVERNING BODY COMMITTEES

- 4.5 Committees will conduct an annual review of performance measured against their terms of reference. Terms of reference are reviewed annually and updated as necessary. Committees will determine their own plans of action to improve performance. Such plans may include the need for further training for members.
- 4.6 Committees carry out formative reviews of the conduct and outcomes of each meeting held. These lead to the immediate identification of areas for improvement.

INDIVIDUAL GOVERNORS

- 4.7 Each governor is asked to complete annually a written self-assessment of his/her individual performance. This can be completed anonymously. The completed forms are given to the clerk who uses them when constructing the draft annual Training Plan for review by the Search and Governance Committee. Governors are encouraged to set personal development plans and to keep a simple 'development journal' as a record of development issues which arise during the year that require action. Governors are also asked to keep a record of their attendance at College events, in addition to Governing Body/Committee meetings.