



## **Governor Recruitment & Succession Policy**

**Policy Area:** Governance

**Policy Lead:** Director of Governance

**Approved By:** Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee

**Date of Approval:** May 2023

## 1. Context

Ensuring an appropriate board membership is a core element of effective governance. The Code of Good Governance for English Colleges sets out the expectation for a formal policy regarding the recruitment of Board members.

The adoption of such a policy is required to ensure that the composition of the Board has the appropriate diversity of skills, experience and backgrounds to provide strong governance; and to identify any need for new members with particular skills.

As such, this policy applies to all Governors and Co-opted Members.

## 2. Policy Statement

The East Sussex College Group aims to ensure a balance between refreshing its membership and maintaining experience, knowledge and skills to have the right people in place to fulfil the organisation's strategy and goals. The Board will keep its recruitment, membership and succession planning under regular review for these purposes.

As part of the East Sussex College Group vision to be the learning provider of choice, the ESCG Board is committed to reflecting the diversity of people and communities that the college serves. This is to ensure it has the breadth of insight and experience needed to govern a genuinely inclusive and prosperous organisation. As part of the Board's Recruitment and Succession Planning Policy, Governors will be drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, with an appropriate balance of skills, gender, race and ethnicity, age, disability, religion and sexual orientation sought.

East Sussex College Group is committed to forward planning and ensuring, by effective succession planning, that it retains an effective functioning Board to ensure continuity of leadership of the highest quality.

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

## 3. Governor Recruitment, Selection & Assessment

- The Director of Governance will maintain a Board Composition Register that provides details of current membership, including categories of membership and terms of office. This will be used to ensure that any vacancies that arise from a Governor's term of office expiring, will be reported to the Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee in a timely manner.
- A member may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to the Director of Governance. All Governors will be encouraged during the induction and onboarding process to provide timely notice at the point of resignation, so that vacancies may be reported promptly to the Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee.
- The Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee will routinely review the membership position, vacancies and any future dates at which there may be significant changes, such as Chair/Vice-Chair(s) of the Board and Committee Chairs.

- A file will be maintained of CVs/application forms for potential governor candidates, which will include details of individual skills, experience, offices held and any other relevant information.
- All Governors will be asked to complete a Skills Audit as part of the application process, with a view for this to be refreshed on an annual basis. The Director of Governance will use this information to undertake an analysis of the balance of skills on the Board.
- The Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee will be provided with the latest Skills Audit analysis results so that they may match the skills and experience of candidates, as set out in their application forms, to any skills gaps that may exist on the Board at the time of a particular vacancy.
- The Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee will carefully consider the skills, experience, background and personal characteristics of each applicant when filling vacancies on the Board. Consideration will be given to identifying potential future leaders from within the ESCG Board membership, as well as the possibility of leveraging new recruitment campaign to fill a future leadership vacancy.
- The Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee will pursue possibilities for new Governors based on this needs assessment. Personal contacts, advertising, approaches to professional, 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 Governance, Performance & Reputation 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 Board, 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 available within in the [Member Vacancy News](#) section of the college website. Similar information will also be shared with anyone interested in becoming a Governor.
- Anyone interested in joining the ESCG Board as an Independent Governor or joining a committee as a Co-opted Member, will be asked to submit an expression of interest form.
- All expressions of interest should be assessed by at least three members of the Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee (including the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Committee). The Director of Governance will support this process.
- Interviews for Independent Governors will be led by a panel comprising three members of the Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee, supported by the Director of Governance. Any appointments are subject to approval by the ESCG Board.
- An individual may not be appointed to the ESCG Board if they would be ineligible for membership of the ESCG Board under the Instrument & Articles of Government. Members shall be required to declare their eligibility in a form prescribed by the Director of Governance.

- Interviews for Co-opted Members will be called by a panel comprising the Committee Chair and the Lead Officer of the Committee. They should nominate suitable members of the Committee as required. Appointments are subject to approval by the ESCG Board.
- Arrangements for Staff Governor and Student Governor elections are set out in Section 5.2 of the East Sussex College Group Standing Orders.

#### 4. Induction

- All new Governors will be provided with a comprehensive induction and onboarding process, led by Director of Governance. Arrangements may be made for separate introductory meetings with the ESCG Chair, the CEO & Principal and other members of the Executive Team, as appropriate.
- Further specific induction training will be provided to Staff and Student Governors, tailored to their needs.
- A new Governor will be asked if they wish to have a named Governor who will be available as a mentor to give peer support for their first year. Student Governors will always be mentored by an existing Governor, as well as supported by the Director of Governance.
- New Governors will be offered the opportunity to have a six-month review meeting or telephone discussion with the ESCG Chair.
- Further details of the Governor induction process, may be found within the [Governor Induction Booklet](#), which is available on Diligent Boards (governor resource portal). Further details of governor mentoring support may be found in the [New Governor Mentoring Policy](#), which is also available on Diligent Boards.

#### 5. Training & Development

- The annual Skills Audit results will be utilised to identify any potential opportunities for governor learning and development.
- Governors will also be asked to consider their training requirements as part of the annual appraisal programme. Feedback will be evaluated and used to inform the annual programme of training and events.
- An annual programme of activities for Governor training will be prepared by the Director of Governance, in consultation with the Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee, with a view for this to be agreed by the ESCG Board.
- Governors are encouraged to attend and engage in college activities and events, to increase their knowledge of the College and its work. Regular information on such will routinely be shared by the Director of Governance.
- Led by the Director of Governance, the Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee shall discuss the value for money of individual external events, seminars and other training and development activities. Arrangements will be made for attendance and travel by the Director of Governance, as appropriate.

- The Director of Governance will disseminate learning and development opportunities, relevant sector briefings and information from external organisations including the Association of Colleges (AoC), Education & Training Foundation (ETF) and Government agencies.

## **6. Succession Planning & Business Continuity**

- The Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee will consider succession planning at every meeting.
- The expiry dates of terms of office of existing Governors are staggered to assist in effective succession planning, and to reduce the number of forthcoming vacancies at any given time.
- The Standing Orders limit the number of consecutive terms of office that a Governor may undertake. This ensures that independence is maintained, and assists in the aim of having a balance of new and experienced Governors in the Board's membership.
- The Standing Orders also defines the nomination and election process for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair(s).
- A Governor may at any time resign his/her office by notice of writing to the Director of Governance.
- Where a future committee chairing vacancy has been identified, opportunities for shadowing/mentoring a prospective future Chair will be considered, to support their development and knowledge sharing before an office is taken up.
- The Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee will keep under review the membership of the Board, including the composition of Committees. Recommendations will be submitted to the ESCG Board accordingly.
- An extraordinary meeting of the Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee will be convened by the Chair of the Committee (or in their absence the Committee Vice-Chair), 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 ESCG Board will collectively undertake an annual self-assessment, which will include an assessment of Board and Committee effectiveness. As part of this assessment, any succession issues and activity to address them will be identified.
- Each Governor will annually participate in an appraisal meeting with the Chair of the Board. The meeting will include an opportunity to identify any development needs, consideration of their aspirations as a Governor and what additional support may be useful. Individual outcomes will be used to contribute to the annual ESCG Board self-assessment.