

## GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PROSPECTIVE STAFF CORPORATION MEMBERS (GOVERNORS)

### BACKGROUND : CORPORATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Further education colleges are incorporated bodies which are each controlled by a corporation (also referred to as a governing body or board of governors). A corporation is a collective, strategic decision-making body whose key non-delegable article responsibilities are:

- determining the educational character and mission of the college
- overseeing college activities
- approving the college's quality strategy
- ensuring the effective and efficient use of college's resources, the solvency of the college and the safeguarding of its assets
- the appointment, pay and conditions of senior post holders and the clerk
- setting a framework for the pay and conditions of all other staff

Corporations operate within the terms of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and under the Instrument and Articles of Government, the Financial Memorandum and other legal and funding requirements as well as Best Practice guidelines.

The Corporation of Yeovil College has a determined membership of 17 Governors all of who are unpaid volunteers in respect of their Corporation roles and who are recruited from the communities which the College serves. Public information on the Corporation's work (including minutes of its meetings) is available on the College website ([www.yeovil.ac.uk](http://www.yeovil.ac.uk)) and can also be requested directly from the Clerk. (email: [lily.garth@yeovil.ac.uk](mailto:lily.garth@yeovil.ac.uk), phone 01935 845533)

The Corporation is assisted in the discharge of its work by the Clerk to the Corporation. The Corporation also works closely with the College Principal (who is both the Chief Executive of the College and an Ex-Officio Corporation Member), other Senior Post Holders and a range of College Managers and Staff.

### CONDUCT

Corporation Members are required to abide by the *Code of Conduct* for Corporation Members. The Code includes the seven principles of public life set out in the second report of the *Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life*, which recommends that Corporations act with: -

**Selflessness** - taking decisions solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity** - acting without obligation or influence to outside individuals/organisations.

**Objectivity** - taking decisions on merit.

**Accountability** - being accountable for decisions and subsequent public scrutiny.

**Openness** - being as open as possible and giving reasons for decisions.

**Honesty** - declaring private interests and avoiding conflicts of interest.

**Leadership** - promoting and supporting principles by leadership and example.

Corporation Members nominated by particular groups are not permitted to speak or vote at meetings as if delegated by the group they represent. No Corporation Member is to be bound by a mandate given to him or her. Corporation Members are required to take a view on each matter before them and reach a decision based on the merits of the issue. Corporation Members have collective responsibility and should therefore support all Corporation decisions once they have been reached. No individual Corporation Member has the authority to speak or act on the Corporation's behalf unless specifically delegated to do so.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All Corporation Members have to fulfil basic eligibility criteria. Persons who within specific time periods have had certain criminal convictions, have been bankrupted or entered into arrangements with creditors, or have previously been removed from office as Governors may not be eligible for appointment (see separate notes or contact the Clerk for more details).

All Members are required to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check in order to be appointed to the Corporation. As all staff undergo a CRB check prior to employment at the College, it will not usually be necessary to carry out an additional check in respect of appointment to the Corporation. The College follows the CRB Code of Practice.

The Corporation operates a Register of Interests which Corporation Members are legally required to complete. The Register is open to public inspection and must be updated annually.

Members must immediately inform the Clerk if they are disqualified from Membership or if their interests alter.

## **THE APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF STAFF CORPORATION MEMBERS**

Under English law, the Corporation must appoint Staff Corporation Members on the basis of its agreed election criteria. There are certain circumstances in which the Corporation and/or the Learning and Skills Council have the power to remove any Corporation Member (including Staff) from office. Removal from office as a Corporation Member does not affect a member of Staff in relation to his or her contract of employment.

## **STATUTORY REGULATIONS REGARDING STAFF CORPORATION MEMBERS**

The Statutory Instrument provides for the exclusion of Staff Members where certain confidential staff matters are being discussed. Guidance on these situations is available from the Clerk.

## **ROLE DESCRIPTION : STAFF CORPORATION MEMBER**

In order to assist the Corporation with discharging its responsibilities each Staff Governor will:

<b>1.</b>	Comply with the provisions of the following documents as they apply to the role of members of the Corporation and Corporation Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All relevant Acts of Parliament</li> <li>▪ Instrument and Articles of Government</li> <li>▪ Financial Memorandum</li> <li>▪ Standing Orders</li> <li>▪ Code of Conduct</li> <li>▪ Committee Terms of Reference</li> <li>▪ Additional Guidelines which the Corporation may agree from time to time</li> </ul>
<b>2.</b>	Participate in the work of the Corporation by attending its meetings and serving on those Committees and working parties to which that Member is appointed, with due regard to the time commitment and current minimum attendance target of 70%.
<b>3.</b>	Act in the best interests of the Corporation.
<b>4.</b>	Act as an ambassador for the College.
<b>5.</b>	Support decisions of the Corporation once they have been reached.
<b>6.</b>	Participate in Corporation self-assessment activities.
<b>7.</b>	Attend College events in order to gain a wider appreciation of the work of the College and to meet students and other staff.
<b>8.</b>	Actively seek to develop and maintain expertise by participating in appropriate training and development events.
<b>9.</b>	Be a Member of at least one Committee.
<b>10.</b>	Give additional assistance as may reasonably be requested by the Corporation Chair.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION : CORPORATION MEMBER

Corporation members must possess:

1.	The ability to work co-operatively and positively with others, to motivate and inspire, to express ideas clearly, listen actively to others, come to collective agreement and ensure that strategies can be monitored and implemented
2.	The ability to attend meetings. <i>[On average there are 8 Corporation meetings and 3 Committee meetings (usually held on Wednesday evenings between 5.00-7.00pm, but occasionally during the daytime or on a different evening), and 2 strategic awaydays per year.]</i>
3.	The ability and willingness to prepare for meetings by reading papers in advance (papers are usually dispatched 7 days prior to the relevant meeting)
4.	The ability to establish an effective course of action for self and others to achieve established performance targets
5.	The ability to make reasoned decisions and to act honestly, diligently and in good faith
6.	A commitment to contribute to the life and well-being of the College and its communities
7.	An active interest in further and higher education
8.	A commitment to equality of opportunity
9.	A commitment to raising social and educational standards
10.	An understanding of the different role of Governors and Managers (Governors do not get involved in the day-to-day operation of the College)
11.	In addition to Corporation and Committee meetings, the ability to liaise termly with curriculum or departmental link managers to gain an understanding of the curriculum offer, quality and learner experience

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Corporation Members have access to training and development opportunities to assist them in understanding and fulfilling their duties. In addition to an annual training needs analysis and action plan, Members are encouraged to request (via the Clerk) training and support as appropriate.

## ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES

Corporation Members are not paid for carrying out their duties. Corporation Members may claim expenses for travelling and subsistence associated with attendance at meetings, training events and conferences.

## PERSONAL LIABILITY

In principle, Corporation Members are not liable for the debts of the College, but the question of personal liability has not been fully tested. It is generally the case that provided Corporation Members act honestly, in good faith and understand fully their duties and responsibilities, the risks of personal liability arising will be extremely small. The College currently has Corporation Members' Indemnity cover included within the College's insurance provision.

If you have any queries about these guidance notes, please contact the Clerk:  
phone: 01935 845533, email: [lily.garth@yeovil.ac.uk](mailto:lily.garth@yeovil.ac.uk).