



Nescot External Review of Governance 2023-24

In accordance with the [DfE Colleges Governance Guide](#) and, in particular, the requirement for regular governance reviews, including triennial external reviews, an external review of governance was carried out by Governance4FE during the 2023-24 academic year. The Guide also requires Corporations to publish a summary of the review on the College website.

The review commenced in March 2024 and the report and recommendations were presented to the Corporation at their meeting on 5th July 2024. The review included observation of a Committee and Corporation meeting, feedback from a questionnaire shared with Governors and Senior Leadership, and meetings with individual Governors and members of staff.

The Board and Senior Leadership welcomed the recommendations set out in the report and these have formed the basis of an action plan. Many of the actions have already been addressed and the rest are underway. Progress has been and will continue to be reported termly to the Search & Governance Committee.

The summary of the Board's effectiveness and governance maturity across the five main areas is set out below:

GOVERNANCE ROLES & STRUCTURES

The effectiveness of the Board is demonstrated by clear delegation, robust financial oversight, comprehensive oversight of organisational strengths and weaknesses, and improving reporting, leading to informed strategic decisions.

Greater effectiveness could be driven by having an annual discussion between the Board and executives to align expectations and priority areas of board focus.

Governors need more clarity on the curriculum rationale and the quality of education measurements, requiring deeper engagement and further training.

Meetings are productive and could benefit from more focused reporting and clearer governor requests to avoid information overload.

Establishing a formal link governor scheme could enhance oversight.

RELATIONSHIPS

Behavioural governance is effective, with regular opportunities for governor development and an appreciative relationship between the Board and the Executive.

However, a structured Board Development Plan is needed to track progress and impact, aligning with new annual reporting requirements.

In stakeholder engagement, the Board effectively incorporates stakeholder input and student perspectives into decision-making. Strengthening this could involve consistently detailing stakeholder considerations in decision papers and increasing engagement with students outside meetings.

ENABLING

Board members offer constructive criticism, which senior leaders receive positively.

To enhance effectiveness, implementing a formal link governor visit scheme is recommended. This would deepen governors' understanding of college operations, boost staff morale, improve board reporting on key issues like EDI and Safeguarding, and facilitate direct communication with staff about well-being and workload.

For impactful decision-making, the Board effectively discusses different options and values diverse input. Governance self-assessments should incorporate Executive feedback to better evaluate the Board's impact and benefit to the Executive.

ALIGNMENT

The Board effectively contributes to setting the College's vision, values, and ethos, ensuring a clear understanding of strategic priorities and major risks. To strengthen this, governors need better insight into how these values and culture are embedded.

To enhance strategic focus, reports should explicitly connect to strategic objectives and should also include authors' professional insights to foster meaningful strategic discussions rather than delving into operational details.

TEAM

The Board demonstrates commitment to governance improvement through annual self-assessments and skills reviews. However, an annual gap analysis matched to the risk register and strategic plan is recommended to ensure the Board's composition aligns with strategic needs.

A formal succession plan for governors and senior leaders should be implemented to mitigate risk.

Chairs work hard to promote inclusion at meetings, and this could be enhanced by having EDI principles integrated into the appointment process, with progress reporting.

For further information, please contact governance@nescot.ac.uk