

Governing Board Skills Audit 2019 version

For governors, trustees of single academy trusts and academy committee members

Why this is important

The governance handbook 2019 says that boards should identify the skills they need having regard to the department's Competency framework for governance published in 2017 that sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for effective governance. This skills audit is a useful way of assessing the needs of your governing board to inform recruitment, succession planning and the training that governors/trustees require.

Format and structure of the skills audit

This skills audit is based on the six features of effective governance that are referred to in the competency framework and additional skills and competences required that enable a positive contribution to the board. It does not attempt to replicate all 200 plus competencies that are listed in the framework.

The skills audit is based on the principle that governing boards are best placed themselves to individually assess which areas outlined in the framework are most important for them. Therefore it combines the core aspects of the framework with the priceless experience and feedback of our members to inform the skills, experiences and knowledge included.

The skills audit does not ask potential or serving governors or trustees to rate their commitment to their, school, its ethos, vision and to improving education and welfare for all pupils. Nor does it ask them to evaluate their willingness to devote time and enthusiasm to the role. It is assumed that this has been established from the outset.

Trustees of multi academy trusts should use the version of the skills audit that has been produced for them, which can be accessed via this link.

How to use it

Each area should be rated on a scale of 1-5, with 1 indicating no experience or knowledge in this area, and 5 indicating strong expertise. A skills matrix in which responses can be collated can be found on the NGA website.

See our guidance for governing boards on making the best use of skills audits.

The skills and knowledge sought are those which enable governors to ask the right questions, analyse data and have focussed discussions which create robust accountability for school leaders.

No individual is going to have all the skills listed in the audit. The governing board is a team, and the purpose of the audit is to ensure that each skill below is covered by at least one of the governors/trustees around the table.



Governors, trustees and academy committee members of single schools Knowledge, experience, skills and behaviours	Level of knowledge or skills/behaviour, rate on scale of:				
	No	→	→	→	Yes
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Strategic leadership					
Experience of being a governor/trustee in another school or being a board member in another sector.			x		
Experience of chairing a board/governing board or committee.				x	
Awareness of the key aspects of national education policy e.g. school funding, curriculum, teaching, learning etc. and education locally e.g. the types of school, local education issues etc.			x		
Knowledge and or experience of the community served by the school that can be useful to the board.				x	
Experience of strategic planning and translating a vision into clear objectives.					x
Experience of engaging and working with stakeholders (e.g. parents, community groups, local business etc.) within or outside of the school sector.				x	
Understand the principles of risk management and how to prioritise, assess and mitigate against risks.			x		
Experience and or involvement in change management activities e.g. planning a re-structure or reorganisation.					x
2. Accountability					
Experience of working with leaders to establish expectations for improvement, outcomes and of how progress is to be reported.				x	
Knowledge of the elements that make up a broad and balanced school curriculum and how the attainment and progress of pupils is assessed and measured.		x			
Ability to interpret data and statistics presented in a range of formats relating to the progress and outcomes achieved by pupils and using it to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for development.			x		
Ability and confidence to ask questions and challenge leaders in an appropriate way on matters relating to the educational outcomes, behaviour, welfare and wellbeing of all pupils.					x
General experience of financial planning, monitoring, decision making, compliance and control.		x			
Experience of financial planning, monitoring, decision making, compliance and control within the school sector.		x			
General experience of human resource (HR) policy and processes outside of the school sector.				x	
Experience of human resource (HR) policy and processes within the school sector.			x		
General experience of preparing for and responding to inspection and oversight.			x		
Experience of inspection and oversight within the schools sector.		x			



3. People					
Ability to listen, reflect and learn from a range of viewpoints and consider impartial advice before reaching my own view.					x
Capable of working alongside and of building strong, collaborative relationships with a range of personalities.					x
The skills, tact and diplomacy required when discussing issues that are of a sensitive nature and are used to bring people together in adversarial situations.					x
4. Structures					
Clear and practical understanding of what the strategic role of a governing board is and how it is different from the management responsibilities that are carried out by the headteachers and senior leaders in the school.		x			
Experience of reviewing governance structures.	x				
5. Compliance					
Experience of complying with legal, regulatory and financial frameworks and statutory guidance.	x				
Working knowledge of the legal duties and responsibilities of a governor e.g. in relation to the safeguarding of children and in respect of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).		x			
Understand the importance of adhering to organisation policies e.g. on parental complaints or staff-discipline issues.		x			
6. Evaluation					
Have experienced the process of evaluating the working practices of a team and of applying the learning to make improvements.					x
7. Positive contribution					
Aware of my strengths, weaknesses and am committed to personal development.					x
Able to work as part of a team and build positive working relationships with different personality types.					x
Honest, transparent and act with integrity.					x
The ability and confidence to speak up when I have concerns e.g. about non-compliance.					x

Existing governors/trustees only

What contribution do you feel you have made to the governing board over the past year?



Please give brief details of courses you have undertaken in the past year - include governor/trustee training, work based training/development and/or any other development/training activities.

Are there any additional areas of the governing board's responsibilities to which you would like to contribute in the future?