**THE SOCIETAS TRUST**

**Governance Leadership, Skills and Knowledge Audit**

**The Societas Trust is passionate about fostering and developing a professional community where everyone is actively encouraged and supported to enhance and build upon their professional knowledge and skills. In order to achieve this, it is important that we have a clear picture of our governors and their current expertise.**

**Key Strategic Intention:**

*Extend the capacity (skills and ability) of leaders, so that by summer 2021 they all have the drive and ambition necessary to fulfil their role; can monitor, evaluate, diagnose and improve the areas for which they are responsible; can lead by example; and can manage and deploy resources effectively. This is to be achieved, among several other initiative, through participating in peer-to-peer, coaching and mentoring, and collaborative governance training.*

**Purpose**

The audit is designed to assess knowledge, skills and experience on 4 levels and is based on the framework of the NGA Skills Audits and various frameworks published by the ICSA; all of which is freely available. The audit is designed as a checklist but to assess understanding and identify areas where perhaps trustees need additional support or where there is wider opportunity for knowledge sharing. It is not a trustee job description.

The audit, which is multi-dimensional in respect of the fact that it does not discriminate between the various roles (members, directors and local governors) is designed to support development and understanding about individual roles and board development needs across the Trust.

Para 1.3 of the Governance Handbook 2017 states

*Boards should carry out regular audits of the skills they possess in the light of the skills and competences they need, taking account of the department’s Competency framework for governance, and actively seek to address any gaps they identify – through either recruitment or training.*

It does not however give advice on how often is ‘regular’ or how to carry out the audits or how to evaluate and analyse but the skills audits’ but should be aligned to the organisations strategic plan” eg trust development or improvement plan.

Everyone with a governance responsibility needs to give consideration to their own self-evaluation as well as to the development of the board on which they sit; and of course ultimately to the trust and the pupils it serves. It is important to effective governance that knowledge is cascaded because boards should have a collective endeavour approach. Trustees need to have an awareness of the Governance Competency Framework and an understanding and familiarity with the Governance Handbook and Academies Financial Handbook.

1. **Entry** – is new to role or board, no specific academy governance knowledge, not aware
2. **Emerging** – knows where to find and obtain further guidance and support, information and research, has read document, has basic understanding
3. **Established/confident** – considers self to be a source of guidance on the board, support and challenge, knows and understands concept of risk, knows when to escalate, comfortable with document content
4. **Highly effective** – board authority on key matters, contributes to collaborative behaviours, outward looking

The last column enables and encourages everyone to identify that they need additional CPD.

At the end of audit there is an additional box for comments

**Assumptions and non-negotiables**

* That trustees are volunteers and have the right to have their commitment recognised and respected,
* Everyone does safeguarding training at least to L1,
* Everyone should have a mentor or ‘governor buddy’ and new trustees have induction training,
* We all have other commitments and time has a value,
* Each has different skills and interests,
* Each has different beliefs,
* Everyone needs to understand the boundaries between the strategic and the operational.

Any information you provide will be used solely for the purposes of the audit eg to support succession planning; individual responses will be destroyed once the audit has been analysed and no names will be published in the final report or on any website. The terms Director, Trustee and Governor are interchangeable.

The audit covers the following themes which reflect, but do not mirror, the competency framework;

1. Governance
2. Education
3. Leadership
4. Finance
5. Accountability
6. Capacity and commitment

**About you**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Which board do you sit on? | Members’ Board |  |
|  | Directors’ Board |  |
|  | \*Local Governing Board (LGB) |  |
| Name (optional): |
| \*If LGB, at which Academy(ies): |

**Role(s) – tick all that apply**

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| Chair |  | Trust Representative |  | Link Role |  |
| Vice Chair |  | Safeguarding |  | Please list which subject or topic you are link governor for at present: |
| Committee Chair |  | SEN |  |
| Parent governor |  | Pupil Premium |  |
| Do you aspire to a leadership role on the board? Please explain. |  |
| Any other comments |  | Is there a subject or topic you would be interested in becoming the link governor for or would will be willing to shadow the current link person? |

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| **Area of Core Understanding****Governance** | **Entry** | **Emerging** | **Established** | **Highly effective** | **Not Applicable** | **CPD needs– give reasons** |
| The Governance Handbook 2017 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The Essential Trustee [[1]](#footnote-1) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The Governance Competency Framework |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Definitions of corporate governance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Trust Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Understand the Strategic Development Plan 2018 – 2021 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Current governance structure and how it works |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Requirements of reporting to wider stakeholders |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The role and remit of the trust’s Members |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Understand and am comfortable with conflict management and resolution |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Understand the purpose and remit of chairs powers to act and when to question |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Understand what constitutes a Related Party Transaction (Trust board only) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I have undertaken and am experienced in due diligence |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand the role and remit of professional clerking |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand the issues around non-compliance and whistleblowing  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Area of Core Understanding****Education** | **Entry** | **Emerging** | **Established** | **Highly effective** | **Not Applicable** | **CPD needs– give reasons** |
| Understand national education policy and local context |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I have specific education expertise and knowledge  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am able to analyse data quickly and can evaluate/interpret to identify trends  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand and can articulate the Trust’s strategic education priorities  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand and can articulate educational priorities for the academy where I am a governor |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Area of Core Understanding****Leadership** | **Entry** | **Emerging** | **Established** | **Highly effective** | **Not Applicable** | **CPD needs– give reason** |
| Nolan Principles – I understand and am comfortable with conflict management and resolution |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Experience and understanding of working with leaders to  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Business development and organisational management |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Priority management and problem solving |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand the principles of ethical leadership |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am comfortable with influencing others |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand the strategic operational boundaries and when to apply them |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I can articulate the trust’s vision, ethos and strategy |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am conversant with the detailed requirements of the Trust’s code of conduct |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I have experience of chairing at board level |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Area of Core Understanding****Finance**  | **Entry** | **Emerging** | **Established** | **Highly effective** | **Not Applicable** | **CPD needs– give reasons** |
| Have read and understand the requirements of the **Academies Financial Handbook** 2018 inc Annex C |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Financial reporting and financial concepts - how these inform the board’s decision making |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| How to read and interpret financial statements and reports |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Can explain and define what probity means? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The reporting obligations of the trust and academy |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Is confident in questions about value for money |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Area of Core Understanding****Accountability** | **Entry** | **Emerging** | **Established** | **Highly effective** | **Not Applicable** | **CPD needs– give reasons** |
| Board management eg how and why the board is run the way it is |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Safeguarding inc Prevent |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| HR and employment law |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Well-being and mental health |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Trust’s responsibility for outcomes for all groups of pupils |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand confidentiality |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand Related Party Transactions |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I understand what a conflict of interest is and when to declare one |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I have experience of performance management at an executive level |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Experience of senior level recruitment |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Actively engages in robust discussion |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Area of Core Understanding****Capacity and Commitment** | **yes** | **partial** | **unsure/can’t answer** | **CPD needs– give reasons** |
| I am committed to my own learning and can demonstrate impact of that learning on the board’s knowledge and behaviours  |  |  |  | This can include any leadership programmes you may be attending, training which you have attended and have reported to the board |
| I am committed to this trust and will seek re-appointment after my term of office ends |  |  |  |  |
| I am committed to the principles of equal opportunities and the promoting of diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organisation  |  |  |  |  |

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

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

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| About You | Describe | Which? |
| Experience in other trusts including third sector and voluntary groups |  |  |
| Have an appetite for and understanding of compliance |  |  |
| Experience as a governor (have you chaired for example) |  |  |
| Do you think you contribute to the wider educational and governance debate beyond the trust |  |  |
| Do you work for a public body?  |  |  |
| Membership – are you a member of the National Governance Association for example |  |  |
| Qualifications which you think have relevance to your role and about which you are willing to Contribute |  |  |
| What else are you able and willing to offer and have the capacity to do so? Eg safeguarding experience, finance and business management, HR etc, |

**Many thanks from the Developing a Professional Community Steering Group!**

**Please return your completed Audit to Carol Stead**

**Carol.stead@societastrust.org.uk**

**Or**

**The Hub Office**

**Ellison Primary Academy**

**Ellison Street**

**Wolstanton**

**Newcastle under Lyme**

**Staffordshire**

**ST5 0BL**

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)