



# Governor Training Materials

## Using the materials

**Further  
Education  
Funding  
Council**

June 2000

[www.fefc.ac.uk/documents/othercouncilpublications](http://www.fefc.ac.uk/documents/othercouncilpublications)

## Using the materials

Welcome to the *Governor Training Materials*.

Read this section if you want to know how to get the best out of these materials by using them for self-study. The materials are designed for self-study, but where it is feasible, you will find it very useful to make opportunities to discuss some of the activities with other governors. If you can, you will find it invaluable to take part in some group training with other governors from your own college or a group of colleges.

If you are a trainer, read the *Trainer Guide* on using the materials for group training.

### Who are the materials for?

These materials are aimed at new and experienced governors of further education colleges. It will also help clerks and college managers to assist the work of governors.

Governors play a vital role in the operation of every college. The FEFC Annual Report for 1998–99 *Delivering the New Agenda* states that one in seven governing bodies are giving some cause for concern. This has often been attributed to a lack of strategic awareness on the part of governors, who have felt disadvantaged by their own lack of knowledge or skills in this area.

These materials have been designed to address this gap. Using the modules flexibly to develop your knowledge and skills in key areas will help you to play a full part in the work of your governing body with confidence and purpose.

### Aims of the materials

The materials are designed to help and support governors and increase the effectiveness of college governing bodies. The specific aims are to:

- improve your knowledge and skills
- increase your confidence in your ability to fulfil your responsibilities and govern your college effectively
- provide easy-to-use learning materials that you can work through in your own time, and at your own pace.

## What's in the materials?

The materials comprise eight modules which are designed to give governors a thorough overview of the work of college governing bodies in further education, along with tools to help you get the most out of using the materials, a glossary of acronyms and a trainer guide.

The sections in order are:

### *Check your current skills and knowledge*

This section provides an outline of what is in each module, presented in a form that will help you to check what you already know and decide which topic areas you would find it useful to work on.

### *Glossary of acronyms*

This section provides an easy-to-follow guide to the acronyms used in the materials (and widely used by professionals in further education).

### *Modules*

The modules vary in length from 23 to 34 pages. The topics covered are:

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Strategy and educational character**
- 3 Curriculum and quality**
- 4 Financial management**
- 5 Human resources**
- 6 The clerk to the corporation**
- 7 The audit committee**
- 8 The search committee**

Each module is free-standing. They can be studied in any order though you may find it useful to begin with Module 1. Each module also provides helpful cross-references to relevant material in other modules.

Each module is broken up into short sections, to make it easier to learn in short chunks of time, and consists of:

- a short introduction, which includes aims, a list of contents and a list of documents you will need to complete the self-study activities

- topic sections which contain information, discussion, case studies or checklists and activities to help you think about how you can apply your learning to your own college
- a module review which includes a reminder of the aims, a summary of key learning points and general guidance on action planning.

### ***Action planner***

This separate section provides you with space to note down useful learning points as you work through the modules and queries, issues or ideas for action that you would like follow up within your own college. It also contains a section for you to note areas in which you would like more information, training or development and to plan how you might tackle these needs.

### ***Useful resources***

This section lists useful sources of further information for college governors – organisations, publications, websites, etc.

## **Using the materials for self-study**

The materials are designed to be used flexibly and you will need to decide how to use the modules in the way that is most effective for you. Some of the governors who piloted the materials chose to work all the way through a complete module, but others chose to skim or dip into sections on topics they were familiar with, and picked out sections on topics that they wanted to know more about for detailed study.

### **Study time**

Individual study times vary widely. As the modules vary in length, you need to set aside between one and four hours to work through a whole module. You may find that you need to allow additional time for activities that involve reading other documents.

### **Doing the activities**

Each module contains activities which will help you to apply ideas from the materials to your own college and to your work as a governor. Do make a point of tackling as many of the activities as you can. Cover over the viewpoints which follow the activities and reflect or write your own thoughts down before you read our comments.

You may find you disagree with some of the viewpoints. There is often no right or wrong answer – the aim of the viewpoints is to suggest possibilities, enable you to compare the suggestions with what actually happens in your own college, and encourage you to apply any ideas that you find useful to your own work.

You could keep all your notes from activities in a separate notebook or on loose-leaf sheets that can be stored in a ringbinder, along with the module, for future reference.

### **Preparation for some activities**

Some of the activities ask you to review or answer questions about documents or information that you will need to get hold of from the clerk to the governing body. It is a good idea to try and gather as many of these as possible before you start work on a module.

If some documents are difficult to get hold of, or are not available at all, we suggest you consider the questions in the activity and whether they are useful to apply to documents that you might receive in future.

### **Possible routes through the materials**

#### **If you are a new governor...**

You may find it useful to work through the whole of Module 1, and then plan which modules or sections of modules you want to study. When you have finished the module, use the *Check your current skills and knowledge* section at the front of the materials to decide on your priorities.

#### **If you are an experienced governor...**

You could skim Module 1 to check what is covered, and then plan the modules or sections you want to work on using the *Check your current skills and knowledge* section to decide which are priorities for you.

#### **If you are a member of the finance committee...**

You may find it valuable to work on *Module 2 Strategy and educational character* and *Module 3 Curriculum and quality*. These are key modules, designed to enable governors to focus on the wider strategic issues which affect the college, and which need to be taken into account when making financial decisions.

## **If you are a member of the search or audit committee...**

You may find it useful to go to these modules first, as they provide a useful review of current good practice. You will also find it valuable to look at *Module 2 Strategy and educational character* and *Module 3 Curriculum and quality* as they explore the wider context in which these committees work, and important strategic and environmental factors which all committees need to take account of in supporting the work of the governing body.

## **Action planning**

We hope you find that there is much in the materials that you can immediately apply to your own college and governing body. Working through the modules is likely to:

- raise questions in your mind
- help clarify issues that concern you
- provide a new or different perspective on recurrent problems
- suggest possible approaches or solutions to difficulties and dilemmas that your governing body is facing.

The *Action planner* section at the back of the materials is intended to help you plan how you will follow up these reflections with practical action. Some things you may be able to take further as an individual, but there are likely to be many issues that need to be considered by the governing body as a whole. Once again, you will find it very valuable if you can arrange an opportunity to think about action planning with a group of governors.

## Check your current skills and knowledge

This section enables you to check what you already know about college governance, and to identify the topic areas in which you want to develop your knowledge and skills.

- 1 Work through the checklist and assess yourself by ticking the appropriate column.
- 2 Where you have identified gaps in what you know or do, number these in order of priority from 1 to 3, where 1 = most important to address and 3 = least important.
- 3 You can then choose whether to work on those modules in which you have identified a number of high priorities, or to pick out priority sections from several different modules.

<b>Module 1 Introduction</b>	Not at all	Partly	Fully	Priority 1–3
I can describe the range of provision in the further education sector				
I can explain the role and responsibilities of college governors				
I can assess my own knowledge and skills and identify my training requirements				
I know how to access the governor-training programme				
I know where to find more detailed information on particular topics or procedures				
I am able to play a full part in the work of the governing body.				

<b>Module 2 Strategy and educational character</b>	Not at all	Partly	Fully	Priority 1–3
<p>I understand the purpose of my college strategy and its relation to the wider educational environment</p> <p>I can describe how my college’s mission and ethos inform its strategy</p> <p>I can explain how the educational character of my college reflects its mission, ethos and strategy</p> <p>I understand my responsibility for determining and monitoring the mission, ethos, educational character and strategy of my college</p> <p>I can explain the difference between the governors’ responsibility for the strategy and that of the management team</p> <p>I know how to use governing body meetings to fulfil my responsibilities for overseeing the mission and strategy of the college.</p>				
<b>Module 3 Curriculum and quality</b>	Not at all	Partly	Fully	Priority 1-3
<p>I can describe the variety of learners and learning opportunities at my college, and explain how these relate to the communities my college serves and to national policies</p> <p>I can describe the characteristics of effective teaching and learning</p> <p>I can engage in strategy discussions about curriculum and quality and contribute to decisions required of governors</p>				

<p>I can discuss and approve my college's targets, based on comparison with information from national sources, from similar colleges and from within my own college</p> <p>I can describe the range of inspection arrangements, including the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) processes of self-assessment and inspection.</p>				
<p><b>Module 4 Financial management</b></p>	Not at all	Partly	Fully	Priority 1-3
<p>I can outline governors' role in monitoring the financial position of the college and its audit process</p> <p>I can explain the range and purpose of financial documents that will be presented to me as a governor</p> <p>I can explain the broad indicators used by the FEFC to evaluate a college's financial health</p> <p>I can describe common areas of weakness in financial target setting, financial monitoring and financial management within the sector</p> <p>I can explain the use of sensitivity analysis in a college financial forecast</p> <p>I can identify good practice in financial management</p> <p>I understand FEFC funding methodology.</p>				

<b>Module 5 Human resources</b>	Not at all	Partly	Fully	Priority 1-3
<p>I can outline the governing body's main legal responsibilities towards the staff it employs, and the responsibilities it delegates to the principal</p> <p>I can explain the role of governors in establishing and keeping under review the terms and conditions of employment for college staff</p> <p>I can state the difference between governors' responsibilities for senior postholders and for other staff</p> <p>I can outline the governing body's responsibilities for staff development and appraisal</p> <p>I can describe college industrial relations and how to deal with trade union representatives and officers</p> <p>I can explain the role of governors in disciplinary and grievance procedures.</p>				
<b>Module 6 The clerk to the corporation</b>	Not at all	Partly	Fully	Priority 1-3
<p>I can outline the role and responsibilities of the clerk</p> <p>I can explain how to review the performance of the clerk (including arrangements for supporting the clerk) on an annual basis so as to ensure the governing body operates efficiently and effectively</p>				

<p>I can describe how to appoint a clerk (when the need arises) according to statutory requirements and acknowledged best practice</p> <p>I know how to ensure the independence of the clerk.</p>				
<p><b>Module 7 The audit committee</b></p>	Not at all	Partly	Fully	Priority 1-3
<p>I can explain why the governing body has an audit committee and what it does</p> <p>I can outline the terms of reference of my own college's audit committee</p> <p>I can describe the membership of an audit committee</p> <p>I can describe how internal and external auditors are appointed</p> <p>I can outline the purpose and content of the reports that are submitted by internal and external auditors and reviewed by an audit committee</p> <p>I can outline the purpose and content of an annual audit committee report</p> <p>I can describe an audit committee's responsibilities in investigating fraud and irregularities</p> <p>I can evaluate the practice and effectiveness of my own college's audit committee.</p>				

<b>Module 8 The search committee</b>	Not at all	Partly	Fully	Priority 1-3
<p>I can explain the terms of reference of the search committee and, where appropriate, suggest improvements for the governing body to consider</p> <p>I can explain the categories of members set out in the instrument of government and what discretion the governing body has to determine the composition of its membership</p> <p>I can outline the Nolan Committee recommendations on reappointing existing members and their implications for my governing body</p> <p>I can describe useful approaches to seeking new members</p> <p>I can identify good practice in interviewing potential members, including key questions to ask and to avoid.</p>				

## Action planner

This section provides you with some simple tools to follow up and ideas to apply arising from your work on the modules in *Governor Training Materials*. The section looks at two aspects of following up what you have learnt:

- planning points for action within your own college
- developing a plan for further learning.

### Planning points for action within your own college

You are likely to have a number of ideas for further action as you work through the materials. The *Action points* form below provides you with a framework for noting down any issues, queries, ideas or practical action that you want to follow up within your own college. The planner enables you to gather them together in one place as you work, and then to prioritise them and decide what action you will take. Use the planner in whatever way you find most useful.

#### **Action point: Develop our new governors' induction pack!**

After working through Module 1, a new governor decided that her college's induction pack for governors could be greatly improved by adding clearer and more specific information about the college's student cohort and the work of the committees supporting the governing body. She contacted the chair to ask informally if such a suggestion would be appropriate or welcome from a new governor, as she did not want to be seen as a 'troublemaker'.

The chair was very positive and suggested that she provide him with a short list of concrete suggestions which he would then ask the clerk or a senior manager to action, without naming her as the source of the suggestion. They agreed that this would be a diplomatic way to achieve the necessary changes.

The kind of action points you identify are likely to vary from one module to another. For example you might decide that you will:

- frame a question to put to the clerk
- get hold of and review a government report or college policy document
- tackle an issue that you are concerned about by asking to speak informally to a committee chair

- ask the principal to clarify information you have received on a specific aspect of the college's operations
- discuss with the clerk or chair a proposal to put to the governing body
- place an item on the agenda of the next governing body meeting.

As with any action planning, it is useful to prioritise the ideas that you have noted. Points for action can be prioritised in various ways, for example:

- important and urgent/important but not urgent/urgent but not important
- requiring short-term, medium-term or long-term action to see results
- simple/complex to achieve
- can be done on your own/requires action by a committee or the whole governing body.

It may be a good idea to start with something simple and short-term that you can achieve on your own. A small early success will help to build up your confidence to tackle bigger issues. Set yourself a feasible limit of, say, no more than three priorities at the outset.

## **Developing a plan for further learning**

Developing the knowledge and skills that you need to be an effective governor is a continuing process of personal development. We hope these materials have taken you some steps further and that you can build on your learning in your day-to-day experience as a member of the governing body.

In some ways this pack has only scratched the surface of effective governance. You can make your contribution more effective by identifying gaps in your skills and knowledge and planning further learning, training or development to meet your needs. The second planning form in this section gives you a framework. Use it in whatever way you find most helpful.

### **Checklist: Planning further learning**

You may find it useful to skim the modules you have done and any notes you have made as you develop your action plan.

In the relevant spaces on the *Plan for further learning* form, note down any topics from the modules you have worked through that you need to find out more about or develop further.

For the topics you have noted, number your top three priorities.

You may find it helpful to discuss this list with the clerk, who is responsible for governor training.

Find out what you can do to develop your knowledge or skills in these topics. Likely sources of further learning include:

- governor training courses, workshops or conferences you could attend
- shadowing a more experienced governor (i.e. spending time with him/her as he/she carries out governance tasks)
- a mentor (a more experienced governor willing to offer practical advice)
- presentations on useful topics from subject specialists (e.g. head of finance, principal, etc.)
- key documents (e.g. principal's reports, governing body papers, FEFC Circulars, etc.)

## ACTION POINTS

Queries/issues/ideas to follow up	What action I need to take/ Who I need to speak to	Priority 1–3	When I will do it by
<b>Module 1 Introduction</b>			
<b>Module 2 Strategy and educational character</b>			
<b>Module 3 Curriculum and quality</b>			

Queries/issues/ideas to follow up	What action I need to take/ Who I need to speak to	Priority 1–3	When I will do it by
<b>Module 4 Financial management</b>			
<b>Module 5 Human resources</b>			
<b>Module 6 The clerk to the corporation</b>			
<b>Module 7 The audit committee</b>			
<b>Module 8 The search committee</b>			

## PLAN FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Topics I need to work on	Priorities 1-3	Action I will take
<b>Module 1 Introduction</b>		
<b>Module 2 Strategy and educational character</b>		
<b>Module 3 Curriculum and quality</b>		
<b>Module 4 Financial management</b>		

## PLAN FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Topics I need to work on	Priorities 1-3	Action I will take
<b>Module 5 Human resources</b>		
<b>Module 6 The clerk to the corporation</b>		
<b>Module 7 The audit committee</b>		
<b>Module 8 The search committee</b>		

## Glossary of acronyms

ALF	Average Level of Funding
AoC	Association of Colleges
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
FEDA	Further Education Development Agency
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation
GFE	Generalised Further Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
liP	Investor in People
ISR	Individualised Student Record
IT	Information Technology
NAO	National Audit Office
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NTO	National Training Organisation
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SFCEF	Sixth Form Colleges Employers' Forum
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
TES	<i>The Times Educational Supplement</i>
THES	<i>The Times Higher Education Supplement</i>
TSC	Training Standards Council
Ufi	University for Industry
WEA	Workers' Educational Association

## Useful resources

### Helpful organisations

This section provides contact details and information about a range of organisations involved in further education. An asterisk (\*) shows those involved in the development of the *Governor Training Materials*.

**\*Association of College Registrars and Administrators (ACRA)**

National Office  
Kingston College  
Richmond Road Annexe  
55 Richmond Road  
Kingston  
Surrey KT2 5BP

Tel: 0208 541 4940  
Fax: 0208 546 0718  
Email: info@acra.fsnet.co.uk

*National organisation providing professional support to business managers and clerks in further education.*

**\*Association for College Management (ACM)**

10 De Montfort Street  
Leicester  
Leicestershire LE1 7GG

Tel: 0116 275 5076  
Fax: 0116 255 0584  
Email: saramccaffrey@acm.uk.com

*Independent professional association and trade union for college managers.*

**Association of Colleges**

5th Floor Centre Point  
103 New Oxford Street  
London WC1A 1DO

Tel: 0207 827 4600  
Fax: 0207 827 4650  
Email: aoc@aoc.co.uk

*Represents further education sector colleges with links to the government and other agencies. Provides a range of services to members.*

**\*Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region (ACER)**

Suite 1  
Lancaster House  
Meadow Lane  
St Ives  
Huntingdon  
Cambridgeshire PE17 4LG

Tel: 01480 468198  
Fax: 01480 468601

*Represents further education sector colleges and provides a range of services to members.*

### **Association of Colleges, South West**

Bishops Hull House  
Bishops Hull  
Taunton  
Somerset TA1 5RA

Tel: 01823 335491  
Fax: 01823 323381

*Represents further education sector colleges and provides a range of services to members.*

### **Basic Skills Agency**

Tel: 0207 405 4017  
Fax: 0207 440 6626  
Email: enquiries@basic-skills.co.uk  
[www.basic-skills.co.uk](http://www.basic-skills.co.uk)

*The national development agency for improving basic skills.*

### **BBC Education**

[www.bbc.co.uk/education](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education)

*Part of the BBC Online service with links to Adult learning and further education.*

### **Department for Education and Employment (DfEE)**

Tel: 0207 925 5000  
Fax: 0207 925 6000  
Publications Line: 0845 6022260  
Email: info@dfee.gov.uk  
[www.dfee.gov.uk](http://www.dfee.gov.uk)

*The government department which contributes to the agenda of social cohesion and economic competitiveness through investment in knowledge, skills and employability.*

### **\*Further Education Development Agency (FEDA)**

Citadel Place  
Tinworth Street  
Vauxhall  
London SE11 5EH

Tel: 0207 840 5400  
Fax: 0207 840 5401  
Email: info@feda.ac.uk  
[www.feda.ac.uk](http://www.feda.ac.uk)

*Leading research and development organisation in the field of post-16 education.*

**\*Further Education Funding Council (FEFC)**

Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry CV1 2WT

Tel: 024 7686 3000  
Fax: 024 7686 3100  
[www.fefc.ac.uk](http://www.fefc.ac.uk)

Email: [info@fefc.ac.uk](mailto:info@fefc.ac.uk)

*The funding council for the further education sector in England.*

**Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO)**

5th Floor Centre Point  
103 New Oxford Street  
London WC1A 1DO

Tel: 0207 827 4661  
Fax: 0207 827 4660  
Email: [fento@aoc.co.uk](mailto:fento@aoc.co.uk)

*The national training organisation for further education.*

**Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)**

Northaven House  
Coldharbour Lane  
Bristol BS16 1QD

Tel: 0117 931 7317  
Fax: 0117 931 7203  
[www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk)

*The funding council for the higher education sector.*

**\*KPMG**

2 Cornwall Street  
Birmingham B3 2DL

Tel: 0121 232 3000  
[www.kpmg.co.uk](http://www.kpmg.co.uk)

*Leading firm of auditors and advisers to the education sector in the UK. National advisory practice for governance is based in Birmingham.*

**National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)**

21 De Montfort Street  
Leicester LE1 7GE

Tel: 0116 255 1451  
Fax: 0116 285 4514  
Email: [information@niace.org.uk](mailto:information@niace.org.uk)  
[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

*Leading non-governmental organisation for adult learning in England and Wales.*

**Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)**

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

Tel: 0207 421 6800

*Non-ministerial government department with a remit to improve standards of achievement and quality of education in schools. Role to be extended from April 2001 to the new post-16 sector.*

**University for Industry (Ufi)**

Ufi Ltd  
The Innovation Centre  
217 Portobello Road  
Sheffield S1 4PD

Tel: 0114 224 2999

Fax: 0114 270 0034

Email: [enquiries@ufi.cwc.com](mailto:enquiries@ufi.cwc.com)

*A private–public partnership to stimulate lifelong learning among businesses and individuals.*

**Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)**

29 Bolton Street  
London  
W1Y 7PD

Tel: 0207 509 5555

Fax: 0207 509 6666

[www.open.gov.uk/qca](http://www.open.gov.uk/qca)

*Oversees curriculum, assessment and qualifications across the whole of education and training.*

**Useful periodicals and journals**

These publications provide a useful overview of current trends and issues in further education. You can get hold of copies from your clerk.

*The Times Educational Supplement*  
*The Times Higher Education Supplement*  
*College Manager*  
*Inform (published by FEDA)*

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### **The College Governor: Training Materials was produced by a partnership of national organisations involved in further education:**

ACRA is a national organisation which provides professional support to business managers and clerks. The services for clerks include seminars, conferences and network meetings to share good practice and become familiar with new initiatives.

KPMG is a leading firm of auditors and advisers to the education sector in the UK. The national advisory practice for governance is based in the Birmingham office.

FEDA is one of the leading research and development organisations operating in the field of post-16 education. Its mission is to increase participation, improve skills and raise quality and standards.

ACER – the Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region – is an association which represents further education sector colleges in its region and provides a range of services to its members.

ACM – the Association for College Management – is an independent professional association and trade union representing and supporting managers in post-compulsory education and training. The Association offers guidance and support to college managers responsible for delivering the Government's agenda for lifelong learning, excellence and social inclusion.

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