



Education
Funding
Agency

The academies finance and assurance steering group

**Terms of reference for the academic year
2013 to 2014**

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Purpose

Role of the steering group

The academies finance and assurance steering group (steering group) has been created to enable the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and academies to work collaboratively to develop a number of finance and assurance products. The steering group will drive improvements to meet the needs of the academy sector in ensuring high standards of accountability and transparency in the use of public funds. The steering group will operate on the basis of these agreed terms of reference.

Objective

The steering group will lead the development of improved financial returns and assurance requirements to minimise administrative burdens on academies. The steering group will focus on balancing minimum administrative requirements with the need to ensure accountability and assurance to academies and the EFA. The steering group will take account of relevant requirements of other stakeholders including the Department for Education, HM Treasury and the National Audit Office.

Scope

The steering group will encompass all activities required to deliver an agreed programme of work. The steering group will provide governance and decision making for the successful collective delivery of the agreed work plan in its entirety.

The steering group will make recommendations to the EFA Chief Financial Officer and will:

- receive and disseminate advice on matters affecting finance and financial assurance within the academy sector.
- agree and monitor a work programme to achieve continuous improvement.
- set up working groups as required focussing on specific areas of work.
- maintain reporting and communication lines with working groups, through working group chairs, supported by EFA nominated leads.
- enable working groups to make recommendations to the EFA Chief Financial Officer, through the steering group chair.
- take ownership of issues that are escalated from working groups.
- approve any changes to the governance and scope of the work programme.

Membership

Steering group

The steering group includes academy finance directors, business managers and principals and representatives from overarching academy collaborative bodies including Freedom and Autonomy for Schools National Association (FASNA), Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), National Association of School Business Management (NASBM), and The Independent Academies Association (IAA).

The steering group chair is John Rawsthorne, EFA Director of External Assurance.

Members

Representative

Adrian Bowater

Amanda Bennett and Amanda Rawson

Andrew Dodd

Barry Walder

Chris Crowther

Chris Hutton

David Hampson

Gareth Dawkins

James Nicholson

John Rawsthorne

Julie Evans

Kam Tallhar

Margo Muris

Mark Aldridge

Martin Latham

Mike White

Sarah Bagshaw

Stephen Morales

Steve Lester

Val Andrew

Organisation

Walsall Academy

The Greetland Academy

National Association of School Business Managers

The Charter School

Unity Academy

City of London Academy and FD Forum

Tollbar Academy

Bradford Academy

United Learning Trust

Education Funding Agency

Martham Primary & Nursery

Nishkam Free School

Alec Reed Academy

Hockerill Anglo-European College

Robinswood Primary School

Bartley Green School

St Bede C of E Primary Academy

National Association of School Business Managers

St Peter's Catholic High School

Association of School and College Leaders

Attendees

Peter Newson, Donna Lewis, Phil Eames Education Funding Agency

Vicky Bowes, Ian McVicar Department for Education

Working groups

Working groups will take forward detailed areas of work as directed by the steering group to achieve the overall work programme. The work programme will take account of the timetable in the Academies Business Cycle Planner 2013. Working groups include academy representatives from across the academy sector. Membership is outlined in the appendix.

The steering group has created three working groups to support the work programme in 2013-2014:

- **Working group 1**
Chaired by Stephen Morales, focussing on the Academies Financial Handbook and the Financial Management and Governance Self-assessment.
- **Working group 2**
Chaired by Mike White, focusing on the Academies: Accounts Direction, Accounts Return, benchmarking review and the Budget Forecast Return.
- **Working group 3**
Chaired by Adrian Bowater, focussing on regularity audit, fraud awareness, funding audit and accounting guidance and direction.

Conduct

Transparency and openness

The steering group will ensure that all matters can be discussed in an open and constructive way. Unless expressly requested by steering group members, the chair will assume that the business of the steering group will not be conducted on a confidential basis. Minutes of steering group meetings will be made available on EFA webpages.

Meetings

Steering group members should avoid delegating attendance at meetings unless it is absolutely unavoidable. Where deputies attend, they will be expected to have authority to represent their organisation.

Additional attendees may be asked to contribute to steering group meetings to provide specialist advice within their area of expertise. Requests for non-steering group members to attend steering group will be at the discretion of the steering group chair.

Steering group meetings are scheduled on a quarterly basis and may be convened on a more regular basis at the discretion of the chair. An agenda for steering group meetings will include:

- Welcome from the chair and summary of key objectives for the meeting
- Declarations of interest
- Review of progress from each working group
- Decisions needed
- Any other business

Reporting and secretariat

The steering group will receive an agenda, minutes and any supporting papers for information or decision. Following steering group meetings, minutes and actions will be issued to steering group members and other stakeholders as required. Steering group members will receive two working days to comment on the minutes.

The secretariat plays a key role in the smooth running of meetings and supporting the work of the steering group. The secretariat will be undertaken by EFA to ensure:

- An agenda is agreed by the chair 5 working days in advance of the meeting.
- Papers are circulated to all attendees 3 working days in advance of the meeting.
- Draft minutes, action points and any other relevant papers are circulated to the attendees and relevant stakeholders within 5 working days following the steering group.

Appendix: Working groups

Working group 1

Organisation

National Association of School Business Managers
Education Funding Agency
Association of School and College Leaders
Boswells Academy Trust
Debenham High School
George Spencer Foundation School
Greenbank High Schools
Heckmondwike Grammar School
Norbury Manor Business & Enterprise College for Girls
Parkstone Academy
St Anne's Academy
St Peter's Catholic High School
The City Academy, Hackney
Westbourne Primary School

Representative

Stephen Morales (Chair)
Chris Patterson (Lead)
Val Andrew
Bruce Doy
Tracy Darby
Gary Holmes
Martin Owen
John Flynn
Winnie Kinnon
Gavin Clegg
Donna Shepherd
Steve Lester
Olu Alalade
Diane Slack

Working group 2

Organisation

Bartley Green School
Education Funding Agency
Bluecoat Academy
David Ross Education Trust
Hinchley Wood School
Martham Primary & Nursery
Ormiston Academy Trust
Prospects Academies Trust
South Dartmoor Academy
South Hunsley School and Sixth Form College
South Leeds Academy
The Cooporative Trust
The Hessle Academy Community Trust
Tollbar Family of Academies Multi Academy Trust
West Hatch High School

Representative

Mike White (Chair)
Donna Lewis (Lead)
Maria Lysenko
Nigel Saxby
Lawrie Lee
Julie Evans
Tony Round
David Baron
Brian Hodge
Jennifer Jewitt
Karen Bromage
Ana Schofield
Chris Hardy
David Hampson
Barbara Newman

Working group 3

Organisation

Walsall Academy
Education Funding Agency
Bartley Green School
City of London Academy and IAA
Great Berry Primary School
National Association of School Business Managers
Oasis
Ribston Hall
Southend High School for Boys
The Charter School
The Greetland Academy
The Skinners' Kent Academy
Unity Academy

Representative

Adrian Bowater (Chair)
Phil Eames (Lead)
Mike White
Chris Hutton
Christine Emerson
Andrew Dodd
Mike Ford
Sandy Woodcock
Simon Oxenham
Barry Walder
Amanda Rawson
Richard Powell
Chris Crowther



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