

# THE ROLE AND EXPERIENCE OF THE BOARD SECRETARY AS A GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONAL IN SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES

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# 1. BACKGROUND

The Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges (2016) includes a section highlighting the importance of the Board Secretary role in advising the board, the committees and individual board members and supporting good governance (D.13 – D.16). The details of these sections are included in Annex 1 of this report.

In the process of reviewing the reviews of the governance of Scotland's colleges (see CDN Report:

*Overview of the External Governance Effectiveness Reviews for Scotland's Colleges 2020/21*) there were indications that the understanding of the role could be improved. It was noted that the recruitment, induction and support for new Board Secretaries should ensure that the Board Secretary has the skills, knowledge, time and resources to undertake the role effectively. This consideration was alongside the recent appointment of many new Board Secretaries by College Boards.

## 2. BOARD SECRETARY AS A GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONAL

The model role description for the Board Secretary (2016), appended at Annex 2 of this report, makes clear that the role is a professional one which carries significant responsibility and accountability within the college. The post is not purely administrative or administrative-plus. The post requires planning and organisational skills, the ability to influence and advise senior staff and board members, the ability to demonstrate integrity and diplomacy, the ability to contribute to the triangle of Chair / Principal / Board Secretary, and to be able to demonstrate a very high level of written and oral communication skills.

A key aspect of the role of Board Secretary as governance professional is the necessity to both act as a team player (being a member of a number of 'teams' associated with the governance of the college and also teams within the wider college community) and also to be able to perform with the minimum of management direction or support and remain impartial and independent in order to be able to advise the board with authority.

# 3. UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE OF A BOARD SECRETARY

To gain an informed insight into the background and experience of Scotland's Board Secretaries, a questionnaire was designed to explore aspects of the following themes

- Professional identity
- Professional agency
- Professional knowledge
- Professional accountability
- Professional terms and conditions

The draft questionnaire was tested with CDN and a board secretary for clarity and potential usefulness.

The questionnaire was circulated to 27 Board Secretaries in May and 18 responses were received by 4 June 2021.

Following receipt of the questionnaire aspects of the pattern of response was discussed with (a) a panel of Board Secretaries (b) a panel of two board chairs and two college principals. We thank the participants for their invaluable contribution.

This resulting report was prepared for CDN by Candy Munro and Prof. Ron Hill. We would like to thank Gordon Hunt of CDN for his support and insight in the production of this final version of the report.



# 4. QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

This section of the report is structured to match the themes underpinning the questionnaire.

## 4.1 Professional identity

4.1.1 18/27 responses represents a 67% response rate. In general, social science research terms this is a good response rate to a questionnaire. However, considering the way in which the questionnaire was promoted i.e. to inform support and development for board secretaries, there is a degree of disappointment that the response rate wasn't higher. There is a possible explanation from the data on respondents where 4 had been in post for less than a year, 4 had been post for a year, 4 had been in post for 2 years, 1 had been in post for 3 years. Thus 13/18 respondents had only been in post for 3 years or less. This pattern might suggest that new and relatively new entrants to the post of governance professional are more motivated to shape support and development arrangements and opportunities than more experienced colleagues. N.B. It should be remembered that Boards have been operating under Covid pandemic restrictions since March 2020 (16 months to July 2021). These have been testing times for college governance. For further understanding, readers are recommended to read the CDN Report 'Governing a College Using Virtual Meetings' (Nov. 2020).

4.1.2 The responses to the questionnaire show that 10/18 respondents had not worked as a governance professional in their 'previous post'. Again, this might support the enthusiasm of new entrants to seek to influence support and development consideration in the future. The panel of governance professionals advised a degree of caution in response interpretation believing some respondents may not be familiar with or

consider themselves yet to be a 'governance professional', although they may have worked in a governance capacity previously.

4.1.3 Respondents listed their most relevant qualifications held on entry to the Board Secretary role. There was a wide variety of qualifications listed including, for example, PG Cert in Public Sector Leadership, Master of Business Administration, CIPFA Certificate in Governance, Higher National Certificate in Administration and Information Management. Some respondents listed 'a degree and considerable experience'. It seemed that the nature of previous employment experience was more important, with qualifications playing a secondary role in most cases. Both panels supported this interpretation. If there was a case for a relevant qualification it was that this should be highly relevant to the task of Board Secretary and probably pursued in-post to enhance the Board Secretary experience already gained. This, like many aspects in this report, needs to be considered alongside the expectations of the Code of Good Governance and will be discussed in Section 5.

4.1.4 The questionnaire asked, 'in your post as board secretary, do you consider yourself as having strategic influence?' This question was based on the assumption inherent in the model job description that the Board Secretary should be influencing long-term aims and interests of the Board and the means of achieving them. Thus, the nature of planning processes, supporting the ongoing development of the capacity and competence of the Board, ensuring that the board receives appropriate, timely and high-quality reports, and the usefulness of Board meetings towards meeting the Board's long-term plans all fall within the Board Secretary's sphere of

influence. 11/18 respondents believed they had strategic influence, which was reassuring in terms of the model job description. An example of a respondent's interpretation of being a strategic influencer

**“ I am able to influence strategically through building good and effective governance practices looking to ensure the scope and presentation of information to the board enables good quality and timely decision making, scrutiny and challenge. A good relationship with the Chair and Principal, and Committee Chairs allows me to understand the strategic environment and promote quality engagement for the Board and effective flow from Board back into the College and to other stakeholders. My inputs are respected and encouraged.”**

The panel discussions suggested that strategic influence may be closely related to trust and experience in post and thus newly appointed Board Secretaries may not have reached strategic influencer status yet. Here is an example of this situation

**“ At the moment I am still learning the role and this will restrict my credibility and strategic influence.”**

However, there is another response theme when Board Secretaries were asked what was limiting their strategic influence – lack of appreciation of the purpose and potential of the Board Secretary. This respondent believed the following was necessary . . .

**“ Improved understanding of the role of the Governance professional across both the Board and the Executive and the organisation as a whole. Move from the ‘Board Secretary’ definition to a ‘Governance professional’ setting the role on a more ‘professional’ status.”**

## 4.2 Professional agency

4.2.1 Linking with the previous section about professional identity, this section looks at performance and, to a degree, the role of the Board Secretary as ‘sensemaker’ for governance and governing within the college.

4.2.2 A key element in professional agency is the relationship between the Chair and the Board Secretary. Respondents were asked to select three words from a list that best described their relationship with their Chair. The three highest scoring descriptors were ‘mutually supportive’ (14/18), ‘productive;’ (14/18), ‘engaged’ (13/18). This is obviously an encouraging picture. The three respondents who rated ‘in need of improvement’ present a cause for concern and remind that whilst there is much good practice, there are exceptions too. However, these responses may be influenced by a number of factors such as new appointments to the post of Board Secretary and / or the Chair and the challenge of building relationships in a virtual environment.

4.2.3 In addition to the relationship with the Chair, Board Secretaries also have to develop a working relationship with College Principals. Asked to describe the performance of the triangle of Chair/Principal/Board Secretary, scores were ‘effective’ (10), ‘still developing’ (6) and ‘needs improvement’ (2). Again, this is a generally encouraging picture. The ‘still developing’ could be assumed to be newly appointed Board Secretaries working their way into the post. Two respondents responded with ‘needs improvement’. These minority voices in 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 require our attention as the consequences of these difficulties could impact adversely on students, staff and external stakeholders.

4.2.4 Board secretaries were asked a series of questions about their performance objectives. 15/18 stated that they had clear performance

objectives, which seems to be a positive position. However, the strength of this position may be undermined to a degree when 12/18 respondents stated that they drafted their own objectives. Bearing in mind responses in section 4.1. this could be a problematic situation – new entrants with limited experience of governance drafting their own performance objectives would necessarily be limited by the vision and awareness of the postholder (many of whom had not acted as a governance professional previously and/or were not supported by a relevant qualification).

- 4.2.5 Only 10/18 respondents believed the performance objectives (drafted as above) fully contributed to their professional status. This is clearly a problematic area which requires greater understanding and, if necessary, advice and guidance.
- 4.2.6 15/18 respondents reviewed their performance objectives with the Chair. It is unclear what the practice is for the three respondents who did not have the opportunity to use this process.

### 4.3 Professional knowledge

- 4.3.1 Board Secretaries were asked to reflect on their knowledge of college governance regulations and procedures. Perhaps reflecting the years of service as Board Secretaries of respondents, 5/18 registered 'strong', 11/18 registered 'incomplete but adequate' with 2/18 'unsure'. There is a sense in which 'unsure' could be associated with new postholders on the basis of not knowing or unclear what isn't known.
- 4.3.2. There is a connection between 4.3.1. and the next question which concerns college-based induction. 10/18 respondents reported that the college-based induction was adequate preparation for the role of Board Secretary

but 8/18 did not support this position. The following quotes may help explain the situation...

**“ The College has no mechanism in place for a Board Secretary induction that is any different to any other new start.’**

**“ No transition from previous post-holder. My role considerably expanded from previous iteration.’**

Positive reference was made to the arrangement of a mentor from another college as a support for a newly appointed Board Secretary and also the value, offered on an annual basis, of the CDN induction for Board Secretaries programme. Panel discussion suggested that guidance on the induction of newly appointed Board Secretaries e.g. in the form of a checklist, could assist Chairs, Principals and H.R. managers to provide the necessary framework to help Board Secretaries become confident and operationally successful quickly.

- 4.3.3. The next series of questions were associated with professional development. Given that the majority of respondents were relatively new in post, responses may need to be interpreted with the needs and aspirations of new Board Secretaries in mind. 9/18 respondents had, since becoming a Board Secretary, considered undertaking an additional qualification related to governance (and 9/18 had not considered this possibility). Of those considering taking an additional qualification, the following quotes may provide some insight into motive and, possibly, the nature of any such qualification.

**“ Formalisation of knowledge ensuring no gaps ‘unknown unknowns.’”**

**“ I did undertake the CIPFA qualification, which enhanced my confidence, and provided assurance to the Board.’**

A similar quote was provided in relation to the ICSA governance qualification.

**“ I would like to do a Governance qualification to give me the key information and knowledge to support my role in the public sector.”**

4.3.4. Respondents indicated their preference for certificated (assessed) professional development as follows 11/18 supported, 7/18 preferred non-certificated. Respondents expressed their preference for college-specific content in governance professional development as 13/18, whereas 5/18 preferred general governance processes and practice for application to college governance.

## 4.4 Professional accountability

4.4.1. Consideration was given to self-review or professional reflection. 8/18 stated that they had time within their role for professional reflection. Thus, 10/18 respondents reported that they did not have time for professional reflection within their Board Secretary role. Examples were provided by the 8/18 group on how professional reflection has informed their professional practice as follows:-

**“ I continue to engage with governance professionals across the public sector and governance related articles / sessions. I often talk over issues with the Chair and the college's Director of Corporate Services reflecting on recent meetings, matters raised etc and any associated actions arising.”**

**“ It highlights areas for me to improve, highlights what I have done well and provides guidance on how I want to further my role over the upcoming months.”**

## 4.5 Professional terms and conditions

4.5.1 8/18 respondents informed that they held 'another post within college'. As specific post examples might identify respondents, the areas of responsibility for 'another post' are given as follows:-

- Administrative support for the principal
- Senior college management
- Freedom of information
- Legal adviser
- Risk management and business continuity
- Strategic planning
- Equality and diversity

N.B. This matter is discussed in section 5.

4.5.2. The questionnaire included the question 'how many hours per week are you contracted for as Board Secretary?' Responses varied from no specific hours, to 10.5 – 35 hours. From discussion with both advisory panels it became clear that due to local factors, it becomes very difficult to see a general picture of contracted hours as a Board Secretary. The local factors could be:-

- perception and expectations of the role of the Board Secretary
- level and nature of administrative support for the Board Secretary
- the degree of fit for the postholder with another post within college
- the performance of the previous Board Secretary i.e. if the previous postholder found two days per week to be adequate, that was the assumed expectation for the new Board Secretary
- the nature and circumstances of the Board and its priorities

In addition, Board Secretaries were asked if they considered their contracted hours were 'adequate'. 7/18 believed their hours

were adequate, but the majority did not consider their hours to be 'adequate'. The questionnaire asks for any changes to 'enable you to perform the role of Board Secretary more effectively'. Examples given include :-

- “ **21 hours p/w is not sufficient for me to fulfil my role. Also, my role functions in complete isolation from any “team”.**
- “ **...a greater recognition of the Board Secretary role in the context of the “triangle”.**
- “ **I cannot do my role in 21 hours p/w. There are succession planning gaps and I feel when I leave, the exact same will happen to a new incoming Board Sec as happened to me.'**
- “ **More hours to do the job. More support from the start and development opportunities. Adequate induction process.'**

“ **This post cannot be done properly in three days a week unless Admin support is provided. It also needs to be pitched at a more senior level in line with the expectations placed on the post holder in the Code...'**

4.5.3. As an aspect of Board Secretary performance is dependant the nature of administrative support available, a question was asked as follows 'Do you have sufficient admin support to enable you to lead a strategic governance agenda'? 5/18 respondents confirmed they did have adequate support, whereas 12/18 believed they did not have adequate support. Panel discussion recognised the various forms of support (direct and indirect) that may be available within college to support the Board Secretary, accepting that some support may be provided via another line management channel. However, it is clear from the questionnaire response that this is a specific matter within the overall terms and conditions of being a Board Secretary that requires at least clearer understanding, if not actual additional resource.



# 5. DISCUSSION

## 5.1 Expectations of the Code of Good Governance for the Board Secretary

The section in the Code on the Board Secretary is included at Annex 1. This sets out the important governance role that the Board Secretary plays in advising the board and supporting effective governance. Every college Board should specifically address the requirements of the Code. If there are local variations from any aspect of this section of the Code, these variations should be justified and managed. For example, if a Board Secretary also has a post within the management structure of the college, care must be taken to preserve the independence of the Board Secretary to be able to advise the Chair and Board by securing clear reporting arrangements to the Chair and Board.

Every Board member should be familiar with the expectations and meaning of the Code of Good Governance regarding the Board Secretary.

## 5.2 Board Secretary Title and Governance Professional Status

There is view that the title 'Board Secretary' or Clerk does not adequately reflect the professional nature of the role, and even possibly undermines the role. There is a preference for an alternative nomenclature such as,

- Governance Professional
- Governance Advisor
- Head of Governance
- Director of Governance

Whichever is preferred, such a title must connect to the professional expectations and appropriate terms and conditions for the Board Secretary. It is not all about just changing the job title. However, the

combination of the job title, terms and conditions, and expectations for the post can make a significant difference to recruitment, retention, development and motivation of the postholder. As the Board Secretary is expected to be a strategic influencer i.e. anticipating and suggesting ways to address strategic governing matters, the working conditions and relationships must operate to encourage and permit this high-level professional contribution.

Every Board should appreciate the potential of the Board Secretary and seek ways to ensure this potential is realised.

## 5.3 Professional Development and Professional Status

The Board has a duty to ensure that the Board Secretary has the skills knowledge and experience to effectively fulfil their role, and that they receive an appropriate induction. The Board should also ensure that the Board Secretary has adequate time and resources to fulfil the role effectively.

Evidence from this study would suggest that there are significant variations in

- the approach to induction to the role
- contracted hours
- ongoing professional development opportunities
- availability of admin support

The recommendations below address aspects of professional development for Board Secretaries. Chairs and Principals are encouraged to ensure the Board Secretary is adequately supported and developed from the beginning of her/his employment in order to build up expertise and confidence in the role in a timely manner.

Boards in transition i.e. where there are significant

changes in board membership and/or board office holders planned and/or already underway, need to give particular thought to the arrival and development of a new Board Secretary in such conditions.

Boards are also reminded to the need to develop an appropriate and realistic arrangement to define working hours, rather than rely on a notional contractual statement of hours which might be a long way from the actual expectation and experience of the role. It is clear that the nature of the Board Secretary role will vary

- at different times of the college governance year
- by the number of committees and working groups operating

- by the number and nature of activities in the wider governance space e.g. board development events, Board member development events, learning walks and student events
- by the nature and availability of admin support
- by the experience and expertise of senior staff
- by the experience and expertise of Board membership
- and many other local factors

Professional development time and focus needs to be built into the working practices for the Board Secretary, supported by the Chair and Principal.

Building on 5.1. & 5.2., every Board should be clear about the development priorities for the Board Secretary, together with the Board's response to addressing these priorities.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

	RECOMMENDATION	Board Secretary	College (Chair & Principal)	CDN (including BS Network)
1	Review the current model job description and person specification for Board Secretary for relevance and clarity			✓
2	Review the nomenclature of 'Board Secretary' in relation to status and performance	✓	✓	✓
3	Each college should review the terms and conditions for the Board Secretary to ensure <sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[a] sufficient time for delivery of the expectations for the role</li> <li>[b] sufficient administrative support for the expectations for the role</li> <li>[c] appropriate salary for the status and responsibilities of the role</li> </ul>	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	
4	Ensure the expectations of the Code of Good Governance are implemented as stated, or that any variations locally are adequately explained and managed effectively	✓	✓	
5	Develop a model programme / checklist of Board Secretary induction for use by colleges			✓
6	Creation of a Board Secretary Handbook to support Board Secretary induction			✓
7	Develop an annual programme of professional support and development for Board Secretaries			✓
8	Ensure a working assumption of governance communications to Chair, Principal and Board Secretary to strengthen the operation of the triangle	✓	✓	✓
9	Develop greater understanding of how the Board Secretary can operate as strategic influencer, sensemaker and translator of governance and governing			✓
10	Develop model performance objectives for the Board Secretary based on (1) and (9) above			✓
11	Develop a support package for the recruitment of Board Secretaries			✓
12	Review the Board Secretary section of the CDN Website for ease of navigation and usefulness of content			✓
13	Review and summarise a range of appropriate qualifications for in-service development by Board Secretaries			✓

<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing (September 2021) a College Sector Job Evaluation process is underway. Any review of terms and conditions must be within the context of the outcome of this national process.

# ANNEX 1 – EXTRACT FROM THE CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES (2016)

## Board Secretary

D.13 The board as a whole must appoint a board secretary who is responsible to it and reports directly to the chair in their board secretary capacity. The board secretary may be a member of the senior management team in their board secretary capacity, but they cannot hold any other senior management team position at the same time. The appointment and removal of the board secretary is a decision of the board as a whole.

D.14 All board members must have access to the board secretary who has an important governance role in advising the board, the committees and individual board members and supporting good governance. The distinctive board secretary role includes:

### **facilitating good governance and advising board members on:**

- the proper exercise of their powers, including in relation to relevant legislation
- the board's compliance with its Financial Memorandum, the Good Governance Code, its Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation
- their behaviour and conduct in relation to the board's Code of Conduct.

### **providing clear advice to the chair and the board/committees on any concerns the board secretary may have that board members have not been given:**

- sufficient information
- information in an appropriate form
- sufficient time to monitor, scrutinise or make informed and rigorous decisions in an open and transparent way.

**attending and providing support to every board meeting and every meeting of every board committee. Where the board secretary is unable to attend, while the board secretary retains overall responsibility, proper arrangements must be made to cover the role with a person who is fully able to discharge the role effectively having an unambiguous right to speak at board and committee meetings to convey any concerns they may have about governance. This extends to someone substituting for the board secretary.**

**reporting any unresolved concerns about the governance of the body to the relevant funding body (i.e. SFC or the regional strategic body).**

D.15 The board must ensure the board secretary:

**has suitable skills, knowledge and behaviours to carry out their role effectively**

**receives appropriate induction, and if new to the role, is mentored by a more experienced board secretary for at least their first year**

**has adequate time and resources available to undertake their role effectively.**

D.16 The board must ensure arrangements are in place to deal with a board secretary's potential or real conflicts of interest.

# ANNEX 2 – MODEL ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR BOARD SECRETARY/CLERK TO THE BOARD/GOVERNANCE OFFICER/COLLEGE SECRETARY

<b>Job Title:</b>	Board Secretary/Clerk to the Board/Governance Officer/College Secretary etc
<b>Salary:</b>	
<b>Hours of Work:</b>	
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Chair of Board of Management
<b>Base Location:</b>	

## 1. Job Purpose

The Board Secretary has an important governance role in advising the Board and individual Board members and supporting good governance. The Board Secretary should advise the Board and Executive Team on governance, the role of the Board and Board matters.

The Board Secretary must directly support the Chair and the Board in ensuring that the Board receives appropriate, timely and high-quality information in a form that allows it to monitor and scrutinise the College's activities and to challenge performance when required. The Board Secretary must support the Chair, the Board and the Executive Team in ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation and governance requirements.

The Board Secretary is accountable to the Board through the Chair on all matters relating to his or her duties. The Board Secretary will give sound, well-researched, independent and impartial advice and guidance to the Board and will support Board Members in evaluating their effectiveness.

The Board Secretary may be a member of the senior management team in their board secretary capacity, but they cannot hold any other senior management team position at the same time. This is to ensure independent advice is given and to avoid potential conflicts of interest arising. However, this does not imply that the Board Secretary is independent of the college, they play a vital role, and should avoid becoming remote from the working of the college. The Board Secretary should establish an effective working relationship with senior management and other relevant staff in their College.

## 2. Key Responsibilities

### Advisory

- 2.1 Provide advice to the Board and its Committees to facilitate good governance in relation to:
- the proper exercise of their powers, including in relation to relevant legislation
  - compliance with the Financial Memorandum, its Good Governance Code, Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation
  - their behaviour and conduct in relation to the Board's Code of Conduct.

- 2.2 Provide clear advice to the Chair and the Board or Committee on any concerns the Board may have that relates to Board members having not been given:
- (a) sufficient information
  - (b) information in an appropriate form
  - (c) sufficient time to monitor, scrutinise or make informed and rigorous decisions in an open and transparent way.
- 2.3 Take appropriate action if Board, Committee or any Board members appear to be at risk of acting outside their powers, in conflict with the College's interests, or undertaking or proposing actions that may be unlawful.
- 2.4 Keep abreast of sector developments and relevant government policy and bring to the attention of the Chair and the Board matters likely to affect the arrangements in place for the College in relation to governance.
- 2.5 Act in an independent and impartial capacity to secure professional advice or undertake research on behalf of the Board and brief the Chair and Board Members on relevant issues.
- 2.6 Ensure that all documentation relating to corporate governance, including the Board's Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation, Code of Conduct, Committee remits and Registers of Interest, are regularly reviewed and kept up-to-date and are approved by the Board prior to publication.
- 2.7 Draft briefing papers for the Board and correspondence on behalf of the Chair.
- 2.8 Report any unresolved concerns about the governance of the body to the relevant funding body (i.e. the Scottish Funding Council or the Regional Strategic Body).

## **Board Appointments**

- 2.9 Manage the process of Board appointments, ensuring that the Board fully takes account of the College Sector Board Appointments: 2014 Ministerial Guidance and ensuring that all Board members are kept up to date on progress.
- 2.10 Act as Returning Officer for the election of staff members to the Board, ensuring that the procedures used are in accordance with legislation and staff have been consulted on these procedures as appropriate.
- 2.11 Check the eligibility of current and prospective Board members in accordance with legislation.
- 2.12 Prepare and issue terms of appointment for all Board members.
- 2.13 Support the Board in the recruitment of a new Principal and, where relevant, members of the Senior Management Team.

## **Induction, Training and Development**

- 2.14 Promote the availability of the National Induction Programme to new Board members as soon as dates are available and encourage, support and monitor participation, normally to be completed by Members within 9 months of appointment.
- 2.15 Lead on the development of a College specific induction programme for new Board members, tailored to individual needs.
- 2.16 Support the Chair in providing an ongoing training programme of activities for existing Board members, to reflect individual training needs, sector changes and current College or national issues.

- 2.17 Assist the Chair (and Vice Chair where appropriate) in making arrangements for annual development meetings with individual Board members.
- 2.18 Participate in relevant CPD and networking events to ensure up-to-date knowledge on governance and sector-wide issues.

### **Conduct of Board Meetings**

- 2.19 Ensure that agendas, papers and minutes are drafted and issued in accordance with the Standing Orders.
- 2.20 Attend or have oversight of all Board and Committee meetings, ensuring that adequate arrangements are in place to record attendance, take minutes and give procedural advice where required.
- 2.21 After each meeting, ensure dissemination of Board decisions to those required to implement them and ensure the Board is briefed on progress at subsequent meetings.
- 2.22 Support the Board in undertaking its annual review of effectiveness.
- 2.23 Prepare an annual schedule of Board and Committee meetings (including Strategy and Development Days where appropriate) and circulate this in a timely manner to Board Members.
- 2.24 Make appropriate arrangements for relevant information relating to the Board to be published on the College website.
- 2.25 Facilitate suitable arrangements for the approval and retention of minutes, in accordance with the Standing Orders.

### **Standards Officer**

- 2.26 Act as Standards Officer in accordance with the Advice on the Role of a Standards Officer (issued by the Standards Commission for Scotland).

### **General**

- 2.27 Check claims for expenses submitted by Board members are in made accordance with College procedures and ensure payment is made.
- 2.28 Undertake any other duties as may reasonably be required by the Board.

## **3. Person Specification**

### **Education and Qualifications**

- Educated to degree level or equivalent
- Up to date knowledge of corporate governance practice
- An understanding of the legal framework in which the Board operates
- An appreciation of ethical standards and the principles of public life

### **Experience**

- Working with a Board
- Providing advice on corporate governance and other matters, ideally within a further education environment
- Holding a senior level position and complex/difficult decision-making

### **Skills/Attributes**

- Ability to provide advice in an accurate and concise manner
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Integrity, diplomacy and good judgement
- Ability to remain independent and impartial
- Ability to meet tight timescales and prioritise work to ensure deadlines are met
- An effective team member and can perform effectively with a minimum of supervision
- Excellent planning and organisational skills
- Confidentiality and discretion
- Meticulous attention to detail
- Effective minute-taking skills
- IT skills relevant to the post

### **Flexibility**

- Ability to work flexibly, including flexing the number of hours worked to accommodate the Board and Committee cycles. Some evening work may also be required to support meetings.

### **Good Governance Steering Group June 2016**



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