

Benefits of being a Governor

What are the personal benefits to be gained from being an academy governor?

The main benefit you can gain from being an academy governor is a sense of satisfaction through involvement in the most important volunteering role in education. The collective decisions you make, as a member of the governing body, will help shape the future of children at the academy. Other benefits will include:

- The opportunity to develop new skills and to strengthen existing ones.
- The opportunity to practise work talents. As part of a team, being an academy governor will give you the opportunity to work with a wide range of people from a variety of social, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- The opportunity to gain an understanding of the decision making process of academy governing bodies and an awareness of the education system as a whole.
- The opportunity to make a real difference and the chance to contribute to the good of the community, leading to personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement.
- The opportunity to undertake training provided by the Trust
- And finally making a real difference for our children! School governors have an important part to play in maintaining and developing our children's education. There is a heavier workload on governors now than there used to be, but equally, the importance of the governors' role has gained national recognition.

What are the responsibilities of being an academy governor?

Governors are responsible for promoting high standards of educational achievement and enabling the Principal and the staff to deliver these. Governors are involved in planning the school's long-term future, in overseeing its aims, values and ethos, and in monitoring its performance.

How much work does being a governor involve?

Time spent on governor duties varies by academy. Local Governing bodies (LGBs) generally meet at least once per academy term and are supported by committees that discuss key areas such as finance and Data and Standards. If you decide to become a governor it is important that you are able to attend the majority of the LGBs; some reading will also be necessary as preparation for these meetings. Participation in one of the committees is by invitation of the LGB and is a matter of individual preference. Although it is difficult to quantify the time commitment involved, it is likely to average out at 6-8 hours per calendar month. Most meetings take place on weekday evenings.

How big a commitment is this?

The normal term for serving as a governor is four years. If you want to be an effective governor and provide stability and continuity to an academy's governing body you will

ideally be able to commit to this period of time. As a volunteer you can choose to leave the LGB at any time.

Academies that are experiencing difficulty and that are shown to have serious weakness have appointed Academy Improvement Boards in place.

What qualities or qualifications do I need to be a governor?

You do not need any special qualifications to be an academy governor. The most important qualities a governor will bring to a LGB are enthusiasm and commitment. You are likely to be working with people from a variety of social, religious and cultural backgrounds so it will also help to be a good listener, taking time to understand the views of different people. Governors bring a range of skills, experience, interests and perspectives from many walks of life. This will aid the decision-making functions of the LGB.

What are the benefits of your employees becoming governors?

- Your staff will acquire new skills
- You will influence standards in the future workforce
- You will build stronger links with local communities
- You will help give every young person a better and more relevant education

Employers can really benefit from involvement with academies. This is particularly true of staff serving as governors. It helps staff develop valuable skills; enables employers to play a positive role in their community; and allows them to offer an employer perspective to the running of the academy, its strategy and curriculum.

Many of the skills governors acquire are skills that staff might not otherwise develop until much later in their career. They acquire board-level strategic leadership skills and the experiences of working as a senior team. These are valuable skills that governors can bring back into the workplace, which come at no cost to the employer.

Academy governance has many parallels with running a business, and getting involved makes good commercial sense as well as providing an excellent opportunity for companies seeking to get involved in the community. By supporting staff in their role as governors an employer has the opportunity to gain significant benefits. These range from an enhanced company profile, to staff development, to shaping the local workforce.

Key Business Benefits from Community Involvement:

- Employee development
- Strong and positive links with the community
- A more informed workforce
- Projecting company / business values
- Better customer relations / PR

- Opportunity to shape future workforce
- Staff recruitment
- Demonstrate company skill

Why People With Work and Management Skills?

People from the world of work bring a different perspective to the LGB that is also very beneficial. Skills learnt in the workplace can add real value to LGBs. Volunteers with an external, work-based perspective who are willing to challenge assumptions and promote innovation will be increasingly important as academies deal with major issues such as the expansion of knowledge and resource; the pace and type of change; the implication of faith; race and language; and the influence of new technology.

People have a range of transferable work skills that can add value to schools and strengthen LGBs such as;

- Marketing
- Problem solving
- Team working
- Strategic planning
- Personnel
- Decision making
- Financial planning
- Project management
- ICT
- Communications

For further advice and support please contact Gemma Yates, Governor Services Officer
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