

GOVERNANCE4FE

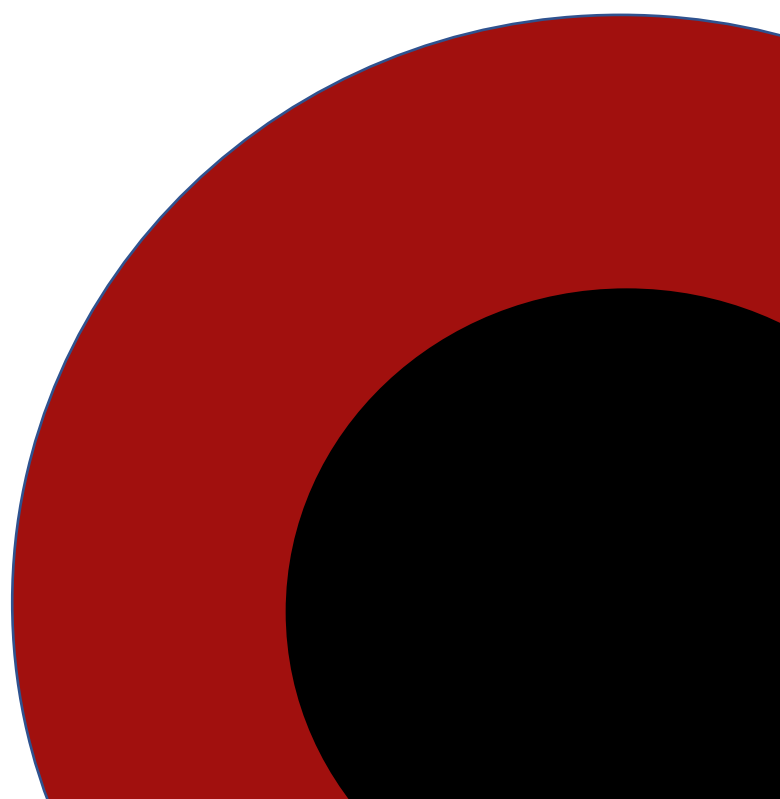
Governance for Further Education and Skills

Guidance Note

Board members Visits

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Board Member Visits

It is the content of most governance codes to promote the requirement for board members to understand the business of the business,

As is normal practice in the role of a board member in any organisation, members are expected to familiarise themselves with the organisation with which they are involved. This familiarisation is through a number of means:

- Attending board and committee meetings
- Reading sector and organisational information
- Attending appropriate sector conferences/development days
- Visiting the organisation through an agreed procedure
- Participating in induction & other training events

In order for the Board to fulfil its duty of ensuring the institution meets its strategic goals and fulfils its vision, board members need to ensure that they thoroughly understand both the institution business they are charged with directing, and the wider operational and strategic context within which the institution operates, so their contributions in the boardroom are both contextually relevant and effective. Therefore, a programme of continuous learning and discovery is recommended.

The purpose of board members attending the institution to undertake board member visits is:

- To extend board members' knowledge of institution management, staff, students, courses, curriculum, and services.
- To provide a better understanding of the student experience
- To familiarise board members with the institution's physical environment and resources.
- To provide an opportunity for members of the senior leadership team, staff and students to meet informally with board members.
- To help board members develop their knowledge of areas and aspects of course delivery, quality issues, performance indicators, improving and well-established good practice, etc.
- To facilitate a better understanding of the way in which strategic decisions taken by the Board influence provision and services at an operational level.
- To raise the profile of the Board with staff and students of the institution.

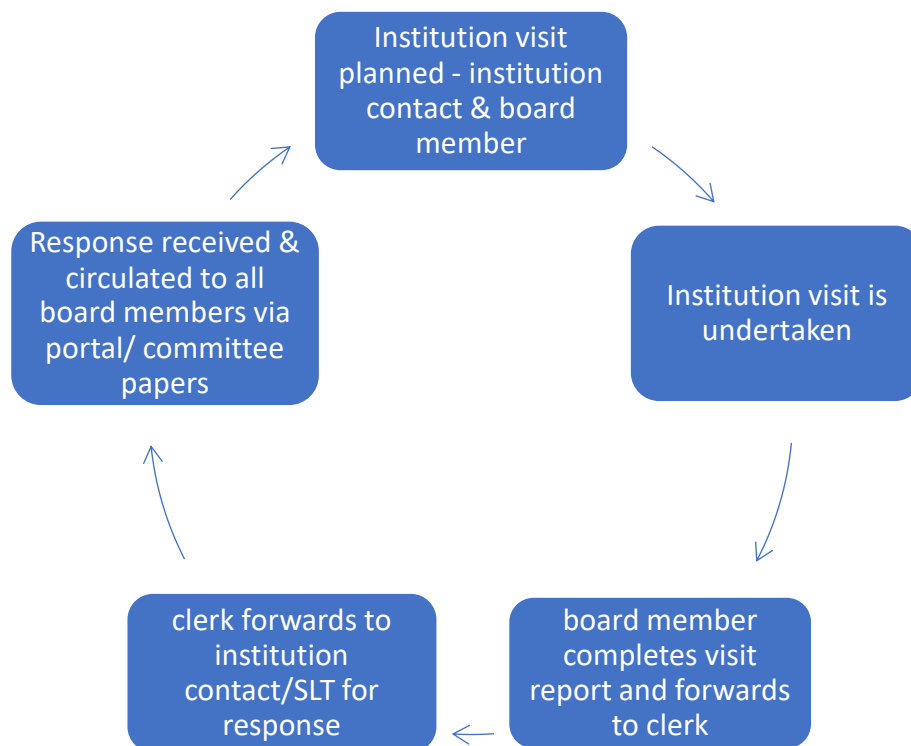
Any board member visit scheme is not:

- For board member involvement in operational matters

- For staff to use board members as channels of communication where management structures and procedures already exist
- To make judgements about the quality of provision, teaching and learning or leadership and management
- To be onerous for either board members or staff, and additional meetings and paperwork should be kept to a minimum.

A note of each visit should be recorded and shared in order to extend the learning and understanding of all board members, not just of the board member who has completed the visit. It is crucial that the feedback loop on board member visits is completed, and a senior lead or the Principal has opportunity to address and report back to board members/the relevant committee on any matters raised by the board member who wrote the report.

Board Member Visit Process



If a formal link board member scheme is set up in the institution, it is essential to remember that an individual board member is not responsible for the area they have been designated. The board is a body corporate, and therefore responsibility remains with the whole governing body, not an individual board member.

A [template for a Board member Visit Report is available here](#).

Governance for Further Education and Skills

We are a unique organisation that focuses on corporate governance in the Further Education & Skills sector, making us the 'go to' place to find and be directed to trusted information, expert advice and consultancy, sophisticated software tools, inspirational training, and a library of support documents. Our desire is to see governing bodies positively influence their institutions through effective governance, enabling them to improve outcomes for all students and their communities. We are the ultimate one-stop shop for all your requirements in Further Education governance.

Our purpose is to come along side all those operating in the Further Education governance space to support them to deliver effective governance by providing an outstanding service which delivers resources that are:

- **Practical** – something you can adapt, adopt and utilise immediately
- **Instructive** – you learn in the act of doing – change happened best, is more sustained, and has greater rewards when it takes place from within the organisation
- **Inspirational** – by providing a new perspective, stimulating curiosity, and bringing hope of an improved future

Guidance notes are prepared by the Governance4FE team and peer reviewed by our associates, who are highly experienced and qualified governance experts.

There are over 100 guidance notes available at

www.governance4fe.co.uk