

Checklist for those in a governance role in ACL

The responsibility for raising standards and challenging poor performance rests with governors and service leaders. This brief checklist sets out some of the key considerations for those in a governance role in ACL: 'what', 'why' and 'how' to do it.

What	Why	How
Accountability		
- assess risk	Establish baseline in order to measure improvement and effectiveness and prepare contingency plans	Head of Service to provide Red, Amber, Green (RAG) ratings against key headings of strategic plan; identification possible solutions should problems arise; monthly or termly according to any level of concern raised. See also Strategy below, with link to sample document
- compliance with local authority codes of conduct and adherence to schemes of delegation	To continue good relationships; ensure continuity of funding; provide reassurance on decisions taken	Regular, annual, audit of Service practice undertaken by Head of Service against any published Codes; followed up with timely plan of action where non-compliance is detected
- data and management information	To inform decisions about strategic direction and curriculum	Learner performance data summarised by Head of Service at learning area level showing achievement, retention, satisfaction; available to each Steering group/portfolio holder briefing/Board meeting. Ofsted data dashboard may be helpful: http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/
- equality and diversity	To ensuring that all learners have access to high quality provision and achieve well. To ensure that those with governance responsibilities are representative of the local community and understand their duties and E&D policy	Set up an equality and diversity task group, chaired by Head of Service or member of governing body or equivalent group. Carry out regular impact assessments on all new policies/ review existing ones. Data from these assessments should show the performance of different groups of learners,

		<p>helping close any achievement gaps. Review regularly the composition of the Board or equivalent steering group to ensure it fairly reflects local demographics. See AOC Governance Guide on Diversity of the Governing Body: http://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Diversity%20of%20the%20college%20governing%20body_0.pdf</p> <p>LSIS Guide to Governance, E&D: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130802100617/http://isis.org.uk/Documents/Publications/LSIS_208_WEB.sflb.pdf</p>
<p>- funding</p>	<p>To balance funding income against funding body contracts equated to learner recruitment and fee income targets. To ensure that any central local authority top sliced or financial contributions are paid</p>	<p>Monthly or quarterly management accounts prepared by a qualified person and presented to those in the governance capacity, with a commentary on all items, highlighting changes since previous reporting and action recommended. Forward cash flow forecasts should be included. Governors need training in order to understand the data, challenge any changes and consider solutions to any deficits or plans for expansion/fund-raising. Governor rep who is/was an accountant can be helpful. The FE Commissioner has written to FE providers about finances, linked to performance measures: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementing-rigour-and-responsiveness-in-skills-</p>

		fe-commissioner-letter-financial-challenges
- leadership	Key risk arises from poor leadership: inadequate planning and lack of strategic direction	Performance management system undertaken by line manager to appraise regularly the Head of Service against Service targets; Head and line manager to discuss strengths/weaknesses through regular formal/informal contact with Chair of governors or portfolio holder permitting challenge of noted problems and helping identify solutions. The Foundation sponsors the Leadership Register to help leaders in FE build professional relationships and networks: http://212.84.66.199/~leadreg/index.php
- marketing and communications	To understand any changes in direction the Service wishes to make	Brief overview of learner survey results, marketing materials and new ideas, based on information prepared by marketing manager or Head of Service. Sample marketing methodology/oversight: http://www.rcu.co.uk/custom-consultancy/market-analysis-study
- staff performance and turnover	To ensure continuity of service; to assess levels of satisfaction in the working environment	Termly or annual confidential staff surveys; regular focus groups of staff to talk about curriculum or quality or other issues, observed by or involving governors/portfolio holders
- stakeholder relationships	To ensure local community and employer understanding and buy in; maintain good relations with funding bodies	Employer/community equitable representation on Board or equivalent group; their regular attendance and contribution. Possible inclusion of a funding agency rep as an observer or

		<p>member of a relevant sub-committee.</p> <p>AOC have a Governance Library open to all reading their website, with helpful guides for governors on various topics including engagement, equally useful to those in ACL as well as colleges:</p> <p>https://www.aoc.co.uk/funding-and-corporate-services/governance/governance-library/guidance-notes</p>
Community	To engage effectively with local learners and understand their needs. Likely to be in partnership with organisations that represent specific types of learner or learning need	<p>Head of Service undertakes an annual Community Impact Assessment. See an example at:</p> <p>http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20086/communities_and_localism/480/equality_and_diversity</p> <p>AOC Governance Guide: Meeting Community Needs</p> <p>http://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Meeting%20community%20needs.pdf</p>
Performance	Accountability to funding agencies and the local community, and compliance with the Ofsted inspection Framework	Use of a balanced scorecard prepared by Service staff drawing on the strategic plan, showing targets and actual achievements
Strategy	To set the mission, vision and values for	Develop a clear understanding of the strategic

	the Service and ensure that resources are allocated accordingly	<p>plan prepared and delivered annually by the Head of Service.</p> <p>Update on evaluation and progress against the Service targets at each governing body or committee meeting.</p> <p>AOC Governance Guide: http://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Strategic%20positioning%20and%20local%20infrastructure.pdf</p>
Teaching and Learning	Accountability to Ofsted and to learners, both of whom have high expectations of excellent teaching and achievements	<p>Set up a teaching and learning task group, chaired by Head of Service or member of governing body or equivalent group, with teaching staff membership.</p> <p>Conduct regular 'learning walks' and/or review/observe teaching in action.</p> <p>Consider what is learnt from this training when reading and commenting on regular reports of learning and achievement data.</p> <p>Useful AOC Governance Guide to T&L: http://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Governors%20role%20in%20teaching%20learning%20and%20assessment.pdf</p>
Working Together	Particularly for Services where there is a Portfolio Holder (PH) or Cabinet Member working with the Head of Service: the PH should be seen to set and agree priorities and take an active role in challenge and aligning Service goals to the local	Meet regularly with the Head of Service on a one to one basis, to provide informal information gleaned from the local constituency and to provide formal challenge of reporting and data presented by the Head. Provide timely advice and direction and a link to relevant local

authority's central strategies

authority committees and/or departments or other councillors – this could include an invitation to the Head to present key facts about ACL to these committees/departments eg health, or to a discrete Scrutiny Committee.