



Royal  
Academy  
of Music

## Summary of Responsibilities of Members of Governing Bodies

Institutions of higher education are legally independent corporate institutions which have a common purpose of providing teaching and undertaking research. They also contribute to economic growth through research and developing links with industry and the community.

***The board of governors is the executive governing body of the institution and carries responsibility for ensuring the effective management of the institution and for planning its future development. It has ultimate responsibility for all affairs of the institution.***

The main responsibilities of the governing body are as follows:

- **Proper Conduct of Public Business**

Governing bodies have a duty to observe the highest standards of corporate governance. This includes ensuring and demonstrating integrity and objectivity in the transaction of their business, and following a policy of openness and transparency in the dissemination of their decisions.

- **Strategic Planning**

The governing body bears the responsibility to consider and approve the institution's strategic plan, which sets the academic aims and objectives of the institution and identifies the financial, physical and staffing strategies necessary to achieve these objectives.

- **Monitoring Performance**

The governing body should regularly monitor the performance of the institution against its planned strategies and operational targets.

- **Finance**

The governing body ensures the solvency of the institution and safeguarding its assets. It approves the institution's financial and operating plans and budgets which should reflect the strategic plan. The governing body ensures the funds provided by HEFCE are used in accordance with the terms and conditions specified in HEFCE's Financial Memorandum.

- **Audit**

The governing body is responsible for directing and overseeing the institution's arrangements for internal and external audit.

- **Estate Management**

The governing body considers, approves and keeps under review an estate strategy which identifies the property and space requirements needed to fulfil the objectives of the institution's strategic plan, and also provides for a planned programme of maintenance.

- **Charitable Status**

Governing bodies must ensure that the property and income of the institution are applied only in support of purposes which are charitable in law.

- **Staffing**

The governing body has responsibility for the institution's employment policy which includes ensuring that pay and conditions of employment are properly determined and implemented.

- **Students' Union**

The governing body should take reasonable steps to ensure the Students' Union operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances.

- **Health and Safety**

The governing body carries ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of employees, students and other individuals whilst they are on the institution's premises and in other places where they may be affected by its operations. The governing body's duties include ensuring that the institution has a written statement of policy on health and safety, and arrangements for the implementation of that policy.

From the '*Guide for Members of Governing Bodies of Universities and Colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.*' Guide 01/20. Higher Education Funding Council of England.