Board of Governors – Accountability and Assurance

The Board of Governors has an important role in the governance of University of Staffordshire. The exact role of the Board of Governors, and the assurance that it needs in the efficacious governance of the University, has developed over time and is dispersed across a range of interested parties. This document brings together briefly, in one place, the assurances that the Board needs in order to fulfil its role in the governance of the University.

These areas of accountability form the business of the Board of Governors. The main sources of assurance are shown below, but it should be noted that reports underpinning each of these will be received regularly through the sub committees of the Board. The following information has been summarised from the main source documents.

University of Staffordshire's Instruments and Articles of Government

The University's Instruments and Articles of Government are determined by the Privy Council and set out in broad terms the role of the Board of Governors, the Vice Chancellor, other Senior Postholders and Academic Board. The relevant parts for the Board, in terms of responsibilities. are as follows:

- the determination of the educational character and mission of the University and for oversight of its activities; **(Board of Governor Strategic Events and Decisions of the Board)**
- the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the Corporation and for safeguarding their assets; **(Sustainability and Resources Committee and Decisions of the Board and specifically the Annual Financial Statements, Annual Procurement Report, Annual Report on Public Interest Disclosure, Internal Audit Annual Report, Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee, External Audit Management Letter and University Level Risk Registers)**
- the responsibility to ensure that the principles of academic freedom of speech are upheld **(Prevent Annual Report)**
- the determination of the tuition fees of the University **(Tuition Fee Policy)**

And specifically:

- The approval of the financial statements of the University **(Annual Financial Statements)**
- The appointment and dismissal of the Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive **(Special Committee of the Board as required)**
- The appointment of members of the Board of Governors **(Nominations and Governance Committee)**
- The remuneration and terms and conditions of service of senior postholders including the Vice Chancellor **(Remuneration Committee and specifically the Annual Statement of Senior Postholder Remuneration)**
- The appointment and dismissal of senior postholders other than the Vice Chancellor **(Remuneration Committee)**
- The appraisal of the performance of senior postholders including the Vice Chancellor **(Remuneration Committee)**
- The appointment of a Clerk to the Board of Governors **(Remuneration Committee)**

Office for Students – Ongoing Conditions of Registration as a Higher Education Provider

The Office for Students is the principal regulator for the Higher Education Sector in England, and as such the University is required to comply with the ongoing conditions of registration:

- **Access and Participation of Students:**
  - Ensuring that the University attracts and accepts students to study from the widest possible pool and takes steps to attract and accept students from groups that are under-represented. **(Access and Participation Plan Annual Report)**
  - A Fee Policy that is in line with the Institutions status with the OfS as a provider of Higher Education **(Tuition Fee Policy)**

- **Quality, Reliable Standards and Positive Outcomes for all Students**
  - The University must deliver well-designed courses that provide a high-quality academic experience **(Annual Academic Quality, Standards and Student Success Report*)**

- The University must support all students from admission through to completion, with the support they need to succeed **(Annual Academic Quality, Standards and Student Success Report* and Access and Participation Plan Annual Report)**
- The University must deliver successful outcomes for all its students that are valued and recognised **(Annual Academic Quality, Standards and Student Success Report*)**
- The University must deliver courses that meet the academic standards as they are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications **(Annual Academic Quality, Standards and Student Success Report*)**
- The University must participate in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (or its successor) **(TEF Status)**

- **Protecting the Interests of Students**
  - The University must comply with consumer protection law and participate in the student complaints scheme run by the Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education **(Annual Report of Student Complaints and OIA Judgments and Internal Audit Reports regarding CMA compliance)**
  - The University must have in place a Student Protection Plan, approved by the OfS and review this regularly **(Approval of the University's Student Protection Plan)**
  - The University must comply with any Student Protection Direction, if the University will be at risk of providing Higher Education – the market exit risk **(University Level Risk Registers and Annual Financial Statements)**

- **Financial Sustainability**
  - The University must be financially viable, sustainable and have the resources to provide Higher Education, fulfilling the earlier requirements of quality provision and positive outcomes **(Sustainability and Resources Committee and Decisions of the Board and specifically the Annual Financial Statements, Annual Procurement Report, Annual Report on Public Interest Disclosure, Internal Audit Annual Report, Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee, External Audit Management Letter and University Level Risk Registers)**

- **Good Governance**
  - The University must have adequate and effective governance arrangements in place **(Governance Effectiveness Review completed every three years against the CUC Code of Governance and accompanying action plan and Annual Cycle of Face-to-Face Meetings with the Chair of the Board)**
  - The University, through its governance arrangements must comply with all conditions of its registration **(as detailed earlier)**
  - The University must have in place a senior 'accountable officer' who fulfils the responsibilities set out by the OfS **(appointment of a Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive)**
  - The University must provide the OfS with information as requested and when requested and publish this as stipulated, in accordance with the OfS ongoing conditions of registration **(Internal Audit Reports on Data Returns)**
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Charity Commission:

The majority of Universities in England are exempt charities as per Schedule 2 of the Charities Act 1993 and section 22(1) of the 2011 Act. This means that these hold charitable status and are required to comply with charity law, but are not required to register with the Charity Commission and fulfil its associated reporting and filing requirements. The six core duties set out by the Charity Commission in the Essential Trustee Guide are adapted below to make them relevant to the HEI governance context:

- Ensure the University is carrying out its purpose for the public benefit through the advancement of education. **(Board of Governor Strategic Events and Decisions of the Board and the Annual Academic Quality, Standards and Student Success Report*)**
- Comply with the Instrument and Articles of Government and legal obligations **(as outlined in the specific earlier section)**
- Act in the University's best interests. **(Board of Governor Strategic Events and Decisions of the Board, University Level Risk Registers, Annual Report of Public Interest Disclosure, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report, Inclusion Annual Report, Prevent Annual Report)**

- Manage the HEI's resources responsibly **(Sustainability and Resources Committee and Decisions of the Board and specifically the Annual Financial Statements, Annual Procurement Report, Annual Report on Public Interest Disclosure, Internal Audit Annual Report, Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee, External Audit Management Letter and University Level Risk Registers)**
- Act with reasonable skill and care **(Nominations and Governance Committee, through the Governance Effectiveness Review, Annual Face to Face Reviews with the Chair of the Board)**
- Ensure the University is accountable for its core purpose of advancing education as a public benefit, ultimately to the charity regulator, government, funders, sponsors and, most importantly past and present beneficiaries. **(Board of Governor Strategic Events and Decisions of the Board)**

All of the above areas of accountability and assurance should be achieved through good governance, built upon the Nolan Principles of Public Life. All source documents are available on the Governance section of the University website.

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*The Annual Academic Quality, Standards and Student Success Report includes information on recruitment, progression, retention, satisfaction, achievement, and employability