

EXCEED ACADEMIES TRUST – BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Overview

The Finance Committee's remit is to advise the Board and Accounting Officer (the CEO) regarding the financial strategy, planning, performance, and compliance of the Trust. The Committee also advises the Board regarding the budget, financial policies, contracts, and procurement, as well as ensuring that the Trust operates within the financial regulations and guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Additionally, the Committee will support the Board in fulfilling its responsibility to ensure sound management of the Trust's finances and resources, including proper planning, monitoring and probity.

Authority

The Finance Committee is authorised by the Trust Board to:

- Carry out any activity authorised by these terms of reference.
- Investigate any activity within its terms of reference or specifically delegated to it by the Board.
- Request any information it requires from any employee, external audit, internal audit, or other assurance provider.
- Obtain any outside legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary, normally in consultation with the Accounting Officer and/or the Trust Board.

Membership and Quorum

The Members of the Committee and its Chair shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees. Membership of the Committee will be reviewed annually alongside these terms of reference. Members shall hold office from either the date of their appointment until their resignation, or their omission from membership of the committee on subsequent consideration by the Board of Trustees – whichever occurs first.

- There shall be no fewer than three committee members with the majority being serving Trustees. Up to two external co-opted members with relevant expertise may also be appointed but must not be employees of the Trust.
- Any Committee Member may be appointed as Chair.
- At least one member of the Committee should have recent or relevant financial or accounting experience.
- Only full members of the Committee who have been approved by the Board of Trustees have the right to vote on any matters.
- Any Trustee may attend a meeting of the Finance Committee, including those who are not members of the Committee.
- Meetings of the Finance Committee shall be quorate if two members of the Committee are present. A committee member dialled in via conference/video call will be classed as in attendance and shall count towards the quorum.

Duties

The duties of the Finance Committee shall be to:

- advise the board on the financial strategy and planning of the Trust, including the setting and monitoring of key performance indicators and financial objectives
- review and recommend the annual budget and three-year financial plan to the Board of Trustees for approval
- monitor the income and expenditure throughout the year of all funds against the annual budget plan in monthly management accounts produced by the Chief Finance Officer
- review and approve any significant changes to the budget or financial plan during the year
- ensure the Trust has appropriate financial policies and procedures in place and adheres to requirements set out within the Funding Agreement, Academy Trust Handbook, Dear Accounting Officer letters and ESFA updates
- monitor financial risk and ensure any change is reflected in the Trust Risk Register
- oversee the School Resource Management Self-Assessment tool completion and timely submission
- receive and recommend the annual financial statements to the Board of Trustees for approval
- review and approve expenditure requiring Trustee approval in line with the Financial Scheme of Delegation
- provide minutes of all Finance Committee meetings for review at board meetings
- monitor the Trust's reserves and:
 - review and approve investment proposals involving standard bank savings accounts
 - review and recommend to the Board other investment proposals such as stocks and shares
- review and approve any policies presented, on behalf of the Trustees. Any policies approved by the Committee shall be circulated to all members of the Board of Trustees

Meetings of the Finance Committee

The Committee will meet as often as is necessary to fulfil its responsibilities, usually at least three times per year.

All meetings shall be convened by the Governance Professional, who shall send to all of the members of the Committee written notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda at least seven days in advance of the meeting.

The convening of a meeting and the proceedings conducted shall not be invalidated by reason of any individual not having received written notice of the meeting or a copy of the agenda.

The Accounting Officer and the Chief Finance Officer shall attend meetings, unless otherwise instructed by the Committee.

The Governance Professional shall attend to take a record of the meeting, unless otherwise instructed by the Committee. Where the Governance Professional fails to attend a meeting, committee members can appoint any one of their number or any other person to act as Clerk for the purposes of that meeting.

Every matter to be decided upon will be determined by a majority vote – where there is an equal division of votes, the Chair will have the deciding vote.

Members will withdraw from the meeting if there is an identified or potential conflict of interest, or there is a motion to question their ability to remain impartial.

The Committee meetings will not be open to the public but minutes shall be made available. Information relating to a named person or any other matter that the committee considers confidential does not have to be made available for inspection.

Minutes and Publication

At every meeting of the Finance Committee the minutes of the last meeting shall be taken as an agenda item and, if agreed to be accurate, shall be approved as a true record.

The minutes of meetings of the Committee will be circulated to all members of the Board of Trustees.

The Governance Professional shall ensure that a copy of the agenda for every meeting of the Finance Committee and the approved minutes of every such meeting are, as soon as is reasonably practicable, made available for publication.