



Association
of Colleges

Promoting. Representing. Supporting.

Welcome Pack for Chairs of Governors



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WELCOME

Governance in further education colleges has received an increased profile in recent years. Good governance is essential to the successful running of colleges. A wide diversity of people are encouraged to become governors: it is a great way to contribute to the community and gives a strong grounding in strategic leadership.

The Association of Colleges' (AoC) Governance Team was established in 2014 with initial funding from the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) to commission and deliver training across the country and help create more high-performing colleges. Our team help with numerous detailed enquiries from clerks, governors and chairs on issues ranging from college mergers to declarations of interest. The team has developed the [Code of Good Governance for English Colleges](#) along with continuing to supply intelligence on the composition of boards in colleges, the profile of clerking in colleges and training and development opportunities through webinars and events across the country for all governors

AoC is the voice of colleges, with over 95% of eligible colleges in membership; we are the first choice destination for information about colleges in England. We focus solely on representing, promoting and supporting our members. Please keep this as your guide to the organisation and the services we offer.

We welcome you to AoC and hope you feel supported by your membership association both nationally and regionally.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Doel OBE
AoC Chief Executive



Carole Stott MBE
AoC Chair



Mark White
Chair, AoC Governors' Council



OUR MISSION



The Association of Colleges exists to represent and promote the interests of colleges and provide members with professional support services.

About us

The Association of Colleges (AoC) is a not-for-profit membership organisation set up in 1996 by colleges to act as their collective voice. Today, AoC represents and promotes the interests of more than 320 further education, sixth form, tertiary and specialist colleges across the UK – over 95% of the sector.

We influence Government and its agencies on policies affecting colleges and their students and staff at national and regional levels. We also provide members with professional support services, which include expert advice lines for [employment](#), [communications](#), [health and safety](#), [governance](#) and [teaching and learning](#).

AoC is the first port of call when seeking information about English colleges. We also work with colleges in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland through our membership of the UK Council of Colleges. Across the globe, we have partnerships with colleges in many countries including China and India. AoC has nine regional offices and hundreds of active networks, through which member colleges shape AoC's policy and direction.

Our services - at a glance

- › Weekly eBriefings on latest sector news
- › Professional advice lines – from employment to PR
- › Direct access to policy makers
- › Powerful national and regional networks
- › Projects and shared services expertise
- › Discounted rates for training, AoC Jobs and events
- › Access to online sector intelligence and analysis
- › Stronger governance and WorldSkills – The Skills Show representation as well as sport representation through AoC Sport
- › AoC Beacon and Gold Awards
- › AoC Student of the Year and Student Photographer of the Year Awards

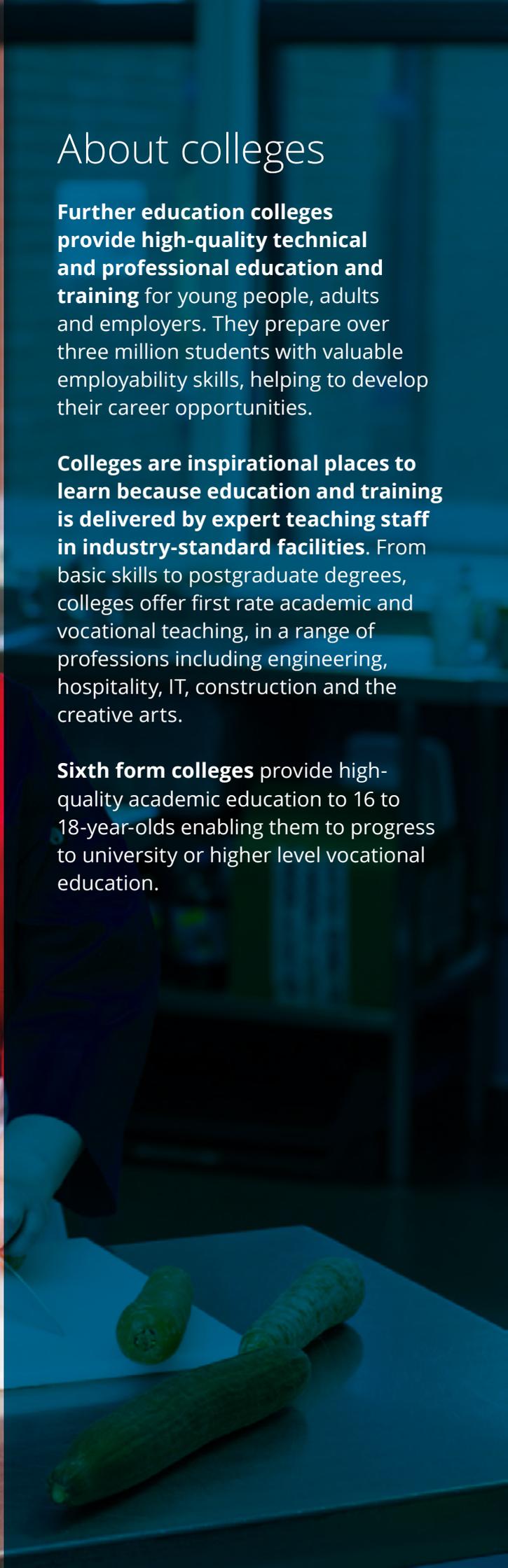


About colleges

Further education colleges provide high-quality technical and professional education and training for young people, adults and employers. They prepare over three million students with valuable employability skills, helping to develop their career opportunities.

Colleges are inspirational places to learn because education and training is delivered by expert teaching staff in industry-standard facilities. From basic skills to postgraduate degrees, colleges offer first rate academic and vocational teaching, in a range of professions including engineering, hospitality, IT, construction and the creative arts.

Sixth form colleges provide high-quality academic education to 16 to 18-year-olds enabling them to progress to university or higher level vocational education.



GOVERNANCE TEAM



AoC's Governance Team is responsible for supporting governance and meeting the needs of governors, clerks and senior leaders as informed by AoC Governors' Council and the delivery and oversight of the Governance Development Programme. The team represents the views of governors and raises issues on their behalf with government officials and agencies. The team also produces monthly governance briefings, runs the Governance helpline, webinars and keeps the website and library up to date, as well as liaising with regional offices on their regional governance offer. We aim to visit as many regional meetings as possible to offer national updates.

Director of Governance – David Walker david_walker@aoc.co.uk

Governance Manager – Josie Ormondroyd josie_ormondroyd@aoc.co.uk

Governance Administrator – Guram Korkoti guram_korkoti@aoc.co.uk

Recruitment Manager (Governance) – Fiona Telford fiona_telford@aoc.co.uk

Register for AoC briefings by contacting the Governance Team:
governance@aoc.co.uk

GOVERNANCE SUPPORT

Governance briefings

If you are a governor of an AoC member college you can register to receive briefings on a range of further education issues. These include:

- notices of forthcoming events
- updates on policy developments
- links to guidance and other useful publications
- other matters of interest to governors and clerks

When you have registered you will receive a regular email from AoC that includes all of the briefings published that week. The governance briefing is published on the last Friday of each month.

After you have registered you will also have access to previously [published](#) governance briefings.

Register to receive notifications of briefings

As the governor of a member college you can register by either:

- emailing governance@aoc.co.uk providing:
 - your name
 - the name of the college where you are a governor
 - your email address - this may be either your private email or that provided by your college
 - the category of governor you are (e.g. student or staff governor) and whether you are the chair or vice-chair of the corporation or a committee
 - the region in which the college is situated, if known
- registering through your clerk, who may need to submit your private email address to us along with the other information listed above.

When we have these details you will be able to register on AoC's website and receive a password enabling you to both log in to the website and access the briefings. Registering on the website allows you to personalise your experience by selecting specific subject areas, such as governance. When you log in you will be presented with a welcome page that will include briefings, news and events that are of particular interest to you.

Please email the [Governance Team](#) if you have any questions about briefings. Alternatively, call us on 020 7034 9900.

Governance resources

AoC's website maintains a [library of information](#) for governors on a range of topics. These include briefing notes, case studies and good practice guides and webinars on topics such as finance, recruitment and appraisal and evaluation, structured around the 10 Principal Responsibilities of Good Governance, as described in the *English Colleges Code of Good Governance*.

The website also contains a useful [frequently asked questions](#) page, which has a listing of useful services for chairs, governors and clerks.

Any governor wishing to submit material to the website can do so by emailing the [Governance Team](#).

Training materials

AoC has a wide range of training materials of interest and use to governors. There are 13 modules covering all aspects of governance. We have training materials for [governors](#) and [clerks](#).

Helpline

AoC's Governance Team provides a confidential helpline service open to clerks, chairs and governors alike, with support from internal and external governance experts as part of its service to member colleges. The contact details are listed on page nine.

GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT

Webinar programme

We deliver monthly webinars throughout the year to chairs, governors and clerks. This programme is an accessible way of disseminating up-to-date knowledge and developments in governance to a wide reaching audience.

They are free and are held on subjects of interest to governors and clerks. Each webinar will include a presentation by a subject expert who also answer questions from participants.

Details of the dates of upcoming and previous webinars are available [on our website](#).

Want to watch our webinars? Check your computer's settings.

Please ensure that you have run a test on your computer's settings.

[Whitelisting Guide](#)

This guide will talk you through what you need to make sure you are always able to see and participate in AoC webinars.

Regional offer

AoC is in a unique position to be able to represent members through its national and regional offices. Many of the key issues on governing bodies, including new structures and devolution will be played out at a regional and sub-regional level. AoC regions have local intelligence on the needs of colleges and tailor their support accordingly.

Regional AoC offices offer:

- Termly inductions for new governors.
- A training event for clerks in recruiting and supporting new governors.
- An induction session led by National Union of Students (NUS) for student governors.
- Termly themed good practice workshops. These include briefings with key regional partners including Ofsted and Skills Funding Agency/Education Funding Agency.
- A network/training meeting for staff governors.
- Termly newsletters on relevant governance issues and events.
- Regional governance summit.
- Regular network meetings for governors, clerks and chairs/principals.

There are many opportunities to become involved with governance regionally, including through:

- › Governance Steering Group
- › National Leaders of Governance
- › Regional Governors' Council representation

National Leaders of Governance

The National Leaders of Governance (NLG) programme is designed to support college boards in fulfilling their principal responsibilities including:

- › setting the strategy
- › providing financial security
- › ensuring good or outstanding teaching and learning
- › meeting employer and community need
- › ensuring the governance structures, behaviours and procedures are fit for purpose

The NLG programme was chosen as the means to improve individual college governance because research demonstrates that boards have a better chance of ensuring long term change when they have designed the process of support and intervention. Research also shows that boards often need external support to start and facilitate any improvement programme and there is no substitute for hands-on-support and one-to-one interaction from someone who has been there. The power of confidential peer-to-peer conversations should not be underestimated and neither can the value of objectivity.

NLGs are being recruited at all times and suitability for this role can be discussed with our Governance Team. These recruits will work with college colleagues to:

- › Improve college performance
- › Support the chair of governance
- › Improve board effectiveness



Effective governance case study – teaching and learning summary

This case study describes how governors from different colleges can come together to determine good practice for teaching and learning. It describes how the event was organised, provides a number of questions for governors on determining good practice and provides a principal's perspective describing the 10 difficult questions no principal wants to be asked.

Code of Good Governance

This case study underpins principal responsibility four – Teaching and Learning.

Issue to be resolved

Governors across a region wished to be more aware of the extent to which they should be involved strategically in teaching and learning and the effective mechanisms for achieving this.

[Read more.](#)

GOVERNANCE REPRESENTATION



Governors' Council

The Council's mission is to "develop and use the experience and expertise of governors to represent their views in the formation of AoC policy and promote best practice in college governance".

The Council engages with governors and oversees AoC's development of the governance programme. AoC collects their views to inform AoC policy and initiatives. The Council's regional network provides governors with feedback and information from AoC and other organisations.

Details of the [members of the council](#) are available on our website.

National Clerks Network

The National Clerks' Network (NCN) is a voluntary association of clerks of Boards of Corporations with a Memorandum of Understanding with AoC to provide support.

Its mission is "to promote excellence in governance by providing a mutual support network for clerks, representing the views of clerks, and providing a communications channel to and from clerks and other groups and individuals who are in a position to influence college governance".

The NCN meets six times a year. It is the conduit for information to and from the regions and is responsible for promoting the voice of clerks in the sector and ensuring clerks are properly informed on all key governance issues.

Governors' Portfolio Group

The Governors' Portfolio Group (GPG) reports to both the Governors' Council and AoC Board. The GPG reviews and monitors developments on governance and advises on and makes recommendations for the development of AoC policy in this area; it has specific responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the *Creating Excellence in College Governance* action plan, including the Governance Support and Development Programme. It also advises the Education and Training Foundation's (ETF's) expert panel on leadership, management and governance. The chair of the GPG is the vice-chair of the expert panel.

Governance and clerks helpline and contact details

If you are struggling with any aspect of college governance or need any support from AoC's services in governance, please contact:

[David Walker](#), Director of Governance, 020 7034 9953

[Josie Ormondroyd](#), Governance Manager, 020 7034 9948

[Guram Korkoti](#), Governance Administrator, 020 7034 9958

[Fiona Telford](#), Recruitment Manager (Governance), 073 4108 8169

All enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence. AoC's Governance Team endeavours to reply to all enquiries within three working days. If the matter is particularly urgent, we will reply on the same day if possible.

Other helplines governors may find of use include:

<i>Quality improvement and regulation helpline</i>	020 7034 9911
<i>Communications crisis and PR helpline</i>	020 7034 9974
<i>Employment and human resources helpline</i>	020 7034 9944

Help us make this publication better

We are always looking for ways to improve the information we provide to our members. If you think we have missed something or there is something you don't fully understand, please let us know by contacting membership@aoc.co.uk.

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