



ASSOCIATION  
OF COLLEGES

# The Colleges Senior Staff Remuneration Code

Association of Colleges Governors' Council

December 2018

## Introduction

1. Fair and appropriate remuneration is key to the success and development of the college sector. To support governing bodies, this Colleges Senior Staff Remuneration Code (the Remuneration Code) has been developed by AoC Governors' Council after wide consultation with AoC members, governors and college stakeholders. This Remuneration Code will be reviewed every three years, in consultation with the sector.
2. The different regulatory frameworks of the college sector within the UK mean that governing bodies will need to decide how best to use the Remuneration Code. Colleges are bound by the relevant accounts direction issued by their regulator. In addition, in assessing compliance with conditions of registration, the Office for Students (OfS) may consider the provider's information about the pay of Senior Post Holders within its audited financial statements and whether the governing body publishes its written commitment to comply with this Remuneration Code.
3. By visibly adopting the Remuneration Code, governing bodies demonstrate leadership and stewardship in relation to remuneration within their institutions and, in doing so help to protect institutional reputation and provide greater assurances to key stakeholders and partners, including the student community and wider society.
4. The use of this Remuneration Code is voluntary, and it can be used by all colleges. The Remuneration Code is to be used on an 'apply or explain' basis. This means that colleges should either publicly state that they have abided by the minimum requirements of this Remuneration Code or should provide meaningful explanations for non-compliance and how their alternative arrangements meet its principles.
5. Throughout this Remuneration Code the word 'must' identifies the AoC Governors' Council view of the minimum requirements for an institution wishing to comply with it. Governing bodies are free to meet 'must' statements by the means and mechanisms appropriate to their own context. The Remuneration Code is supported by a set of Explanatory and Guidance Notes (Appendix 1) which are designed to assist governing bodies in developing their responses. The use of the word 'should' identifies good or enhanced governance practice which institutions are encouraged to adopt.
6. The principles outlined in this Remuneration Code apply to all remuneration decisions affecting the emoluments of the Chief Executive, Principal and other Senior Post Holders as prescribed in constitutional documents or by the governing body as being within the remit of the Remuneration Committee. In England, the principles also apply to Senior Post Holders as defined in ESFA accounts direction.

## Elements of fair and appropriate remuneration

Fair and appropriate remuneration<sup>1</sup> requires three key elements – namely that there is:

- i. a fair, appropriate and justifiable level of remuneration;
- ii. procedural fairness; and
- iii. transparency and accountability.

Each of these elements are underpinned by several supporting principles.

### Element I - A fair, appropriate and justifiable level of remuneration

Remuneration starts with a clear understanding of the responsibilities, context and expected contribution of a role and the attributes required to undertake that role effectively. Fair and appropriate remuneration then recognises an individual's contribution to their college's success in that role, and is sufficient to recruit, retain and motivate staff of appropriate calibre in the context of the market for that role, balanced with the need to demonstrate the achievement of value for money in the use of resources.

#### Principles

- a) Remuneration should take account of the context in which the college operates.
- b) Remuneration must be linked to the value, based on a number of components, delivered by the individual within the role.
- c) Remuneration must consider matters of equality, diversity and inclusion with a view to ensuring that there are no biases pertaining to gender or other protected characteristics within the pay structure.
- d) Colleges should be clear about what they expect from staff, i.e. what is 'normal' and what is 'exceptional'. There must be a robust and consistent process for setting objectives and assessing an individual's contribution.
- e) Remuneration can vary according to individual performance. However, the decision to apply performance-related pay is for individual colleges to make. Nothing in this Code is intended to imply that performance-related pay is a requirement for fair and appropriate remuneration.
- f) Awards made in respect of annual bonus arrangements linked to the achievement of specific annual objectives should not be consolidated.
- g) From time to time the value of a role may need to be reviewed in light of changing conditions, sustained performance, experience etc.
- h) Non-achievement of an individual's expected contribution should be clearly addressed through performance management.
- i) Any severance payments must be reasonable and justifiable.

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<sup>1</sup> Remuneration includes not only basic salary but also bonuses, expenses and other allowances, and the monetary value of benefits in kind including housing and cars, etc.

- j) There should be a clear and justifiable rationale for the retention of any income generated by an individual from external bodies in a personal capacity.

## **Element II – Procedural fairness**

Procedural fairness requires remuneration to be set through a process that is based on competent people applying a consistent framework with independent decision-making using appropriate evidence and assessing the value of roles, the contexts and individuals' performance in them.

### **Principles**

- a) Senior Post Holder remuneration should be determined in the context of each college's approach to rewarding all its staff, and in particular, consideration should be given annually to the rate of increase of the average remuneration of all other staff.
- b) No individual can be involved in deciding his or her own remuneration.
- c) Remuneration Committees must be independent, competent and should not be chaired by the Chair of the Governing Body.
- d) The Chief Executive / Principal must not be a member of the Remuneration Committee.

## **Element III - Transparency and accountability**

The process for setting remuneration must be transparent. For Senior Post Holders there must be a college level justification for remuneration that relates to the competitive environment, the value of the roles and institutional performance. The remuneration of the Chief Executive / Principal must be separately justified, published and related to the remuneration of all staff within the organisation.

### **Principles**

Each college must publish a readily accessible annual statement, based on an annual report to its governing body, containing:

- a) a list of Senior Post Holders within the remit of Remuneration Committee;
- b) its policy on the remuneration for post holders within the remit of Remuneration Committee;
- c) its choice of comparator college(s)/organisation(s);
- d) its policy on income derived from external activities;
- e) the pay multiple of the Chief Executive / Principal and the median earnings of the institution's whole workforce, illustrating how that multiple has changed over time and, if it is significantly above average, an explanation of why; and
- f) an explanation of any significant changes.

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