



## Further Education College Clerk Development and Training Programme Resource Pack

### Using the Materials

Commissioned and funded by the Education and Training Foundation

SEPTEMBER 2014

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# Introduction

Welcome to the Clerks' Development & Training Programme Resource Pack. This guide will give you some ideas on how to get the best out of the self-study materials. If it is feasible, you will find it very useful to discuss some of the activities in the modules with other governors, chairs or clerks.

## Aims of the materials

The materials are designed to help and support you in your role as clerk, and to increase the effectiveness of governing bodies. The specific aims are to:

- improve your knowledge of the ethical and legal framework within which governing bodies must work;
- develop your ability to help your governing body focus on strategic questions and use inquiry skills;
- increase your skills in managing working relationships;
- develop your expertise in managing the process of governance; and
- provide easy-to-use learning materials that you can work through in your own time and at your own pace.

## The self-study modules

The materials consist of 13 modules designed to give you a thorough overview of your responsibilities as clerk. There is a separate executive summary for each module, which provides an overview of the module's scope and content.

The modules vary in length and were up-to-date in September 2014. They cover the following topics:

Module 1	The further education system: an introduction
Module 2	Values and ethical framework
Module 3	The main statutory framework
Module 4	Working relationships
Module 5	The process of effective governance
Module 6	Strategy and educational character
Module 7	Collaboration and partnerships
Module 8	Curriculum
Module 9	Quality and standards
Module 10	Finance
Module 11	Human resources
Module 12	The audit committee
Module 13	Governor recruitment and succession

Each module is broken up into short sections, to make it easier to learn in short chunks of time and consists of:

- a short **introduction**, which includes aims, a list of contents and a list of documents you will need to complete the self-study activities;
- **topic sections** which contain information, discussion, case studies or checklists and activities to help you think about how you can apply your learning to your own college;

- a **module review** which includes a reminder of the aims, summary of key learning points and general guidance on action planning; and
- suggestions for **further reading** for those who wish to explore the subjects covered in more detail.

## Sixth form college gateway

The [Sixth Form Colleges' Association](#) (SFCA) has produced a 'gateway' document introducing the training materials to a sixth form college audience and designed to enhance the reading of the materials by:

- providing a helpful executive summary of each module;
- highlighting sections that are particularly relevant for sixth form colleges; and
- highlighting sections or guidance that are not relevant for sixth form colleges.

The gateway document can be downloaded [here](#).

## Using the modules for self-study

The materials are designed to be used flexibly and you will need to decide how to use them in the way that is most effective for you. We all study differently. Some people prefer to work all the way through a module from beginning to end, others choose to skim or dip into sections on topics they are familiar with, and pick out sections on topics that they want to know more about for detailed study.

## Study time

Individual study times vary widely: you might need to spend anything between one and four hours working on a module of average length, depending on how quickly and in how much detail you choose to work.

As a rough guide, if you work through all the modules, you will need to set aside between 10 and 30 hours total study time. You also need to allow additional time for activities that involve reading other documents, discussion with other people or observing meetings.

## Doing the activities

Each module contains activities which will help you to apply ideas from the materials to your own college and to your work as a clerk. Do make a point of tackling as many of the activities as you can. Cover over the 'viewpoints' which follow the activities, and reflect or write your own thoughts down before you read our comments.

You may find you disagree with some of the viewpoints. There is often no right or wrong answer – the aim of the viewpoints is to suggest possibilities, enable you to compare the suggestions with what actually happens in your own college, and encourage you to apply any ideas that you find useful to your own work.

You could keep all your notes from activities in a separate notebook or on loose-leaf sheets that can be stored in a ring binder, along with the module, for future reference.

## Preparation for some activities

Some of the activities ask you to review or answer questions about documents or information that you should have on file. It is a good idea to try and gather as many of these as possible before you start work on a module.

If some documents are difficult to get hold of or not available, we suggest you consider the questions in the activity and whether they are useful to apply to documents that you might receive in future.

## Action planning

We hope you find that there is much in the materials that you can apply immediately to your own situation. Working through the modules should:

- raise questions in your mind;
- help clarify issues that concern you;
- provide a new or different perspective on recurrent problems; and
- suggest possible approaches or solutions to difficulties and dilemmas that you or your governing body is facing.

The **Action Planner** (see page 19) is intended to help you plan how you will follow up these reflections with practical action. Some things you may be able to take further on your own, but there are likely to be issues that you want to raise with the principal or chair, or perhaps the governing body as a whole.

## This guide

The sections of this guide are:

### Section 1 Check your current skills and knowledge

This section provides an outline of what is in each module, presented in a form that will help you to check what you already know, and decide which topic areas you would find it useful to work on.

### Section 2 Action Planner

This provides you with space to note down useful learning points as you work through the modules and queries, issues or ideas for action that you would like follow up within your own college. It also contains a section for you to note areas in which you would like more information, training or development and to plan how you might tackle these needs.

### Section 3 Useful resources

This section lists useful sources of further information for governors— organisations, publications, ebsites, etc.

## Section 1. Check your current skills and knowledge

This section enables you to check what you already know about your role as clerk and college governance in general, and to identify the topic areas in which you want to develop your knowledge and skills.

- Work through the **self-assessment checklist** on the following pages and assess yourself by ticking the appropriate column.
- Where you have identified gaps in your knowledge or practice, number these in order of priority from 1–3 where 1 = most important to address and 3 = least important.
- You can then choose whether to work on those modules in which you have identified a number of high priorities, or to pick out priority sections from several different modules.

<b>Module 1: The further education system: an introduction</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can explain the current reforms in post-16 education and training.</p> <p>I can describe the range of provision in post-16 education and training.</p> <p>I can explain the role and responsibilities of governors.</p> <p>I can summarise the role and responsibilities of the governing body.</p> <p>I can summarise the role and responsibilities of the clerk.</p> <p>I can assess my own knowledge and skills and identify my training requirements.</p> <p>I understand the clerk's responsibilities in ensuring that governors take part in training and development activities.</p> <p>I can explain the clerk's responsibilities for ensuring public access to information about the work of the governing body.</p> <p>I know where to find more detailed information on particular topics or procedures.</p> <p>I play a full part in the smooth running of the governing body.</p>				
<b>Module 2: Values and ethical framework</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can explain how the Nolan Committee's seven principles of public life and other principles impact on the activities of the governing body and my role as a clerk, and am informed about the Committee on Standards in Public Life review/s of best practice in promoting good behaviour in public life.</p>				

<b>Module 2 (cont): Values and ethical framework</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can describe my role in relation to the governing body's code of conduct and conflicts of interest.</p> <p>I can describe my board's position in relation to agreeing a code of governance.</p> <p>I can set out the reasons for having a whistleblowing policy.</p> <p>I can explain the governing body's role in ensuring that the college promotes equal opportunities.</p> <p>I can explain governors' responsibilities in relation to whistleblowing, equal opportunities and human rights and identify when specialist advice needs to be sought.</p>				
<b>Module 3: The main statutory framework</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I am aware of the significance of the most recent changes in legislation in the Education Act 2011.</p> <p>I can describe the legal structure of my college and how it affects the governing body's activities.</p> <p>I can explain the need for caution when changing the legal status of the college, setting up subsidiary companies or entering into a joint venture.</p> <p>I can state the implications of a college's charitable status.</p> <p>I can list the college's powers and the consequences of acting outside them.</p>				

<b>Module 3: The main statutory framework</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can identify the occasions when the college seal should be used.</p> <p>I can specify the lines of accountability regulating the college.</p> <p>I can outline the college's legal responsibilities to its students. I understand the legal framework and the governing body's responsibilities for safeguarding.</p> <p>I can outline the college's responsibilities in relation to information legislation.</p> <p>I am aware of the significance of the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act and other relevant legislation relating to information and communication technology (ICT).</p> <p>I am aware of other key areas of college life that are covered by legislation and where to find information on them in these training materials.</p>				
<b>Module 4: Working relationships</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can apply assertiveness skills (as described in the module) to help manage difficult situations.</p> <p>I can identify common barriers to communication and discuss strategies to help.</p> <p>I can consider the diversity of perspectives and interests represented on the governing body and strategies to help develop a sense of common purpose.</p>				

<b>Module 4 (cont): Working relationships</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can explain key processes and skills for working with groups and teams.</p> <p>I can analyse skills for self-management and apply these to my own interactions.</p>				
<b>Module 5: The process of effective governance</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can outline the complementary roles and responsibilities of the chair, governing body, principal and senior leadership team and clerk.</p> <p>I can explain how to support appointed key players in their governance positions according to statutory requirements and best practice.</p> <p>I can describe how to ensure the smooth running of meetings, what business should be transacted, and how it should be presented.</p> <p>I am aware of how committees and working groups are structured to complement the work of the governing body.</p> <p>I understand the statutory basis for openness in communications and recognise good practice.</p> <p>I appreciate a range of issues and practice around independence and resolving difficulties.</p> <p>I appreciate the need for high-quality governance; how to assess and develop it, and the requirements of inspectors and auditors.</p> <p>I know how the performance of the clerk should be reviewed and supported on an annual basis, to ensure effective and efficient governance.</p>				

<b>Module 6: Strategy and educational character</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can explain the current reforms in post-16 education and training.</p> <p>I can describe the range of provision in post-16 education and training.</p> <p>I can explain the role and responsibilities of governors.</p> <p>I can summarise the role and responsibilities of the governing body.</p> <p>I can summarise the role and responsibilities of the clerk.</p> <p>I understand the clerk’s responsibilities in ensuring that governors take part in training and development activities.</p> <p>I can explain the clerk’s responsibilities for ensuring public access to information about the work of the governing body.</p> <p>I know where to find more detailed information on particular topics or procedures.</p> <p>I play a full part in the work of the governing body.</p>				
<b>Module 7: Partnership and collaboration</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can explain the different ways a college can partner or collaborate with others.</p> <p>I can describe the benefits and risks of such partnerships and collaboration.</p> <p>I can outline the college’s partnership and collaboration activity.</p> <p>I can explain how the institution’s partnership and collaboration with other providers contribute towards social inclusion and equality of opportunity.</p>				

<b>Module 7 (cont): Partnership and collaboration</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can participate actively in discussions and in decision-making – at both governing body and committee level – about the key issues relating to partnerships and collaboration.</p> <p>I can ask questions about potential risks that should be considered when discussing new strategic partnerships / collaboration.</p>				
<b>Module 8: Curriculum</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can explain what is meant by ‘curriculum’ and the meaning of terms used to describe categories and levels of qualifications.</p> <p>I can describe the variety of learning opportunities at my college both for 14 to 19-year olds and adult learners.</p> <p>I can show how this provision relates to the needs of students and employers’ skill requirements in the local community and to national strategy.</p> <p>I can demonstrate how the college’s curriculum offer forms a coherent part of provision within the local area and show how some specialist niche provision contributes towards the ‘bank’ of national skills.</p> <p>I understand the funding available for learners.</p> <p>I can outline the current range of government policies regarding the curriculum.</p> <p>I can explain how the college’s provision, on its own and in collaboration with other providers, contributes towards social inclusion and equality of opportunity.</p>				

<b>Module 8 (cont): Curriculum</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can participate actively in discussions and decision-making, at both governing body and committee level, about curriculum issues in the college, in accordance with my responsibilities as a clerk.</p>				
<b>Module 9: Quality and standards</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can describe structures and processes for improving quality and raising standards in FE.</p> <p>I can explain the responsibilities governors have for monitoring standards in FE.</p> <p>I can explain the major policy drivers underpinning these structures and processes.</p> <p>I can describe the scope and purpose of the Ofsted common inspection framework.</p> <p>I understand how the senior leadership develop the annual self-assessment.</p> <p>I can identify the critical success factors for quality improvement planning.</p> <p>I can explain the role of Government agencies in quality improvement in the FE sector.</p>				

<b>Module 10: Finance</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can outline the governing body's main legal responsibilities towards ensuring the college's solvency and the safeguarding of its assets.</p> <p>I understand financial terminology, key performance indicators and funding body requirements.</p> <p>I am able to adequately scrutinise the financial information presented.</p> <p>I understand the key risks facing the college and the potential impacts on its financial health as well the role of auditors.</p>				
<b>Module 11: Human resources</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can outline the governing body's main legal responsibilities towards the staff that it employs directly, other workers whose services it engages, and responsibilities it delegates to the principal.</p> <p>I can explain the role of governors in establishing and keeping under review the terms and conditions of employment for staff.</p> <p>I can state the difference between governors' responsibilities for senior post holders and for other staff.</p> <p>I can outline the governing body's responsibilities for staff learning, development, performance management and appraisals.</p> <p>I can describe employee relations mechanisms and communication methods with trade union representatives and officers.</p> <p>I can explain the role of governors in disciplinary, grievance and suspension procedures.</p>				

<b>Module 12: The audit committee</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can explain why the governing body has an audit committee and what its purpose is.</p> <p>I can outline the terms of reference of the college’s audit committee and understand the considerations for maintaining independence.</p> <p>I can understand and use risk management models.</p> <p>I can explain the skillsets required to form a balanced and effective audit committee.</p> <p>I understand the types of audit that the college is required to undertake, who should conduct them and their purpose, and appoint, monitor and performance-manage the auditors.</p> <p>I understand and can explain to a non-audit committee governor the contents of the audit reports and the audit committee’s annual report.</p> <p>I have a clear understanding of the governing body’s responsibilities with regard to fraud and irregularity.</p>				

<b>Module 13: Governor recruitment and succession</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>Fully</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>
<p>I can explain why the governing body may have a search committee and what it does.</p> <p>I can outline the terms of reference of the search committee.</p> <p>I can describe the membership of a search committee.</p> <p>I can describe how governors are recruited and appointed.</p> <p>I can describe the search committee's relationship with the corporation.</p> <p>I can evaluate the practice and effectiveness of the college's search committee.</p>				

## Section 2. Action Planner

This section provides you with some simple tools to follow up and apply ideas arising from your work on the modules in the Clerks' Development Programme:

- an **action points form** to note follow-up action within your own college; and
- a **plan for further learning**.

### Planning points for action within your own college

You are likely to have a number of ideas for further action as you work through the materials. The Action Points form provides you with a framework for noting down any issues, queries, ideas or practical action that you want to follow up within your own college. The planner enables you to gather them together in one place as you work, and then to prioritise them and decide what action you will take. Use the planner in whatever way you find most useful.

The kind of action points you identify are likely to vary from one module to another. For example you might decide that you will:

- frame a question to put to the principal or chair.
- ask the governing body to amend the code of conduct.
- tackle an issue that you are concerned about by seeking a meeting with the chair and/or principal or a senior college leader.

As with any action planning, it is useful to prioritise the ideas that you have noted. Points for action can be prioritised in various ways, for example:

- important and urgent, important but not urgent, urgent but not important;
- requiring short-term, medium-term or long-term action to see results;
- simple or complex to achieve.
- can be done on your own, or requires action by a committee or the whole governing body.

It may be a good idea to start with something simple and short-term that you can achieve on your own. A small early success will help to build up your confidence to tackle bigger issues. Set yourself a feasible limit of, say, no more than three priorities at the outset.

### Developing a plan for further learning

Developing the knowledge and skills that you need to be an effective clerk is a continuing process of personal development. We hope this pack has taken you some steps further and that you can build on your learning in your day-to-day experience.

In some ways this pack has only scratched the surface of effective governance. You can make your contribution more effective by identifying gaps in your skills and knowledge and planning further learning, training or development to meet your needs. The second planning form in this section gives you a framework. Use it in whatever way you find most helpful.

### Checklist: Planning further learning

You may find it useful to skim the modules you have done and any notes you have made as you develop your action plan.

In the relevant spaces on the Plan for Further Learning form note down any topics from the modules you have worked through that you need to find out more about or develop further.

For the topics you have noted, number your top three priorities. You may find it helpful to discuss this list with the principal or chair.

Find out what you can do to develop your knowledge or skills in these topics. Likely sources of further learning include:

- Joining the National Clerks Network, or a local or regional network.
- Logging on to the AoC Governance web site, signing up newsletters and to hot issues.
- Shadowing a more experienced clerk.
- Finding a mentor (a more experienced clerk willing to offer practical advice, perhaps by phone or email).
- Joining presentations on useful topics from subject specialists (eg head of finance, principal, etc).
- Reading key documents (eg principal's reports, governing body papers, funding letters, etc).
- Accessing the knowledge and skills of a National Leader in Governance or a National Subject Specialist in Governance information

## Action Points form

	Queries/issues/ ideas to follow up	What action do I need to take/who do I need to speak to?	Priority 1-3	When will I do it by?
Module 1 The FESystem: An Introduction				
Module 2 Values and Ethical Framework				
Module 3 The Main Statutory Framework				
Module 4 Working Relationships				
Module 5 The Process of Effective Governance				
Module 6 Strategy and Educational Character				
Module 7 Collaboration and Partnership				

## Action Points form (cont)

	<b>Queries/issues/ ideas to follow up</b>	<b>What action do I need to take/who do I need to speak to?</b>	<b>Priority 1-3</b>	<b>When will I do it by?</b>
Module 8 Curriculum				
Module 9 Quality and Standards				
Module 10 Finance				
Module 11 Human Resources				
Module 12 The Audit Committee				
Module 13 Governor Recruitment and Succession				

## Plan for Further Learning

	Topics I need to work on	Priority 1-3	When will I do it by?
Module 1 The FE System: An Introduction			
Module 2 Values and Ethical Framework			
Module 3 The Main Statutory Framework			
Module 4 Working Relationships			
Module 5 The Process of Effective Governance			
Module 6 Strategy and Educational Character			
Module 7 Collaboration and Partnership			
Module 8 Curriculum			

## Plan for Further Learning (cont)

	Topics I need to work on	Priority 1-3	When will I do it by?
Module 9 Quality and Standards			
Module 10 Finance			
Module 11 Human Resources			
Module 12 The Audit Committee			
Module 13 Governor Recruitment and Succession			

## Section 3. Useful Resources

### Support

[AoC Governance](#)

[ETF](#)

### Departments

[BIS](#)

[DFE](#)

### Agencies

[UK Commission for Employment & Skills](#) (UKCES)

[National Apprenticeship Service](#) (NAS)

[Skills Funding Agency](#) (SFA)

[Education Funding Agency](#) (EFA)

[Higher Education Funding Council for England](#) (HEFCE)

[Student Loans Company](#) (SLC)

[Ofsted](#)

[Ofqual](#)

[National Careers Service](#) (NCS)

[Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education](#) (QAA)

### Acts

[Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act](#) |

### Policy

[‘Skills for Sustainable Growth’](#) (2010) sets out the national skills strategy for England.

[‘New challenges, new chances: next steps in implementing the further education reform programme’](#) (2011) set out the policies of the Coalition Government for post 19 education and skills.

[‘Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills’](#) (2013) summarises the government’s reform agenda.

[‘Skills funding statement 2012 to 2015’](#) contains the 2013-14 budget for skills and indicative funding levels for 2014-15 (financial year).

[‘Further education \(FE\) college capital investment strategy’](#) (2012) outlines the Government’s priorities for investing £550 million in college facilities in the remainder of this Parliament.

[‘16-19 Study Programmes’](#) (2014) provides advice on planning and delivering study programmes.

[‘A Dynamic Nucleus: Colleges at the heart of local communities’](#) (2011) gives advice on how colleges can establish better ties with the community.

[The report of the Commission on Adult and Vocational Teaching and Learning](#) (2013) gives advice on how colleges can establish better ties with business and industry.

[‘Professionalism in further education: final report of the independent review panel’](#) (2012) is the report by Lord Lingfield on how the sector can best serve its users’ needs.

[‘Making apprenticeships more accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises: a review by Jason Holt’](#) (2012) is an independent report on apprenticeships and SMEs.

[‘Building engagement, building futures: our strategy to maximise the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work’](#) (2011) sets out BIS and DfE plans for engaging 16 to 24 year olds in education, training and work.

[‘The Richard Review of Apprenticeships’](#) (2012) is Doug Richard’s independent report for the government on the future of apprenticeships.

[‘Traineeships: framework for delivery 2014/15’](#) (2014) gives young people, employers and education and training providers information about how traineeships should work in practice.

[‘Chartered status for the further education sector’](#) (2012) was a consultation on plans for an independent quality scheme for the sector, due to be launched in 2014.

[‘National Careers Service: the right advice at the right time’](#) (2012) explains BIS’ plans to ensure that young people and adults can find accurate information about learning and work.

### **Useful periodicals and journals**

Several publications are available and provide a useful overview of current trends and issues in further education. You can get hold of copies from your college.

For example:

- Times Educational Supplement
- Times Higher Education Supplement
- FE Focus
- FE News
- AoC Governance Briefings