

York St John University

Committed Governors are crucial to the University's current and ongoing success. Governors are drawn from a range of backgrounds and include both staff and student members. Further information is available on the University's website <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/about/university-structure/governing-body>

The University is a company limited by guarantee (Company Number: 4498683) and an exempt charity (regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England). Governors are consequently Directors and also Charitable Trustees.

Governors are appointed for a three-year term of office. The maximum period of office is three terms of three years each.

Governor Role description

1. Overview

a) Governors are expected to play an appropriate part in ensuring that the necessary business of the Governing Body is carried out efficiently, effectively, and in a manner appropriate to the proper conduct of public business. They are expected to make rational and constructive contributions to debate and to make their knowledge and expertise available to the Governing Body as opportunity arises.

b) Governors have a responsibility for ensuring that the Governing Body acts in accordance with the instruments of governance of the University and with the University's internal rules and regulations and should seek advice from the Secretary in any case of uncertainty.

c) Governors are required to accept collective responsibility for the decisions reached by the Governing Body. Governors elected, nominated or appointed by particular constituencies may not act as if delegated by the group they represent, and may not be bound in any way by mandates given to them by others.

2. Standards

a) Governors have a responsibility for ensuring that the Governing Body conducts itself in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life, embracing selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. They must at all times regulate their personal conduct as Governors in accordance with these standards.

b) Governors must make a full and timely disclosure of personal interests to the Secretary in accordance with the procedures approved by the Governing Body. They must as soon as practicable disclose any interest which they have in any matter under discussion and accept the ruling of the Chair in relation to the management of that situation, in order that the integrity of the business of the Governing Body and its committees may be, and may be seen to be, maintained.

c) Governors have particular legal responsibilities for the University as a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. Governors' responsibilities as Directors and Charitable Trustees are reflected in the Governing Body's Statement of Primary Responsibilities available at: <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/about/university-structure/governing-body>

3. The Business of the University

a) Governors have a responsibility for ensuring that the Governing Body exercises control over the strategic direction of the University, through an effective planning process, and that the performance of the University is adequately assessed against the objectives which the Governing Body has approved.

b) Governors should endeavour to establish constructive and supportive but challenging working relationships with the University employees with whom they come into contact but must recognise the proper separation between governance and executive management and avoid involvement in the day-to-day executive management of the University.

c) Governors will be appointed by the Governing Body to at least one committee of the Governing Body and are expected to play a full part in the business of all committees to which they are appointed. The expected time commitments for Governors are set out below.

d) Arrangements are in place for designated Governors to act as formal signatories for certain (usually financial) transactions. Governors will be briefed on any such role separately.

4. The External Role

a) Governors may be asked to represent the Governing Body and the University externally and will be fully briefed by the University to enable them to carry out this role effectively.

b) Governors may be asked to use personal influence and networking skills on behalf of the University.

c) Governors may be asked to play a role in liaising between key stakeholders and the University, or in fund-raising. They will be fully briefed by the University to enable them to carry out this role effectively. However, this role in particular must be exercised in a carefully co-ordinated fashion with other senior officers and staff of the University.

5. Personal

a) Governors must participate in procedures established by the Governing Body for the regular appraisal/review of the performance of individual Governors. Governors should attend any induction activities arranged by the University and should participate in appropriate training events.

b) The likely overall time commitment required of Governors is 12-20 days per year.

c) Governors are not remunerated but are encouraged to reclaim all travelling and similar expenses incurred in the course of University business via the Secretary.

d) Governors are appointed for a period of three years. The maximum period of office is three terms of three years each. Exceptionally, the Governing Body may remove a Governor if s/he is not able to meet the expectations set out in this role description and/or the legal requirements of the role of Director or Trustee.

e) Directors and Officers Liability Insurance is in place.

Person Specification

Governor appointments will take account of personal skills and experience, in the context of the overall composition of the Governing Body.

Knowledge and Experience

- Strong, personal commitment to Higher Education, its governance and the values, aims and objectives of the University
- Knowledge of developments in the Higher Education sector
- Experience as a member of committees/boards
- Experience of operating at a strategic level in a professional role
- Demonstrable involvement in striving towards continuous improvement
- Experience of professional networking on a national and/or international basis.

Skills and Abilities

- Ability to act fairly and impartially in the interests of the University as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate
- Ability to evaluate and monitor the work of the University in a constructively critical fashion without breaching the boundaries between governance and operational management
- Ability to be an ambassador and represent the University to the wider community
- Ability to operate as a member of a team
- Excellent communicator with appropriate negotiation, presentation and influencing skills.

Personal Characteristics

- Supportive of the University's ethos, mission, values and foundation
- Enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the role
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity in practice.

Time commitment

Governors are expected to attend all meetings of the Governing Body and of committees of which they are a member, or give timely apologies if absence is unavoidable. The role often entails access to confidential or privileged information which must be treated sensitively.

The commitments of Governors have been divided into two main categories – those that are required and those that are desired, depending on the time available.

The total expected commitment is approximately 12 to 20 days per annum.

Required Commitments

- Governing Body Meetings - three per year
- Governing Body Residential - two per year (involving overnight stay)
- Meetings with the Chairman/Deputy Chairman - once or twice per year
- Committee meetings - three or four per year
- There is background reading associated with the above meetings.

Desired Commitments

- Social events - various (regional events, celebrations, public lectures)
- Graduation - once per year (November) (attendance at a ceremony and associated lunch).