

Guidance for Governors and Trustees

Supporting governing bodies and trust boards to develop strong, effective operational teams

Governors and trustees will be well aware of the importance of financial oversight and the optimal use of resources (best value) as a core responsibility in discharging their governance functions.

As our system continues to evolve, the level of complexity and scrutiny on schools and trusts is constantly increasing. It is therefore vital that governors and trustees not only have a good working knowledge of the regulatory framework but also understand what arrangements need to be in place to ensure ongoing best value and financial sustainability. An important element in assessing a school's or trust's capability in the area of financial management and resource optimisation is a strong understanding of the competency of school leaders and staff in this area of operations.

It is important that trust boards and governing bodies build a strong working relationship with their school or trust business professionals and should use ISBL's professional standards to assess competency, monitor performance and support ongoing professional development. The standards are also helpful in assessing the school's or trust's overall competency and capacity across a range of critical operational areas including finance, HR, procurement, estates, and marketing/public relations. For further guidance on how employers, including trustees and governors, can use professional standards to best effect, please download the Employer Guidance from the ISBL website.

For a copy of the full version of professional standards, register [here](#).

Good recruitment practice and succession planning contribute towards boards achieving the mix of skills, experience, diversity and background they need to be effective. Further guidance is available from the National Governance Association (NGA) on getting the [right people around the table](#) and making [succession planning](#) part of governing boards' long-term practice.

Conducting regular skills and diversity audits is recommended good practice to help governing boards identify any gaps that need to be filled by new members as well as establish the training needs of current members and plan for succession. Professional standards can aid this process, and NGA also provides [tools](#) that can be used for this purpose.