

Skills audit

For maintained school and federation governors, trustees of single academy trusts and academy committees

Effective governance requires a board with a range of knowledge, skills, perspectives and backgrounds. The NGA skills audit is a way of assessing the overall breadth and depth of the board's skills and knowledge; no individual will have all the necessary skills and competencies.

How to complete this audit

1. Enter your scores (1 to 4) and make comments where prompted, using the scoring guidance to access helpful resources.

[Log in to the NGA website](#) to access member-only resources. Speak to your governance professional or [contact us](#) if you would like to discuss membership or need help logging in.

2. Reflect on your responses – identify any areas where you need to prioritise further development.
3. Your board's scores should then be collated and evaluated using the NGA skills dashboard – we recommend that this is carried out by your governance professional, together with the chair or designated member of the board.

[Visit the NGA website](#) for further guidance.

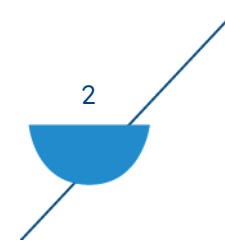
About NGA membership

NGA membership provides access to a wealth of governance resources and tools. Whether it's advice and guidance, networking or keeping up to date on education news and policy, we can help you face new challenges as they arise.

[Find out more](#)

NGA skills audit

Statement	Scoring guidance	Enter a score (1 to 4)
1 I have governing experience in a school or in a different sector	<p>4: you have significant (more than 4 years’) experience of governance on a school or academy trust board.</p> <p>3: you have up to 4 years’ experience governing within the schools sector or more than 4 years’ experience governing in a different sector (such as director of a charity or limited company).</p> <p>2: you have limited governing experience outside the school sector.</p> <p>1: you have no prior governing experience.</p>	
2 I am/have been the chair of a board or committee	<p>4: you have more than 4 years’ experience of chairing governing boards and or committees in schools or academy trusts.</p> <p>2 or 3 (depending on your level of experience): you have some chairing experience, including being a vice-chair or acting as chair for meetings. This may include chairing experience outside the schools sector.</p> <p>1: you have no chairing experience.</p>	
3 I have experience and expertise in developing a strategy	<p>Developing a medium to long-term strategy for any organisation requires: risk management; identification of key performance indicators and deciding how they will be monitored; and consideration of stakeholder views.</p> <p>4: you have experience of strategy development in a school (such as leading a governing board strategy development day).</p> <p>3: you have equivalent strategy development experience outside the schools sector.</p> <p>2: your experience is less extensive.</p> <p>1: you have no experience of developing a strategy.</p>	



4	I know what the school's strategic priorities are	<p>4: you know what your school's strategic priorities are, what they mean for pupils and other stakeholders, and can confidently discuss these priorities with others.</p> <p>2 or 3: you are aware of your school's strategic priorities but don't feel confident discussing them.</p> <p>1: you don't know what your strategic priorities are – perhaps you have recently joined the board or haven't been involved in developing the strategy.</p>	
5	I can identify key risks and evaluate their potential impact	<p>4: you have experience of evaluating and managing risk in a governance role – you have contributed to discussions about the school's risk register, potential impact and mitigation.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have some understanding of how risk management works in practice. NGA members may wish to read our risk management guidance to help achieve a score of 2 as a minimum.</p> <p>1: you have no experience of risk management and do not feel able to contribute.</p>	
6	I am aware of how the school is funded and what the funding is spent on	<p><i>School funding is largely based on pupil numbers and includes grants such as the pupil premium.</i></p> <p>4: you have a good understanding of how funding is allocated under different budget headings and how spending impacts on pupil outcomes.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have some awareness of your school's funding and allocation but do not feel confident providing examples of how spending impacts on pupil outcomes.</p> <p>1: you are not aware of what the key information is.</p>	
7	I can interpret budget monitoring reports and ask relevant questions	<p><i>Governing boards (finance/resources committees in particular) should receive budget monitoring reports from their headteacher and or school business professional.</i></p> <p>4: you can confidently use these reports to ask relevant questions which help provide assurance that the budget is being managed effectively. Your questions focus on changes to planned spending and the explanations for such changes.</p>	

		<p>2 or 3: you have evaluated financial data in a school or another organisation; your experience informs your contribution to relevant discussions.</p> <p>1: you have no experience of using financial data and so do not feel able to contribute to relevant discussions.</p>	
8	I understand how the school's curriculum meets the needs of all pupils	<p><i>You can find out about the principles upon which your curriculum is based on your school's website.</i></p> <p>4: you have read and understood the curriculum principles and feel confident discussing this with colleagues.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have read the curriculum principles but do not yet feel confident discussing this.</p> <p>1: you are not aware of what the curriculum principles are.</p> <p>NGA members can use our guide to curriculum effectiveness to explore this topic.</p>	
9	I understand how my governing board engages with stakeholders – pupils, parents, staff and the wider community – and how this informs decisions	<p>4: you have been involved in your board's stakeholder engagement activity, which may include: evaluating parent survey responses, attending pupil forums, or meeting with staff and outside organisations (such as the local authority).</p> <p>3: you have experience of stakeholder engagement on another governing board.</p> <p>2: you have experience of stakeholder engagement outside the schools sector.</p> <p>1: you have no experience of stakeholder engagement.</p>	
10	I feel confident being part of the panel that conducts the headteacher's appraisal	<p>4: you have been a member of the panel that conducts the headteacher's annual appraisal.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have conducted an appraisal outside the schools sector.</p> <p>1: you have not been part of an appraisal process.</p>	

11	I know how to build the knowledge I need to be effective in my governance role	<p>4: you have completed an induction to the board and engage in ongoing development.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have identified knowledge or skills gaps but have not yet engaged in or planned relevant development activity.</p> <p>1: you have not yet identified knowledge or skills gaps and have not engaged in relevant development activity.</p>	
12	I can build positive, collaborative relationships with members of my board	<p>A score of 4 means that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are willing to share the workload • welcome a range of experiences and perspectives • feel comfortable offering up constructive challenge • can reach a reasonable consensus • seek to resolve issues that may lead to conflict <p>2 or 3: you have identified areas you would like to work on.</p> <p>1: you have not built collaborative relationships and are unsure how to achieve this.</p>	
13	I understand the strategic nature of the board's role and what governing boards and school leaders should expect from each other	<p>NGA guidance on what governing boards and school leaders should expect from each other should be understood and applied to your own context.</p> <p>4: you have read and understood the guidance.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have read the guidance but require further clarity.</p> <p>1: you have not read or understood the guidance.</p>	
14	I know what the governing board's core functions are	<p>Section one of the DfE governance guide explains the core functions and describes the features of effective governance. If you have read and understood this section, provide a score of 4 for this statement.</p>	
15	I understand how the board delegates its work	<p><i>Governing boards often delegate their work to committees, working groups, individuals (link governors), and panels.</i></p> <p>4: you have good awareness of how the governing board delegates its work, for example, the specific responsibilities of any committees and their terms of reference.</p>	

		<p>2 or 3: you have some understanding – for example, you know what committees the board has appointed but not what each one is responsible for.</p> <p>1: you are unaware of how your board delegates its work.</p>	
16	I feel confident serving on a panel	<p><i>Governors are sometimes required to be part of a panel which is needed to decide employment issues and other matters.</i></p> <p>4: you have been a member of a panel where you reviewed evidence and reached an objective decision.</p> <p>2 or 3: you understand how and why panels are formed and, with some support, you would feel confident being part of a panel.</p> <p>1: you do not feel confident being part of a panel.</p>	
17	I am aware of the board’s legal and compliance responsibilities	<p><i>Your induction to the board (including any induction training course you attend) should provide a broad understanding of the board’s legal and compliance responsibilities in areas such as safeguarding.</i></p> <p>You may also wish to consult chapter two of NGA’s Welcome to Governance for an overview of your responsibilities.</p> <p>4: you have gained awareness of your board’s legal and compliance responsibilities from your induction, experience of governing, attending meetings, carrying out the business of the board and undertaking further development.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have some awareness.</p> <p>1: you have no awareness.</p>	
18	I feel able to speak up if I am concerned about non-compliance and unethical behaviour	<p>4: based on your experience of governance, you are able to recognise something that is not – or does not appear to be – right and raise it as an issue in an appropriate way, however challenging it may be.</p> <p>2 or 3: you do not feel confident in recognising and or challenging appropriately.</p> <p>1: you would like more support or guidance in this area.</p> <p>You may wish to consult The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education.</p>	

19	I recognise when independent, expert advice may be required	<p><i>Effective governing boards recognise the importance of seeking independent, expert advice and are prepared to call for advice before making a decision. This includes the advice of their governance professional (clerk to the board) and, where necessary, legal, financial, or human resource advice.</i></p> <p>4: you feel confident requesting that expert advice is sought where necessary.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have a lower level of confidence.</p> <p>1: you are unable to recognise situations where expert advice is necessary.</p>	
20	I know, and can identify with, the community served by the school	<p><i>Developing knowledge and understanding of your community means you are better placed to understand the impact of your strategy and decisions.</i></p> <p>4: you have knowledge and understanding of the community served by the school and its characteristics. This may be informed by a range of experiences such as volunteering, talking to people, and or living and working in the community.</p> <p>2 or 3: your experience and understanding could be extended.</p> <p>1: you have limited or no experience of the community served by the school.</p>	
21	I understand the legal responsibilities of governing boards in relation to equalities	<p>Governing boards have a legal duty under The Equality Act to protect pupils and staff against discrimination, harassment and or victimisation.</p> <p>4: you have read and understood Department for Education guidance on The Equality Act (and/or Equality and diversity guidance for NGA members).</p> <p>2 or 3: you have some understanding of the responsibilities that schools have under The Act but require further clarity.</p> <p>1: you have not yet built an understanding of The Act as it applies to schools.</p>	



22	I have influenced an organisation’s culture of equality and diversity (through communication, appropriate challenge, awareness raising or developing policy and practice)	<p><i>Culture – the way things get done – is what makes a school or trust unique and influences behaviour and practices. The policies that governing boards adopt reflect the culture in their school.</i></p> <p>4: you have had a direct influence on creating an inclusive culture within or outside a school. For example, by being part of a working group to create family friendly working practices or a more accessible work environment.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have not had a direct influence but recognise how this is achieved.</p> <p>1: you are developing an understanding of how an inclusive culture is achieved.</p>	
23	I have knowledge, experience or training that will help me to promote diversity and inclusion	<p><i>An example is training on unconscious bias (beliefs and views about other people that might not be right or reasonable).</i></p> <p>4: you have experience and or training and so are confident making a tangible contribution to discussions and actions that promote diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have some knowledge or experience but do not feel confident about making a tangible contribution.</p> <p>1: you have limited knowledge or experience and are unable to make a tangible contribution.</p>	
24	I can confidently challenge behaviour, attitudes and practices which are detrimental to creating an inclusive culture	<p>4: you are able and prepared to challenge attitudes, assumptions and or language that, whether intentional or not, could result in individuals or groups being disadvantaged or treated less favourably than others.</p> <p>2 or 3: you are prepared to challenge but could benefit from development, support or guidance.</p> <p>1: you require development, support or guidance in this area.</p>	
25	I can interpret relevant data and insight to identify issues and ask questions relating to equality and inclusion	<p><i>Examples include data on pupil attendance and exclusions, recruitment, and outcomes of different groups.</i></p> <p>4: you are fully confident using data to identify issues and ask questions.</p> <p>2 or 3: you have some experience using data and asking relevant questions.</p> <p>1: you have no experience using data for this purpose and require support.</p>	

26	Is there any training or support you would like to increase your contribution to promoting equality and diversity in your school?	<p>This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mentoring and coaching • specific training (such as unconscious bias training) • reading • general awareness raising • a whole board approach (such as a diversity and inclusion workshop) 	<i>INSERT COMMENTS HERE</i>
27	What do you need to do over the next 12 months to increase your governance knowledge and skills?		<i>INSERT COMMENTS HERE</i>
28	What specific skills or experience do you have that could be utilised by the board?		<i>INSERT COMMENTS HERE</i>

NCA is the national membership association for governors, trustees and governance professionals in England’s state schools and trusts.

We empower those in school and trust governance with valuable resources, expert support and e-learning. Together, we’re raising standards and shaping stronger governance to ensure every pupil can thrive today – and tomorrow.

nga.org.uk