



Instrument of Government

Approved by the Corporation Board

26 September 2023

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Interpretation of the terms used

1. In this Instrument of Government:

- (a) any reference to “the Principal” shall include a person acting as Principal;
- (b) “the Clerk” means the Clerk to the Corporation;
- (c) “the Corporation” means any further education corporation to which this Instrument applies;
- (d) “the institution” means the institution which the Corporation is established to conduct and any institution for the time being conducted by the Corporation in exercise of its powers under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992¹;
- (e) “this Instrument” means this Instrument of Government;
- (f) “Clause” means a Clause within this Instrument of Government;
- (g) “Articles of Government” means the Corporation’s Articles of Government, from time to time amended, and “Article” is to be construed accordingly;
- (h) “Standing Orders’ means the Corporation’s Standing Orders, from time to time amended and “SO” is to be construed accordingly;
- (i) “meeting” includes a meeting at which the members attending are present in more than one room, provided that by the use of videoconferencing or teleconferencing facilities it is possible for every person present at the meeting to communicate with each other;
- (j) “necessary skills” means skills and experience, other than professional qualifications, specified by the Corporation as appropriate for members to have;
- (k) “Independent Member”, “Staff Member” and “Student Member” have the meanings given to them in Clause 2;
- (l) “the previous Instrument of Government” means the Instrument of Government relating to the Corporation which had effect immediately before 7 June 2016;
- (m) “the Secretary of State” means the Secretary of State for Education;
- (n) “staff matters” means the remuneration, conditions of service, promotion, conduct, suspension, dismissal or retirement of staff;
- (o) “the students’ union” means any association of students formed to further the education purposes of the institution and the interests of students, as students; and
- (p) “a variable category” means any category of members whose numbers may vary according to Clauses 2 and 3.

¹ 1992 c.13

Composition of the Corporation

2. — (1) The Corporation shall consist of:

- (a) up to sixteen (16) members who appear to the Corporation to have the necessary skills to ensure that the Corporation carries out its functions under Article 3 of the Articles of Government (“Independent Members”);
 - (c) the Principal of the institution, unless the Principal chooses not to be a member;
 - (d) at least one (1) and not more than three (3) members who are members of the institution’s staff and have a contract of employment with the institution and who have been nominated and elected as set out in paragraphs (3), (4) or (5) (“Staff Members”); and
 - (e) at least one (1) and not more than three (3) members who are students at the institution and have been nominated and elected by their fellow students, or if the Corporation so decides, by a recognised association representing such students (“Student Members”).
- (2) A person who is not for the time being enrolled as a student at the institution shall nevertheless be treated as a student during any period of authorised absence from the institution for study, travel or for carrying out the duties of any office held by that person in the institution’s students’ union.
- (3) Where the Corporation has decided or decides that there is to be one Staff Member; the member may be a member of the academic staff or the non-academic staff and shall be nominated and elected by all staff.
- (4) Where the Corporation has decided or decides that there are to be two Staff Members:
- (a) one may be a member of the academic staff, nominated and elected only by academic staff; and the other may be a member of the non-academic staff, nominated and elected only by non-academic staff, or
 - (b) each may be a member of the academic or non-academic staff, nominated and elected by all staff.
- (5) Where the Corporation has decided that there are to be three Staff Members:
- (a) all may be members of the academic or non-academic staff, nominated and elected by all staff,
 - (b) one may be a member of the academic or the non-academic staff, nominated and elected by all staff, one may be a member of the academic staff, nominated and elected by academic staff only, and one may be a member of the non-academic staff nominated and elected by non-academic staff only,
 - (c) two may be members of the academic staff, nominated and elected by academic staff only, and one may be a member of the non-academic staff, nominated and elected by non-academic staff only, or

- (d) one may be a member of the academic staff, nominated and elected by academic staff only, and two may be members of the non-academic staff, nominated and elected by non-academic staff only.
- (6) The appointing authority, as set out in Clause 4, will decide whether a person is eligible for nomination, election and appointment as a member of the Corporation under paragraph (1).

Determination of membership numbers

3. — (1) Subject to paragraph (2), the number of members of the Corporation and the number of members of each variable category shall be that decided by the Corporation in accordance with Clause 2.
- (2) The Corporation may at any time vary the determination referred to in paragraph (1) and any subsequent determination under this paragraph provided that:
- (a) the number of members of the Corporation, shall not be less than twelve (12) or more than twenty (20); and
 - (b) the numbers of members of each variable category shall be subject to the limit which applies to that category set out in Clause 2.
- (3) No determination under this clause shall terminate the appointment of any person who is already a member of the Corporation at the time when the determination is made.

Appointment of the members of the Corporation

4. — (1) The Corporation is the appointing authority in relation to the appointment of its members.
- (2) The appointing authority may decline to appoint a person as a Staff Member or Student Member if:
- (a) it is satisfied that the person has been removed from office as a member of a further education corporation in the previous ten years; or
 - (b) the appointment of the person would contravene any rule or bye-law made under Article 22 of the Articles of Government concerning the number of terms of office which a person may serve, provided that such rules or bye-laws make the same provision for each category of members appointed by the appointing authority; or
 - (c) the person is ineligible to be a member of the Corporation because of Clause 7.
- (3) Where the office of any member becomes vacant the appointing authority shall as soon as practicable take all necessary steps to appoint a new member to fill the vacancy.

Appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair

5. — (1) The members of the Corporation shall appoint a Chair and may appoint up to two (2) Vice-Chairs from among themselves.

- (2) Neither the Principal nor any Staff Member or Student Member shall be eligible to be appointed as Chair or Vice-Chair or to act as Chair in their absence.
- (3) If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair(s) is/are absent from any meeting of the Corporation, the members present shall choose someone from among themselves to act as Chair for that meeting.
- (4) Subject to SO 2.4, The Chair and Vice-Chairs shall hold office for such period as the Corporation decides.
- (5) The Chair or Vice-Chairs may resign from office at any time by giving notice in writing to the Clerk. Subject to SO 2.5, resignation from office shall not affect their appointment as members of the Corporation, unless this is also specified within the written notice.
- (6) If the Corporation is satisfied that the Chair is unfit or unable to carry out the functions of office, or that it is no longer in the best interests of the Corporation for the individual to continue in office, it may give written notice, removing the Chair from office and the office shall then be vacant.
- (7) If the Corporation is satisfied that the Vice-Chair(s) is/are unfit or unable to carry out the functions of office, or that it is no longer in the best interests of the Corporation for the individual(s) to continue in office, it may give written notice, removing the Vice-Chair(s) from office and the office shall then be vacant.
- (8) At the last meeting before the end of the term of office of the Chair, or at the first meeting following the Chair's resignation or removal from office, the members shall appoint a replacement from among themselves.
- (9) At the last meeting before the end of the term of office of the Vice-Chair(s), or at the first meeting following a Vice-Chair's resignation or removal from office, the members shall appoint a replacement from among themselves.
- (10) Subject to the restrictions under SOs 2.4 and 2.5, at the end of their respective terms of office, the Chair and Vice-Chair(s) shall be eligible for reappointment.
- (11) Paragraph (10) is subject to any rule or byelaw made by the Corporation under Article 22 of the Articles of Government concerning the number of terms of office which a person may serve.

Appointment of the Clerk to the Corporation

- 6. —** (1) The Corporation shall appoint a person to serve as its Clerk, but the Principal may not be appointed as Clerk.
- (2) In the temporary absence of the Clerk, the Corporation shall appoint a person to serve as a temporary Clerk, but the Principal may not be appointed as temporary Clerk.
 - (3) Any reference in this Instrument to the Clerk shall include a temporary Clerk appointed under paragraph (2).

- (4) Subject to Clause 13, the Clerk shall be entitled to attend all meetings of the Corporation and any of its committees.
- (5) The Clerk may also be a member of staff at the institution.

Persons who are ineligible to be members

7. — (1) No one under the age of 18 years may be a member, except as a Student Member.
- (2) The Clerk may not be a member.
 - (3) A person who is a member of staff of the institution may not be, or continue as, a member, except as a Staff Member or in the capacity of Principal.
 - (4) Paragraph (3) does not apply to a student who is employed by the Corporation in connection with the student's role as an officer of a students' union.
 - (5) Subject to paragraphs (6) and (7), a person shall be disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a member, if that person has been adjudged bankrupt or is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order or a bankruptcy restrictions undertaking within the meaning of the Insolvency Act 1986², or if that person has made a composition or arrangement with creditors, including an individual voluntary arrangement.
 - (6) Where a person is disqualified by reason of having been adjudged bankrupt or by reason of being the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order or a bankruptcy restrictions undertaking, that disqualification shall cease:
 - (a) on that person's discharge from bankruptcy, unless the bankruptcy order has before then been annulled; or
 - (b) if the bankruptcy order is annulled, at the date of that annulment; or
 - (c) if the bankruptcy restrictions order is rescinded as a result of an application under section 375 of the Insolvency Act 1986, on the date so ordered by the court; or
 - (d) if the interim bankruptcy restrictions order is discharged by the court, on the date of that discharge; or
 - (e) if the bankruptcy restrictions undertaking is annulled, at the date of that annulment.
 - (7) Where a person is disqualified by reason of having made a composition or arrangement with creditors, including an individual voluntary arrangement, and then pays the debts in full, the disqualification shall cease on the date on which the payment is completed and in any other case it shall cease on the expiration of three (3) years from the date on which the terms of the deed of composition, arrangement or individual voluntary arrangement are fulfilled.

² 1986.c.45 as amended by the Enterprise Act 2002 (c. 40)

- (8) Subject to paragraph (9), a person shall be disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a member if:
- (a) within the previous five (5) years that person has been convicted, whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, of any offence and has received a sentence of imprisonment, whether suspended or not, for a period of three (3) months or more, without the option of a fine; or
 - (b) within the previous twenty years (20) that person has been convicted as set out in sub-paragraph (a) and has received a sentence of imprisonment, whether suspended or not, for a period of more than two and a half (2½) years; or
 - (c) that person has at any time been convicted as set out in sub-paragraph (a) and has received a sentence of imprisonment, whether suspended or not, of more than five (5) years.
 - (d) that person has been disqualified from acting as a charity trustee by virtue of the Charities Act 2011.
- (9) For the purpose of this regulation there shall be disregarded any conviction by or before a court outside the United Kingdom for an offence in respect of conduct which, if it had taken place in the United Kingdom, would not have constituted an offence under the law then in force anywhere in the United Kingdom.
- (10) Upon a member of the Corporation becoming disqualified from continuing to hold office under paragraphs (5) or (8), the member shall immediately give notice of that fact to the Clerk.

The term of office of a member

- 8.** — (1) A member of the Corporation shall hold and vacate office in accordance with the terms of the appointment, but the length of the term of office shall not exceed four (4) years.
- (2) Members retiring at the end of their term of office shall be eligible for reappointment, and Clause 4 shall apply to the reappointment of a member as it does to the appointment of a member.
- (3) Paragraph (2) is subject to any rule or byelaw made by the Corporation under Article 22 of the Articles of Government concerning the number of terms of office which a person may serve.

Termination of membership

- 9.**— (1) A member may resign from office at any time by giving notice in writing to the Clerk.
- (2) If at any time the Corporation is satisfied that any member:
- (a) is unfit or unable to discharge the functions of a member; or
 - (b) has been absent from meetings of the Corporation for a period longer than six (6) consecutive months without the permission of the Corporation; or

- (c) it is no longer in the best interests of the Corporation for the individual to continue in office,

the Corporation may by notice in writing to that member remove the member from office and the office shall then be vacant.

- (3) Any person who is a member of the Corporation by virtue of being a member of the staff at the institution, including the Principal, shall cease to hold office upon ceasing to be a member of the staff and the office shall then be vacant.
- (4) A Student Member shall, subject to paragraph (5), cease to hold office:
 - (a) at the end of the academic year in which they are appointed, although if continuing as a student in the following academic year they shall be eligible for reappointment, or
 - (b) if expelled from the institutionand the office shall then be vacant.
- (5) A Student Member may, at the Corporation Board's discretion, be reappointed for one (1) further academic year following the expiry of their initial term of office, provided that they remain eligible to continue as a Student Member.

Members not to hold interests in matters relating to the institution

10.—(1) A member to whom paragraph (2) applies shall:

- (a) disclose to the Corporation the nature and extent of the interest; and
- (b) if present at a meeting of the Corporation, or of any of its committees, at which such supply, contract or other matter as is mentioned in paragraph (2) is to be considered, not take part in the consideration or vote on any question with respect to it and not be counted in the quorum present at the meeting in relation to a resolution on which that member is not entitled to vote; and
- (c) withdraw, if present at a meeting of the Corporation, or any of its committees, at which such supply, contract or other matter as is mentioned in paragraph (2) is to be considered, where required to do so by a majority of the members of the Corporation or committee present at the meeting.

(2) This paragraph applies to a member who:

- (a) has any financial interest in:
 - (i) the supply of work to the institution, or the supply of goods for the purposes of the institution;
 - (ii) any contract or proposed contract concerning the institution; or
 - (iii) any other matter relating to the institution; or

- (b) has any other interest of a type specified by the Corporation in any matter relating to the institution.
- (3) This clause shall not prevent the members considering and voting upon proposals for the Corporation to insure them against liabilities incurred by them arising out of their office or the Corporation obtaining such insurance and paying the premium.
- (4) Where the matter under consideration by the Corporation or any of its committees relates to the pay and conditions of all staff, or all staff in a particular class, a Staff Member:
 - (a) need not disclose a financial interest; and
 - (b) may take part in the consideration of the matter, vote on any question with respect to it and count towards the quorum present at that meeting, provided that in so doing, the Staff Member acts in the best interests of the Corporation as a whole and does not seek to represent the interests of any other person or body, but
 - (c) shall withdraw from the meeting if the matter is under negotiation with staff and the Staff Member is representing any of the staff concerned in those negotiations.
- (5) The Clerk shall maintain a register of the interests of the members which have been disclosed and the register shall be made available during normal office hours at the institution to any person wishing to inspect it.

Meetings

- 11.—**(1) The Corporation shall meet at least once in every term and shall hold such other meetings as may be necessary.
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5) and to Clause 12(4), all meetings shall be called by the Clerk, who shall, at least seven (7) calendar days before the date of the meeting, send to the members of the Corporation written notice of the meeting and a copy of the proposed agenda.
 - (3) If it is proposed to consider at any meeting the remuneration, conditions of service, conduct, suspension, dismissal or retirement of the Clerk, the Chair shall, at least seven (7) calendar days before the date of the meeting, send to the members a copy of the agenda item concerned, together with any relevant papers.
 - (4) A meeting of the Corporation, called a “special meeting”, may be called at any time by the Chair, or in the absence of the Chair, by a Vice-Chair, or at the request in writing of any five (5) members.
 - (5) Where the Chair, or in the Chair’s absence the Vice-Chair, decides that there are matters requiring urgent consideration, the written notice convening the special meeting and a copy of the proposed agenda may be given within less than seven (7) calendar days.
 - (6) Every member shall act in the best interests of the Corporation and shall not be bound to speak or vote by mandates given by any other body or person.

Quorum

- 12.— (1) A quorum shall be formed on the attendance of 7 members of the Corporation.
- (2) If the number of members present for a meeting of the Corporation does not constitute a quorum, the meeting shall not be held.
- (3) If during a meeting of the Corporation there ceases to be a quorum, the meeting shall be terminated at once.
- (4) If a meeting cannot be held or cannot continue for lack of a quorum, the Chair may call a special meeting as soon as it is convenient.

Proceedings of meetings

- 13.— (1) Every question to be decided at a meeting of the Corporation shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast by members present and entitled to vote on the question. All questions put to the vote shall, at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting, be determined by silence, oral expression, or by a show of hands.
- (2) Where, at a meeting of the Corporation, there is an equal division of votes on a question to be decided, the Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- (3) A member may not vote by proxy or by way of postal vote.
- (4) No resolution of the members may be rescinded or varied at a subsequent meeting unless consideration of the rescission or variation is a specific item of business on the agenda for that meeting.
- (5) Except as provided by procedures made pursuant to Article 15 of the Articles of Government, a member of the Corporation who is a member of staff at the institution, including the Principal, shall withdraw:
- (a) from that part of any meeting of the Corporation, or any of its committees, at which staff matters relating solely to that member of the staff, as distinct from staff matters relating to all members of staff or all members of staff in a particular class, are to be considered;
- (b) from that part of any meeting of the Corporation, or any of its committees, at which that member's reappointment or the appointment of that member's successor is to be considered;
- (c) from that part of any meeting of the Corporation, or any of its committees, at which the matter under consideration concerns the pay or conditions of service of all members of staff, or all members of staff in a particular class, where the member of staff is acting as a representative (whether or not on behalf of a recognised trade union) of all members of staff or the class of staff (as the case may be); and
- (d) if so required by a resolution of the other members present, from that part of any meeting of the Corporation or any of its committees, at which staff matters relating to any member of staff holding a post senior to that member are to be considered,

except those relating to the pay and conditions of all staff or all staff in a particular class. For the avoidance of doubt, the Clerk is considered to be independent. Subject to clause 13(10), decisions on whether the Clerk should be required to withdraw shall be taken on a case-by-case basis.

- (6) A Principal who has chosen not to be a member of the Corporation shall still be entitled to attend and speak, or otherwise communicate, at all meetings of the Corporation and any of its committees, except that the Principal shall withdraw in any case where the Principal would be required to withdraw under paragraph (5).
- (7) A Student Member who is under the age of 18 shall not vote at a meeting of the Corporation, or any of its committees, on any question concerning any proposal:
 - (a) for the expenditure of money by the Corporation; or
 - (b) under which the Corporation, or any members of the Corporation, would enter into any contract, or would incur any debt or liability, whether immediate, contingent or otherwise.
- (8) Except as provided by rules made under Article 17(3) of the Articles of Government relating to appeals and representations by students in disciplinary cases, a Student Member shall withdraw from that part of any meeting of the Corporation or any of its committees, at which a student's conduct, suspension or expulsion is to be considered.
- (9) In any case where the Corporation, or any of its committees, is to discuss staff matters relating to a member or prospective member of staff at the institution, a Student Member shall:
 - (a) take no part in the consideration or discussion of that matter and not vote on any question with respect to it; and
 - (b) where required to do so by a majority of the members, other than Staff Members, of the Corporation or committee present at the meeting, withdraw from the meeting.
- (10) The Clerk:
 - (a) shall withdraw from that part of any meeting of the Corporation, or any of its committees, at which the Clerk's remuneration, conditions of service, conduct, suspension, dismissal or retirement in the capacity of Clerk are to be considered; and
 - (b) where the Clerk is a member of staff at the institution, the Clerk shall withdraw in any case where a member of the Corporation is required to withdraw under paragraph (5).
- (11) If the Clerk withdraws from a meeting, or part of a meeting, of a committee of the Corporation, the Corporation shall appoint a person from among themselves to act as Clerk to the committee during this absence.

Minutes

- 14.—** (1) Written minutes of every meeting of the Corporation shall be prepared, and, subject to paragraph (2), at every meeting of the Corporation the minutes of the last meeting shall be taken as an agenda item.
- (2) Paragraph (1) shall not require the minutes of the last meeting to be taken as an agenda item at a special meeting, but where they are not taken, they shall be taken as an agenda item at the next meeting which is not a special meeting.
- (3) Where minutes of a meeting are taken as an agenda item and agreed to be accurate, those minutes shall be signed as a true record by the Chair of the meeting.
- (4) Separate minutes shall be taken of those parts of meetings from which Staff Members, the Principal, Student Members or the Clerk have withdrawn from a meeting in accordance with Clause 13(5), (6), (8), (9) or (10) and such persons shall not be entitled to see the minutes of that part of the meeting or any papers relating to it.

Public access to meetings

- 15.** The Corporation shall decide any question as to whether a person should be allowed to attend any of its meetings where that person is not a member, the Clerk or the Principal and in making its decision, it shall give consideration to Clause 16(2).

Publication of minutes and papers

- 16.—** (1) Subject to paragraph (2), the Corporation shall ensure that a copy of:
- (a) the agenda for every meeting of the Corporation;
 - (b) the draft minutes of every such meeting, if they have been approved by the Chair of the meeting;
 - (c) the signed minutes of every such meeting; and
 - (d) any report, document or other paper considered at any such meeting,
- shall as soon as possible be made available during normal office hours at the institution to any person wishing to inspect them.
- (2) There shall be excluded from any item made available for inspection any material relating to:
- (a) a named person employed at or proposed to be employed at the institution;
 - (b) a named student at, or candidate for admission to, the institution;
 - (c) the Clerk; or
 - (d) any matter which, by reason of its nature, the Corporation is satisfied should be dealt with on a confidential basis.

- (3) The Corporation shall ensure that a copy of the draft or signed minutes of every meeting of the Corporation, under paragraph (1), shall be placed on the institution's website, and shall, despite any rules the Corporation may make regarding the archiving of such material, remain on its website for a minimum period of twelve (12) months.
- (4) The Corporation shall review regularly all material excluded from inspection under paragraph (2)(d) and make any such material available for inspection where it is satisfied that the reason for dealing with the matter on a confidential basis no longer applies, or where it considers that the public interest in disclosure outweighs that reason.

Copies of the Instrument of Government

17. A copy of this Instrument shall be given free of charge to every member of the Corporation and at a charge not exceeding the cost of copying or free of charge to any other person who so requests a copy, and shall be available for inspection at the institution upon request, during normal office hours, to every member of staff and every student.

Change of name of the Corporation

18. The Corporation may change its name with the approval of the Secretary of State.

Changes to the Instrument and Articles of Government

19. The Corporation shall not make changes to the Instrument or Articles of Government that would result in the body ceasing to be a charity.

Application of the seal

20. The application of the seal of the Corporation shall be authenticated by the signature of any two (2) members of the Corporation.

