

Governance Strategic Advisory Group Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Strategic Advisory Groups (SAGs) are a central part of Advance HE's commitment to ensuring the organisation meets the needs of members across all areas of work. SAGs are involved in:
 - a) Reviewing and shaping Advance HE's priorities and strategic development;
 - b) Identifying current and emerging strategic issues, challenges and opportunities across a range of global contexts to inform the future work of Advance HE;
 - c) Considering the implications of global insight and good practice and shaping how Advance HE's portfolio could respond to work for each relevant area;
 - d) Representing Advance HE and contributing to thought leadership to enable mutual learning across the Advance HE global membership community.
- 1.2 The Governance Strategic Advisory Group supports Advance HE in shaping its strategic direction, priorities, and portfolio on governance effectiveness, review and continuous professional development across global higher education.
- 1.3 The Group provides insight, challenge, and advice on how Advance HE can best support its members in designing, delivering, assuring, and continuously enhancing high-quality governance development initiatives.

2. Duties

- 2.1 The Governance SAG will:
 - a) Help shape Advance HE's strategic approach to governance, ensuring relevance and impact for members across global contexts;
 - b) Identify current and emerging challenges, opportunities, and risks relating to teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum design, student experience, retention, progression, and outcomes;
 - c) Provide insight on the implications of policy, regulation, funding, technology (including digital and AI developments), inclusion, and changing government, regulator, staff and student expectations;
 - d) Provide constructive scrutiny and challenge to Advance HE's priorities and plans, ensuring alignment with contemporary member needs and sector developments;
 - e) Act as a sounding board for the review, refresh, and development of Advance HE's governance-focused programmes, frameworks, services, and products;
 - f) Contribute to and promote Advance HE's thought leadership through publications, events, and external engagement;

- g) Advise on the intersections between governance and educational excellence, student success, leadership, quality assurance, equality, diversity and inclusion, and organisational development;
- h) Consider any other matters relating to governance as may be referred by Advance HE's Board of Directors or Executive.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The maximum number of members will be 18 members drawn from Advance HE member institutions, stakeholders and partners. Other members may be appointed for their specific skills and experience.
- 3.2 Membership will be designed to reflect a balanced mix of chairs, governors, sector stakeholders and governance professionals.
- 3.3 Membership will also explicitly reflect Advance HE's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The Group will bring together individuals with experience and expertise in advancing EDI in governance, and will model inclusive practice in its composition, behaviours, and advice to the organisation.
- 3.4 Members will typically be appointed for a two year term of office. All members will be reviewed at the end of each term to ensure fresh and diverse perspectives. Members will ordinarily serve a maximum of two terms. The Chair of the group will be appointed on a three year term to ensure there is greater continuity.
- 3.5 The GSAG will require specific skills and expertise as outlined in the person specification (annexe A).

4. Meetings

- 4.1 The Governance SAG shall meet (at least) two times each academic year.
- 4.2 Secretariat support will be provided by Advance HE.

Next review date for ToR: January 2028

Annex A

Governance Strategic Advisory Group Person Specification

Experience and Expertise

Members will collectively demonstrate:

- Successful track record of oversight, assurance and leadership in complex organisations
- Experience of Board and committee work
- High level of understanding of governance in a variety of regions and/or contexts, including but not limited to higher education;
- Appreciation of the HE policy landscape in particular relation to the importance of governance
- Commitment to the values and principles of Advance HE
- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to understand complex strategic issues, analyse and resolve difficult problems
- Sound independent judgement, common sense and diplomacy

Diversity of Perspective

In selecting members, Advance HE will seek diversity of perspective, including:

- Representation from different types of higher education providers (for example, research-intensive, teaching-focused, specialist, and regional institutions);
- Representation from across the UK nations and countries within Advance HE's global membership;
- Diversity of protected characteristics, equity-seeking groups, career stage, and background;
- Knowledge of governance in different sectors, including but not limited to higher education
- A mixture of understanding of staff and student issues
- A range of understanding governance from student, secretary, governor and Chair roles