

Applicant Guidance

Completing section F3

Winter/Spring 2021

**New
Schools
Network**

This guidance is based on the Department for Education's most recent mainstream free school wave – wave 14. The deadline for wave 14 applications was on the 11th November 2019.

The criteria for free school applicants are subject to change with each free school wave and local authority led presumption competitions. As a result, applicants using this guidance should be aware of potential changes in criteria for the application route they are applying to. New Schools Network will endeavour to update our guidance to reflect the latest Department for Education's criteria.

Introduction

This is intended to be used as a resource to help you to structure Section F3 in order to meet the DfE's criteria effectively. You should ensure that you address each of the bullet points below, so as to demonstrate a strong understanding of academy governance in the context of your proposed free school. The suggested diagram may help you to clarify your structure. Please see the [DfE criteria](#) for full information on completing this section.

All applicants must complete this section, however the information that is required depends on whether or not you are already an established multi academy trust. You should ensure you pay careful attention to the criteria to ensure you provide all necessary information relevant to your proposal.

Overall governance structure

You will need to include an organogram showing the lines of accountability between members, the board of trustees, any committees and local governing bodies and the principal/SLT of the free school. It is important to set out the roles and responsibilities of each tier of governance, and explain how your structure will ensure effective oversight of all schools in the trust.

University involvement

If your application includes the involvement of university partner(s), you should clarify whether they will be involved in the governance and/or strategic leadership of the school when it opens. You should also provide a brief explanation that outlines how this will be achieved and what their role will be. For example, will members of the university occupy *ex officio* places on the trust's board or the school's local governing body?

Roles and responsibilities

You should accompany the governance organogram with a narrative detailing the remit of each tier of governance. It is important to consider how your structure will enable your governing body to be an effective decision-making body:

- What is your rationale for the size of your governing body and for the number and type of committees?
- What is the proposed schedule and sequence of meetings for the governing body (once a term, twice a term etc.) and any committees/local governing bodies? How will this enable the governing body to operate effectively and discharge key responsibilities?
- See below for a suggested format for presenting the cycle of meetings of the governing body (this is in a Single-Academy Trust context; for Multi-Academy Trusts, you should also include involvement of local governing bodies and/or advisory groups).

Example: Annual cycle of meetings of the governing body

	Sept	Nov	Dec	Jan	March	April	May	June	July
Governing Body	Agree Improvement Plan		Review progress on improvement plan Consider recommendations from Committees Receive and approve annual report and report of auditors		Review progress on improvement plan Consider recommendations from Committees				
Teaching & Learning Committee	Review exam results Review KPI's for last term	Pupil progress from half termly assessment point Curriculum planning for next		Pupil progress from half termly assessment point	Pupil progress from half termly assessment point Feedback from parent				

		academic year		Review KPI's for last term	and pupil surveys				
Business Management Committee	Approve revised budget Review KPI's for last term	Budget monitoring Consider annual report and report of external auditors Agree and commission internal audit programme		Budget Monitoring Consider draft budget for next year Review KPI's for last term Overview of staff performance management					

Effective challenge

You should explain how your governing body will provide effective challenge to your Principal/SLT:

- How will the governing body provide strategic direction and what targets will they have responsibility for? You should cross-reference your targets in Section E2 here. How will they use milestones to give early warning of any concerns?
- How will the governing body find out information about the school? Examples may include targeted school visits, data and reports from SLT, external data (Ofsted, Raise online etc.), commissioning of external audits/specialists, specific portfolios, partnering with a specific member of the SLT etc. Do governors know what is happening in the school, or are they merely told?
- How will governors engage with stakeholders and any partners?
- What timely interventions will the governing body use if the SLT is found to not be meeting their targets? Again you should reference E2 here.

- How will you ensure that your governing body has the necessary expertise - critically in state education and academies finance - to challenge effectively, and what is your strategy for recruiting governors with good expertise? You should refer to section F3 here.

Conflicts of Interest

- How will you identify conflicts of interest? What is your strategy for handling conflicts of interest if and when they should arise?
- Are there any potential conflicts of interest for any individuals who will sit on your governing body?

[Click here to provide feedback about this resource](#)