



Terms of Reference

Academy Improvement Management Boards

Introduction

The Terms of Reference as set out below are general in content and form part of a suite of documents adopted by the Transforming Lives Educational Trust (TLET) as the governance framework for the oversight and management of TLET's community of academies.

The governance framework documents include:

- System of Governance and Working Practices
- Code of Business Conduct
- ToR: Link Trustee
- ToR: Academy Improvement and Management (AIM) Boards
- Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA)

The SoDA also encompasses terms of reference (Section 1). Should the SoDA and ToR for AIM boards differ, the SoDA shall have precedence.

Context

The Department for Education and the parents/carers of the children and young people in our charge have entrusted TLET and its community of Academies with delivering accessible high-quality meaningful learning.

To this end, there is:

- Societal expectation for expertise and excellence of learning
- Student and pupil expectation for engaging and effective learning
- System expectation for enabled and efficient learning

Against this backdrop, TLET formally recognises local Academy Improvement and Management (AIM) boards as integral to its system and design of governance and working practices which ensure learning provision remains fit for purpose and sustains the vision of 'learning today for the world of tomorrow'.

Purpose

The purpose of the AIM boards is to champion continuing improvement across a range of pedagogical and operational processes as acknowledged by the education profession and the regulators as impacting the quality of learning provision.

Promoting a spirit of openness and transparency, AIM boards are the 'critical friends' of the Academy.

Scope and Remit

Independent scrutiny, challenge and the proactive assessment of risk as provided through AIM boards supports the development of the operational performance of our Academies. As such, the scope and remit of AIM boards extends to: Teaching and Learning Impact, Business and Operational Impact, and Leadership and Management Impact.

AIM boards shall ensure:

- **Teaching and Learning Impact**
 - exacting standards of pedagogical and operational excellence
 - critique and challenge of the intent, implementation and impact of learning provision
 - learning equity; every child has the same opportunity to succeed
 - currency of staff occupational competence and professional development
- **Business and Operational Impact**
 - effective operation of healthy, safe, and productive business and learning environments
 - implementation and monitoring of proper and robust safeguarding protocols
 - compliant and consistent people and budgetary work practices
 - disciplined delivery of robust and transparent governance
- **Leadership and Management Impact**
 - effectiveness of school leadership; holding the Principal to account
 - independent scrutiny of the Principal's performance management and reward
 - leadership performance is assessed/shaped through reference to external comparative data
 - development of leadership and management performance through externally supported CPD

Composition

AIM boards shall normally comprise a minimum of 9 members drawn from academy, business, and parental communities.

The compositional percentages of membership category set out below are indicative, recognising that in reality the actual make-up of AIM boards may not be able to reflect the exact percentage.

- **Academy**

- the Principal of the Academy (or the CEO if no such person is appointed); **and**
- teaching and/or support staff (up to 25%)

- **Parental**

- parents/carers of children of the academy (up to 25%); **or**
- parents/carers involved in local community group

- **Business/Education**

- co-opted business/educational professionals (up to 50%); **where**
- the Academy has a faith designation, 50% (or as close to) of all those co-opted must be 'foundation governors' as appointed and recognised by the Diocese

Authority and Powers

The authority and powers AIM boards cascade from the Trust and are set out in the instrument of a documented Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA).

Designation

AIM board members have the designation of 'Partner'.

This designation acknowledges that AIM boards are 'partnering' the Academies via proactive support and development of operational performance, and in so doing, 'partnering' the Board of Trustees in the execution and delivery of their published strategy.

Term of Office

The term of office for all AIM board Partners shall be 4 years, save for the Principal of the Academy who shall remain a member until he or she ceases to work at the Academy.

The term of office of the Chair and Vice Chair shall be 2 years. Subject to re-election and remaining eligible, the maximum term of continuous office for the Chair and Vice- Chair shall be 4 years.

Appointment

The Chair and Vice Chair of AIM boards shall be appointed by the Trustees and may be removed from office by the Trustees at any time.

The Chair of the AIM board shall nominate a 'lead Partner' having specific oversight for Academy functional/operational areas such as Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Staff and Student Wellbeing, and Academy budget and personnel matters. In so doing, it is on the understanding that responsibility for such areas is vested in all AIM partners and not solely that of the 'lead Partner'.

AIM Partner appointments are ratified and approved by the Board of Trustees annually at the commencement of each Academic year.

Trustees have the right to appoint such persons to the AIM boards as they shall determine from time to time.

Recruitment

Members of AIM boards are recruited in accordance with agreed procedure.

Using the National Governance Association (NGA) skills audit and matrix, AIM boards determine a best fit composite skills matrix pertinent to the operation of the Academy to inform and shape membership recruitment profiles.

Vacancies occurring during the academic year are to be notified to the TLET Board of Trustees, with in-year appointments ratified by the Trustees at the closest scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees to the appointment.

Until ratified by the Board of Trustees, all AIM board membership/ appointments are provisional.

Frequency and Conduct of Meetings

The AIM board shall meet at least once per term or otherwise as required. AIM members shall uphold TLET's Code of Business Conduct and have regard for the operational requirements and responsibilities as set out in the ESFA Financial Handbook.

Regarding the business and operational function of upholding the discipline and delivery of robust and transparent governance the AIM board's operational conduct shall align with the non-statutory guidance as set out by the Department for Education publication School Governance Regulations 2013.

AIM Board Annual Review

In cognisance of existing reporting structures regarding Academy performance, namely: CEO report, Link trustee reports, External reporting mechanisms such as that of Challenge Partners, etc., the TLET Board of Trustees does not require, under normal circumstance, AIM boards to submit formal written reports to the Board of Trustees.

However, in keeping with and reflecting the face to face annual review of the Trust by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), AIM boards are required to attend an annual review with the Trust's Operations Standards Committee (OSC).

The annual review will involve the OSC (comprising three trustees), the Chair of the AIM board plus up to two additional AIM Partners. The Principal of the Academy is not required to attend the review.

The OSC will give AIM boards a minimum of 60 days' notice of the Annual Review date. Prior to the Annual Review and to inform professional discussion, the OSC will have accessed:

Minutes of AIM Board meetings;

- Principal's Reports to the AIM Board;
- AIM Board Quality Assurance findings/reports;
- CEO Reports to the Board of Trustees;
- External Reports, e.g. Ofsted, Challenge Partners, etc.;
- LA safeguarding audits;
- Pupil/Student outcome data

An agenda shall be issued to all parties in advance of the review.

Review

The Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Chairs/Vice Chairs of the AIM boards, will review these Terms of Reference to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and support the working practice of the Trust, subject to regulatory change requirement, every three years.