

London South Bank University

	PAPER NO: Nom06(12)	
Board/Committee:	Nominations Committee	
Date:	23 August 2012	
Paper title:	Independent Governors role description	
Author:	James Stevenson, University Secretary and Clerk to the Board of Governors	
Executive sponsor:	James Stevenson, University Secretary and Clerk to the Board of Governors	
Recommendation by the Executive:	The committee are asked to approve the proposed role description for independent governors	
Aspect of the Corporate Plan to which this will help deliver?	Effective governance of the University	
Matter previously considered by:	N/A	N/A
Further approval required?	N/A	N/A
Communications – who should be made aware of the decision?	N/A	

Executive summary

The committee are asked to approve the proposed role description for independent governors.

Role Description for Independent Governor
August 2012

The University

London South Bank University (LSBU) is a vibrant, modern university with a long heritage. For 120 years, we have been priding ourselves on creating professional opportunities for our students and equipping them to become highly successful in their chosen fields.

The Borough Road Polytechnic Institute was established in 1892 with the founding aim to “improve the mental and bodily health and social happiness of the people in one of the poorest parts of south London”.

We are proud that throughout our history, the focus has been on professional courses and strong links with business and industry. The legacy of our past continues to enable our students to build successful and rewarding careers.

We have inherited, and still cherish, the role of welcoming students with potential from whatever background and helping them achieve career success. This mission remains at the core of the university today and will be an enduring legacy for future generations.

We are a cosmopolitan university with some 23,500 students, 50% of which are from ethnic minorities, 58% female and 42% male.

We have received the highest possible rating for the quality of our education, from the independent Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

Our students achieve the 12th highest starting salaries of any university in the UK (Sunday Times University Guide 2011).

London South Bank University

Our main campus is a short walk from many of London's major landmarks and we're at a hub of local transport. Waterloo and London Bridge are some of our nearest stations and the London Underground is on our doorstep.

The University is delighted to have welcomed our new Chancellor, Richard Farleigh, at a formal installation ceremony in July 2012, our 120th anniversary year.

The vision and mission of London South Bank University

We have an important, enduring and consistent mission to create student opportunity for future success. We have much to be proud of and aspire to be the best in our field.

We intend to make this happen by implementing our vision:

“To be the most admired UK university for creating professional opportunity. We intend to be a source of pride to our students, our staff and the communities we serve.”

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is the University's governing body. The core responsibilities of the Board are:

- (i) the effective stewardship of the University to secure its sustainability over the medium and long term;
- (ii) safeguarding the mission of the University and the services it provides for the public benefit;
- (iii) securing the proper and effective use of public funds and accounting to stakeholders and society for institutional performance.

The Board as a whole is collectively responsible for promoting the success of the University by leading and supervising its affairs. The Board:

London South Bank University

- oversees all activities of the University and ensures it complies with the law;
- determines the strategic direction of the University;
- has responsibility for approving the educational character, mission and strategic vision of the University, together with its long-term academic and business plans.
- fosters an educational environment that enables students to succeed; and
- sets the values and standards of the University and ensures that its obligations to its stakeholders are understood and met;
- has overall responsibility for its assets, property and estate, employees and health and safety
- takes all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the University.

Composition of the Board of Governors

The Board comprises up to 13 independent governors, up to two academic staff, up to two students and at least one co-opted governor who has experience in the provision of education.

The Board is chaired by David Longbottom, Pro Chancellor. The vice chair is Sarah Mullally, Pro Chancellor.

The Board meets at least 5 times a year, plus two annual strategy days. Independent governors usually serve on one or more committees. The key committees are the Policy and Resources, Audit, Educational Character, Human Resources and Property Committees. Typically, these meet 3-4 times a year.

The Chief Executive of London South Bank University is the Vice Chancellor who is supported by an Executive consisting of two Pro Vice Chancellors, Executive Director of Finance, the University Secretary and the four Executive Deans.

London South Bank University

Academic Structure

The University is divided into four faculties: Business; Engineering, Science and the Built Environment; Health and Social Care; Arts and Human Sciences (AHS). Teaching and the main administration is conducted at the Southwark Campus for all courses, except the professional courses in nursing, midwifery, health and social care, which are offered at Havering. Each Faculty is headed by an Executive Dean who has Pro Deans to assist them in the running of the Faculty.

The Academic Board reports to the Board of Governors and is responsible for policy and regulation in respect of admissions, examinations, the curricula, course content and all other academic matters.

Role description for independent governor

Main duties and responsibilities

The independent governor's role on the Board

1. To participate fully and actively in matters which come before the Board and its committees. Governors should question intelligently, debate constructively, challenge rigorously and decide dispassionately.
2. To ensure that the Board exercises control over the strategic direction of the University, through an effective planning process, and that the performance of LSBU is adequately assessed against the objectives which the Board has approved.
3. To establish constructive working relationships with fellow governors and the University Executive, recognising that day-to-day management is the responsibility of the Executive.

External Role

4. To act as ambassadors for LSBU externally. To engage with members of the University Court, which is a body of professional contacts and friends of the University, meeting annually.

Conduct

5. To embrace LSBU's vision, mission and values.
6. To act in accordance with the accepted standards of behaviour in public life and observe the highest standards of corporate governance, which includes ensuring and demonstrating integrity and objectivity in the transaction of business and following a policy of openness and transparency.

London South Bank University

7. To exercise the Board's responsibilities in the interests of LSBU as a whole, rather than as a representative of any constituency and to accept collective responsibility for decisions made by the Board.
8. To act fairly and impartially at all times in the interests of LSBU as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

Time Commitment

9. To be willing and able to devote the time needed to be an effective governor, including attending meetings, reading agenda and papers and attending significant LSBU events as appropriate. The time commitment required is approximately 15 days per year. Meetings are normally held in the early evening.

Holding office

10. The role of independent governor is a high profile, responsible and rewarding voluntary role. In the spirit of charity trustees, independent governors are not remunerated, but members may reclaim all travelling and similar expenses incurred in the course of LSBU business. Independent governors have the opportunity to influence and contribute to the success of a large institution that positively impacts on many people's lives.
11. The initial term of office of an independent governor is four years.
12. The successful candidate will receive an in-depth induction programme. Their contribution as a governor is reviewed by the Chairman from time to time. Training and development opportunities are available.

Independent governor – person specification

Experience/knowledge

- A. Legally eligible to be a director and a charity trustee
- B. A commitment to understanding and fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of a governor, and maintaining knowledge in this regard through professional development
- C. Strong personal commitment to higher education and to the aims and values of LSBU
- D. Experience of operating at a strategic and/or corporate level
- E. The ability to negotiate outcomes and influence others to agree with those outcomes
- F. The ability to analyse complex and detailed information, readily distil key issues, and develop innovative approaches and solutions to problems
- G. Ability to operate as an effective member of a team with fellow governors
- H. Ability to communicate effectively with a broad range of stakeholders
- I. Ability to establish constructive and supportive yet challenging working relationships with the University Executive
- J. Ability to evaluate and monitor the work of LSBU
- K. Willingness to devote the time needed to be an effective governor
- L. Commitment to continuous personal improvement, including appraisal by the Chairman of the Board from time to time
- M. Commitment to equal opportunities

University Secretary & Clerk to the Board
August 2012