

ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR MEMBERS

Multi-academy trusts are set up as charitable companies and are founded by members. They are often compared to shareholders of a company limited by shares. Members are volunteers. They sit above the board of trustees and have a largely hands-off role, however, a number of critical decisions sit with members' boards in multi-academy trusts.

Members are essential to the integrity of the academy trust governance structure. They are described as the “guardians” of the governance of the trust and their role is one of oversight. Members play a limited but crucial role in safeguarding academy trust governance. They hold the Trust Board to account for the effective governance of the Trust and assure themselves that the Trustees are acting in accordance with the Trust’s charitable object(s), namely ‘to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom’. Members can use their powers to step in if governance is failing.

Members must both understand and support the Trust’s ethos and culture.

Members are not involved in the day-to-day business of the Trust and must ensure they do not assume the powers of the Trustees. However, they do have an important role in the Trust, based on a number of key powers set out in the Department for Education’s model articles of association and in company law.

Powers of Members

It is essential that Members are aware of the powers available to them and know when and how to use those powers effectively.

Members help to ensure that Trustees are exercising effective governance by utilising a range of powers including:

- Appointing and removing Trustees;
- Appointing and removing Members;
- Amending the Trust’s Articles of Association;
- Appointing and removing Auditors.

The Members ensure the success of the Trust. Essentially, this means that the Members’ Board focuses on:

- Outcomes – are the pupils in the Trust making expected progress and reaching the required levels of attainment?; and
- Financial oversight – is the Trust spending public money wisely?

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Members are kept informed about Trust business so they can be assured that the Trust Board is exercising effective governance. This includes receiving the Trust's audited annual report and accounts.

Independence from the Trust Board

There is clear separation between the layers of governance within the Trust. The Members' Board is entirely separate from the Trust Board.

Skills and experience for the Member role

Essential:

- Critical listening and the ability to ask effective questions
- Strategic thinking
- Excellent communication
- Problem solving and analysis

Desirable:

- Understanding of data
- Finance and/or accounting knowledge
- Educational and business/commercial expertise
- Leadership and management
- Corporate and/or charity governance
- Risk management
- Audit skills
- Marketing and communications
- Connection to the local community

Core competencies:

- Working as a team
- Acting with integrity
- Supporting the Trust in public and acting as an ambassador of the Trust and its schools



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Time commitment

The time commitment for the Member role is not substantial. In practice, the members' role is limited to their meetings. The Members generally have 3 meetings per academic year, including an annual general meeting. Preparation for meetings includes reading papers and preparing questions for the Chief Executive Officer, Chair of the Trust Board and Chairs of the Central Committees.

Upon joining the Trust, we will undertake a full induction with you and also support you in the steps to becoming a Board member.

We hold events for our whole Greensand governance community, one per term, at which our Governors, Trustees & Members receive training and are able to meet, share best practice and ideas. Members are also expected to undertake any training required to enable them to discharge their role effectively.

Additional information

Academies are both charities and companies limited by guarantee. All member appointments must be formalised and details registered with the Education & Skills Funding Agency. All Members are required to have an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check.

The Members' role is both rewarding for individuals and valuable to the local community.

If you would like know more about becoming a Member for Greensand MAT and volunteering for your local community, please contact the Trust's Lead Governance Professional, Emma Salisbury.

Email: e.salisbury@reigate-school.surrey.sch.uk

Phone: 01737 948 186 (DDI) or 01737 243 166 (reception)

Please also find information about the Trust and our six schools on our website:

<https://www.greensandacademytrust.co.uk/>