Roles, responsibilities and aspirations of Birkbeck’s Governors

1 Birkbeck’s Governors have responsibility for overseeing the exercise of the powers of the College, which include:
   - Enrolling and educating students
   - Awarding degrees and Certificates
   - Owning property
   - Receiving grants, gifts and fees
   - Investing and managing funds

2 Individually and collectively, Governors are responsible for:
   - approving the mission and strategic vision of the College,
   - financial strategy and performance,
   - mechanisms for control, accountability and securing value for money
   - appointing the Master and senior posts
   - ensuring an appropriate human resources strategy and pay and conditions of employment
   - ensuring the Governing Body’s effectiveness
   - ensuring systems providing equality of opportunity are in place
   - ensuring, as much as possible, proper operation and accountability of the Students’ Union
   - the health and safety of staff, students and others using the College’s facilities

3 In fulfilling these responsibilities, Birkbeck’s Governors, individually and collectively, aspire to be:
   - challenging to the College in providing effective scrutiny
   - supportive of the College in its strategic development
   - well informed and prepared to share knowledge
   - able to distinguish their role from that of the College management
   - effective in bringing a new perspective to the College management
   - ambassadorial
   - self improving
   - dynamic and engaged
   - in a position to assure themselves that the Committees work well and that the balance of Committee activity within the College is appropriate.

4 The Governing Body meets five times each year. It has four formal committees to assist it in fulfilling its responsibilities:
   - Audit Committee (meets four times each year)
   - Finance and General Purposes Committee (which has established Investment, Estates, Human Resources, Strategic Planning and Health and Safety Committees to assist it and meets three times each year)
   - Nominations Committee which meets once each year
   - Remuneration Committee which meets once each year
Independent Governors are normally expected, once established in their roles, to serve on at least one Committee as well as attending meetings of the governing body. There are also opportunities to take part in working groups and reviews.

Personal attributes

5 A Birkbeck Governor:
- Demonstrates an understanding of the principles and practice of good corporate governance and acts at all times in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life:
  - Selflessness
  - Integrity
  - Objectivity
  - Accountability
  - Openness
  - Honesty
  - Leadership
- Understands and accepts the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of a Governor;
- Has a commitment to education and to the values of the College: academic and research excellence, access for non traditional students, participation in public cultural life and equality of opportunity for all
- Has successful strategic-level experience, in a professional or voluntary capacity, and exercises strategic vision;
- Is able to exercise independent judgement and to make difficult decisions and be accountable for those decisions;
- Can think objectively, creatively, pragmatically and laterally and communicate those thoughts effectively
- Can absorb and digest complex information quickly,
- Has specific expertise or experience in one or more areas that are relevant to College business:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Social and cultural</th>
<th>Student centred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Academic and research disciplines relevant at Birkbeck</td>
<td>Equality and diversity</td>
<td>Student Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnic, gender, professional and family/alumnus dimensions</td>
<td>Student aspirations, motivations and needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estates/property</td>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental, cultural and reputational values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fundraising and lobbying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/commercial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expectations of Governors
6 Birkbeck expects Governors

- To acquire a working knowledge of the Higher Education sector and the particular challenges facing Birkbeck
- To respect the view of others and work effectively as a member of a team;
- To show a commitment to promoting good practice in all matters of good governance, risk management and legal compliance
- To be committed to personal development as a Governor
- To inspire confidence in others
- To respect confidentiality when needed
- To devote sufficient time to attending and preparing for meetings, to participate effectively
- To be a champion for the College: as an ambassador, liaising with outside bodies, stakeholders and supporters; or as an adviser in relation to specific strategic functions or development projects

**Time commitments**

7 All Governors are expected to attend the Governing body's meetings. There are five meeting a year. Once established in the role, Governors are normally expected to serve on a Governors Committee, with 3-5 additional meetings a year.

8 The College also appreciates Governors' participation in other College events, including graduation, public lectures and social and fundraising events.

9 There is a Governor-School/Department Liaison Scheme in which Governors who participate are partnered with a School or strategic or service area.

**Term of appointment**

10 Governors are appointed for three year terms, renewable twice

**Expenses**

11 The Governor role is not remunerated, but travelling and other expenses incurred in travelling to meetings and events are reimbursed.