

A o i tio

# The Composition of English Further Education Corporations and College Governance Frameworks

A





# The Composition of English Further Education Corporations and College Governance Frameworks

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

1. This is a high-level summary showing the key findings of the AoC survey covering the composition of English Further Education (FE) college corporations and







## Age of governors

16. The survey provides a picture of the age of governors on corporations. The majority

*How long has your current chair been in place*

Period chair has been in post	No of colleges	%
Less than 1 year	31	17%
1 to less than 2 years	49	27%
2 to less than 3 years	25	14%
3 to less than 4 years	15	8%
4 to less than 5 years	9	5%
5 to less than 6 years	18	10%
6 to less than 7 years	4	2%
7 to less than 8 years	9	5%
8 to less than 9 years	4	2%
9 to less than 10 years	3	2%
10 or more years	15	8%
Vacancy	1	1%
Total colleges	183	100%

Amending the Instrument and Articles of Government

21. Just over half of colleges (51%) told us they have, or have decided, to use the new freedoms in the 2011 Education Act to amend their Instrument and Articles of Government. A further 29% of respondents who have not proposed any changes so far, said they may make changes during the academic year 2013/14.

More complex business models

22. Eleven percent of colleges classify themselves as operating within a group structure (13% of GFECs and 6% of SFCs). Twenty-three percent sponsor either an academy, free school, UTC or studio school.



## Part 1: The results on the composition of corporations

23. The results cover 183 English FE colleges and provide information on some 3258





Figure 4: The size of GFEC corporations

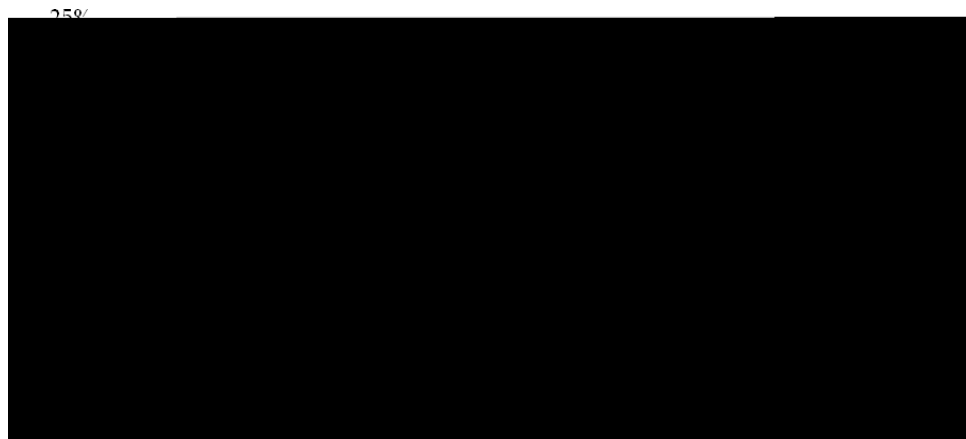
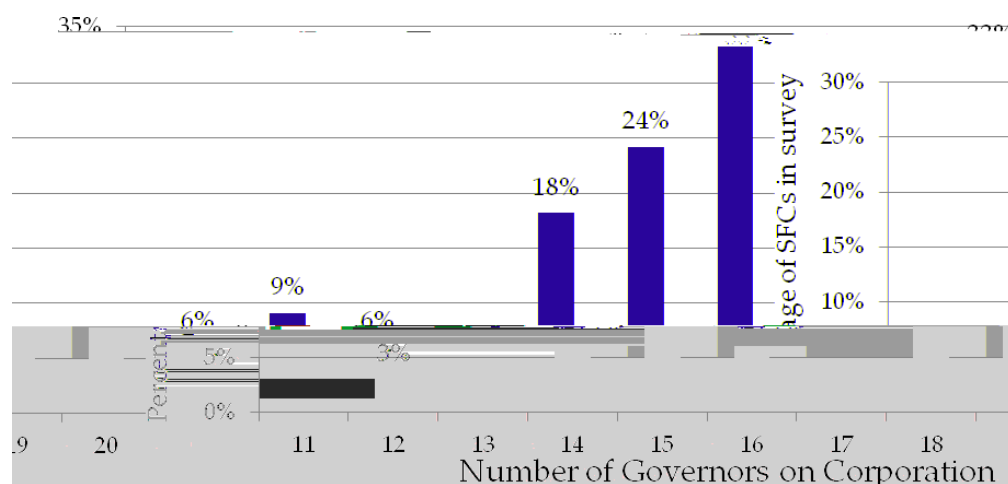


Figure 5: The size of SFC corporations



28. In assessing the size of corporations we have taken into account the position of co-opted governors (see paragraph 38 below).

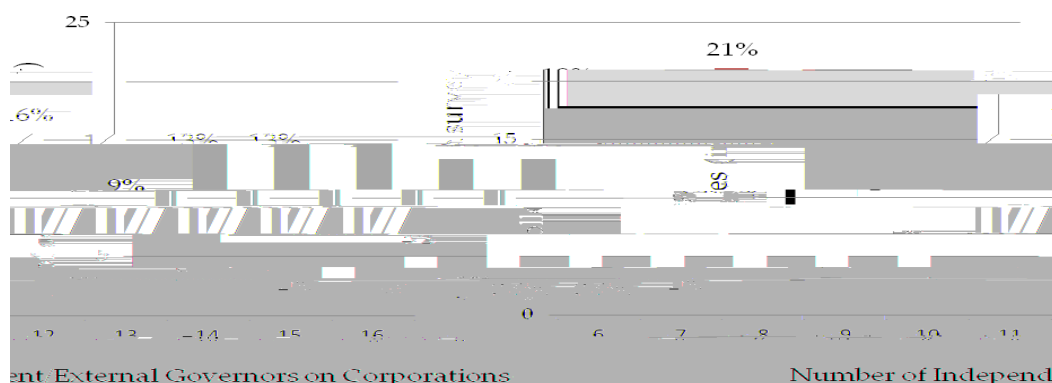
29. Under the unmodified Instrument and Articles of Government for FE colleges, a Principal can (if they wish) choose to be a member of the corporation. We found that

# AoC Report: The Composition of English Further Education Corporations and College Governance Frameworks

Average number of independent/external governors on corporations					
	Type of college				
	College Sector	Non-SFCs	GFECs	SFCs	A&HCs
Average	12.3	12.5	12.3	11.5	13.6

34. Figure 7 shows the number of independent/external governors on corporations in terms of the percentage number of colleges responding to the survey. The minimum number of independent/external governors in any one college is six and the maximum number is sixteen. Twenty-one percent of colleges have 13 independent/external governors and 27% fourteen or more.

Figure 7: The number of independent/external governors on corporations

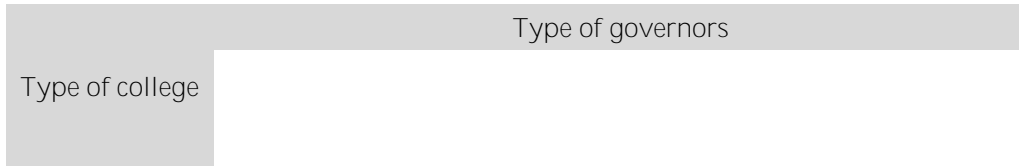


35. Ninety-three percent of corporations have two student governors. Six percent (all GFECs) have just one student governor and 1% have three (GFECs). All the SFCs and A&HCs have two student governors.

36. Eighty-four percent of corporations have two staff governors, 13% have one staff governor and 3% three staff governors. Figure 8 shows the percentage of colleges with the number of staff governors on their corporations.



Figure 9: Vacancy rates in corporations



41. Over half the colleges (52%) had at least one vacancy for an independent/external governor and 29% had at least two vacancies. Eleven percent had three or more vacancies (17 GFECs and 3 SFCs) for internal/external governors.

Gender

42. Just over six out of ten governors (62%) are male and just under four out of ten (38%) are female. This is in line with the FE Women’s Leadership Network’s findings from their 2012 survey, which showed that 65% of governors were male. The AoC survey did not differentiate gender between types of governor nor did it ask for the gender of Chairs. The 2012 ACER survey of the Eastern Region found that 70% of independent/external governors were male and 76% of Chairs.

Age of governors

43. The survey provides a picture of the age of governors on corporations. The majority of governors (60%) are between 45 and 64 years of age. Fourteen percent are aged 65 years or more. The summary table below shows the age of governors.

Figure 10: Age of governors on corporations.

Age of governors on corporations						
24 or under	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 or over
9%	5%	13%	29%	31%	13%	1%





47. One hundred and thirty colleges (71% of the respondents) responded to the question about whether any of their governors assess themselves as disabled. Of these, 48 colleges (37% of the 130 respondents) said they had one or more governors who are self-assessed as disabled. Overall the 48 colleges had 63 governors who self-assessed as having a disability. This represents 3% of the governors in the 130 respondent colleges.
  
48. This question was carefully drafted in a way that would secure a response, so it is disappointing that 53 colleges (29%) did not respond. However, it must be recognised that the survey was completed by clerks on behalf their corporations and



50. A typical corporation of 12 independent/external governors would therefore include three with an education background, two with a finance background, one with a legal and one with an HR background.

51. Figure 13 looks more closely at the education backgrounds of independent/external governors and shows the extent to which they are drawn from schools, further or higher education.

Figure 13: Independent/external governors with an education background

Background experience	Type of College				
	College Sector	Non-SFCs	SFCs	GFECs	A&HCs
Education (Schools)	7%	7%	10%	7%	4%
Education (Further)	7%	7%	7%	7%	8%
Education (Higher)	8%	7%	9%	7%	7%
Education (Other)	3%	3%	5%	3%	4%
Total	26%	25%	30%	25%	23%

52. In terms of specific skills for particular colleges, 20% of independent/external governors at agricultural and horticultural colleges (A&HCs) have an agricultural or



## Part 2: The results on governance frameworks

Number of committees

54.

Figure 15: GFECs - the number of standing committees supporting corporations

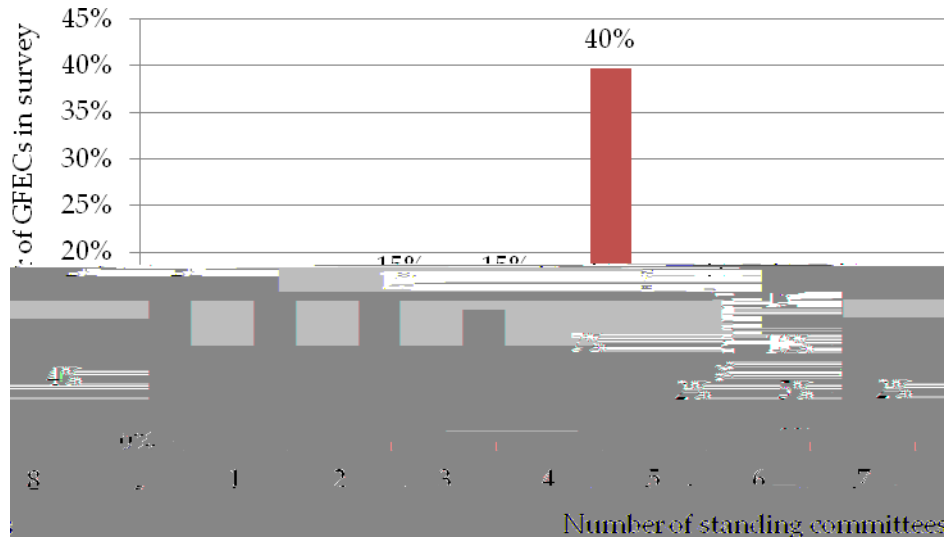
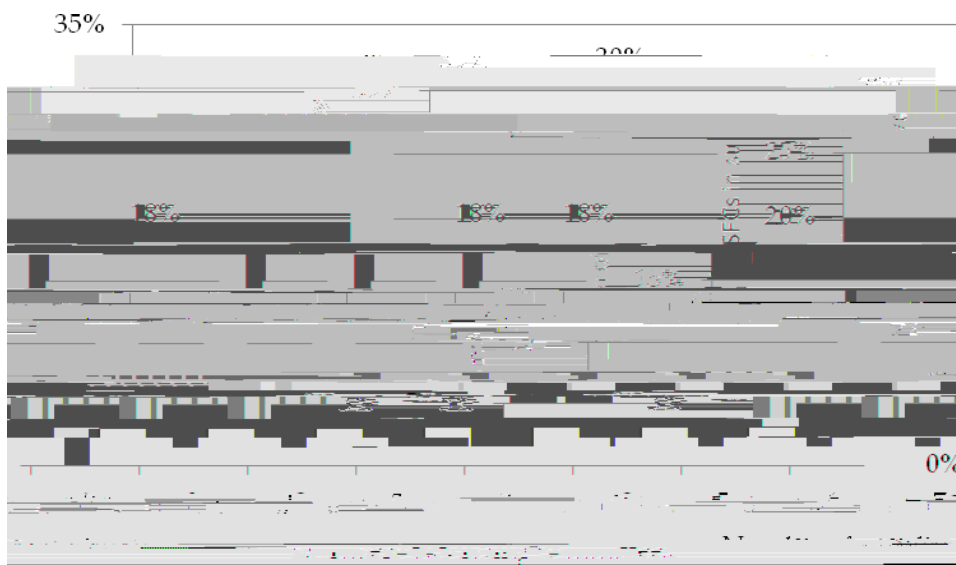


Figure 16: SFCs - the number of standing committees supporting corporations



57. The typical model for a corporation with five standing committees is for it to be supported by an Audit, Search, Remuneration, Quality and Standards, and Finance Committee. Ninety five percent of college have a Search Committee; 88% a Remuneration Committee, 73% a Quality, Standards and Achievement Committee,



and 68% a Finance Committee (though this is frequently defined with a wider brief such as a Resources Committee or a Finance and General Purposes Committee, etc). These were by far the most popular standing committees reported to the survey.

#### Terms of office for governors

58. As figure 17 shows, 76% of colleges said that they set a four year term for governors. Ten percent of colleges said the term varied by type of governor. A CER's 2012 survey of colleges in the Eastern Region asked specifically the term set for independent/external governors and found that 93% se





Figure 20: How long has your current chair been in place

Period chair has

Figure 21: Making changes to the Instrument and Articles of Government

64. Earlier in this report we identified that three GFECs in the survey have amended their Instrument and Articles of Government to allow two executive governors to be appointed to their corporations. That is the principal and one other member of the senior management team.

More complex business models

65. Twenty colleges (11%) in the survey (18 GFECs and 2 SFCs) classify themselves as operating within a group structure. That is 13% of GFECs and 6% of SFCs. One of the GFECs classifying themselves as within a group also said they were part of a legal federation with another college.

66.



colleges (9% of all survey responses) classified themselves as operating in a group structure but did not sponsor an academy, free school, UTC or studio school.





### Part 3: The methodology

66. The Association of Colleges' survey sought to build on the work of the Governors' Council Database Development Task Group, set up after the 2013 National Governance Conference, and the work of ACER and the FE Women's Leadership Network, in collecting and publishing data on the composition of English FE corporations. The survey was completed by clerks on behalf of their corporations in October 2013 prior to the AoC Conference. Godbold Consultancy was commissioned to analyse the data more fully and produce a report on the survey findings.
67. The survey was completed by 188 institutions but the results in this report focus on the 183 respondent colleges that use the standard Instrument and Articles of Government to underpin their governance frameworks. The 183 colleges represent 56% of English FE colleges and cover some 3258 governors' positions. Figure 22 shows the response rate across the college sector by region and figure 23 by type of college.

Figure 22: Response rate to survey by region

Region	Total number of colleges in regions <sup>11</sup>	Number of Responses from regions	% Response rate
--------	---	----------------------------------	-----------------



Figure 23: Response rate to survey by type of college





71. While the overall response rate is fairly robust, the response rate from sixth form colleges (35%) is disappointingly low and may further limit the reliability of forecasts for this subset of results.
72. The analysis looked at forms of measuring and showing averages. Unless otherwise stated in the report, average refers to the mean average. While this can have limitations it is the most frequently used form across the college sector and as such the most readily understood.
73. While some terms for types of governors are defined within the FE Instrument and Articles of Government and supporting documents, others are not. For convenience, this report has adopted the terms and descriptors most commonly used across the college sector.
74. For the most part, data presented as a percentage is shown to the nearest whole number.
75. The report is supported by a full set of source data tables in Appendix 3. This is published separately.





## College Sector

The college sector is defined as those colleges established as independent colleges under the 1992 Education Act. There are currently 339 such colleges. For the purpose of this report the term excludes the 10 special designated colleges which are not required to apply the FE Instrument and Articles of Government.

## GFECs

The term GFECs (General Further Education Colleges) is used in this report to also include colleges which classify themselves as tertiary colleges.

## Independent/external governor

This report has adopted the term independent or external governor to define a college governor who is not a student governor, staff governor, parent governor or executive governor. Though they constitute the largest type of governor on a corporation, they have never been given a distinctive label in the FE Instrument and Articles of Government for FE colleges. Independent or external governors are the two most common terms used in the college sector to label these governors. The term business or employer governors is also sometimes used.

## Non-executive governor

This is the generic term used to label those governors who are not executive governors. Traditionally, under the unmodified FE Instrument and Articles of Government, this covered all the governors other than the principal. It includes student, staff, parent and independent/external governors.

# AoC Report: The Composition of English Further Education Corporations and College Governance Frameworks



## Appendix 2: The AoC survey questions and format

---

### Preliminary questions

College type:

- General Further Education / Tertiary College
- Sixth Form College
- Specialist College
- Other

The data within this Appendix captures colleges according to: GFEC/Tertiary, SFC, Agricultural and Horticultural College (A&HC) and Art & Design and Performing Arts College (AD & PA). The A&HC and AD&PA colleges were originally included under the specialist/other categories.

College regions:



If no, do you anticipate that your governing body may decide to revise its Instrument & Articles during 2013/14? Yes/No

2. Has your College developed any of the following business models? (tick all that apply)

Creation of a group structure

Legal federation with another College





Other (please specify)

8. How many Governors does the College have by the following categories?

- Student Governor (s)
- Staff Governor (s)
- Parent Governor (s)
- Principal/Chief Executive
- Business/Employer Governor (s)
- Other Governor (s)
- Co-opted Governor (s)
- Total number of Governors

9. Number of vacancies on Governing body by category?

- Student Governor (s)
- Staff Governor (s)
- Parent Governor (s)





- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Any other Black / African / Caribbean
- Arab
- Any other ethnic group
- Not provided

17. If you have any comments on the questions in this survey or the issues it raises or any other issue, please record them.

---