



Clerking Case Study: The Role of the Professional Clerk

In the recent Ofsted ‘Improving Governance’ report (December 2016) it is indicated that in order for governance to be effective a governing board should enlist the skills of a professional clerk. The EES for Schools Clerking Agency recently streamlined their service level agreements to ensure that the professional service provided by agency clerks meets the Department for Education’s current clerking expectations.

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Their [clerks] role is not only about good and effective organisation and administration, but also, and more importantly, about helping the board understand its role, functions and legal duties and supporting the chair to enable and facilitate strategic debate and decision making.

Department for Education (2017). Extract taken from ‘Governance handbook – For academies, multi-academy trusts and maintained schools’. [online] p.36. Available at: www.gov.uk [Accessed 8 Feb. 2017]

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The EES for Schools Clerking Agency undertakes responsibility to ensure all of its clerks have suitable skills, training and knowledge. This ensures they are able to successfully fulfil their duties as outlined in the governance handbook.

The Clerking Agency provides termly briefings for clerks to ensure they are informed of the latest legislative and educational updates at the beginning of each new term. This is continually supported throughout the term in the form of a weekly update bulletin including any specific hot topic information. In addition to this, the Clerking Agency ensures that clerks have access to appropriate legal advice and guidance.

All clerks are encouraged to participate in the National Clerks Development Programme whether this is to deepen and expand an already extensive knowledge of clerking or if it is to provide a sound and broad understanding of how a professional clerk works effectively.

Through understanding the service level agreements, attending the clerks’ briefings and familiarisation with the weekly updates, clerks have a clear understanding of what is required of governors. They are able to apply this knowledge when attending meetings and can ensure that the effective governance and core functions of the governing body are reflected concisely in the governing board minutes.

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