



INDEPENDENT GOVERNOR

HEART OF WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE

INFORMATION PACK

MARCH 2026

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HEART OF
WORCESTERSHIRE
COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR.

THE CORPORATION

The Corporation (Board of Governors) of Heart of Worcestershire College has a Membership of 19 Governors, of whom 18 are volunteers (14 external, independent non-executive plus 2 elected Staff and 2 elected Student Governors) plus the Principal and CEO. The Corporation's responsibilities are to:

- Provide strategic leadership shaping the College's vision and promoting inclusive education.
- Hold senior leaders accountable for delivering the College mission, overall performance and effectively managing public money.
- Actively engage with local stakeholders to ensure alignment with local, regional and national skills needs and relevance.
- Ensure effective Governance whilst adhering to the Nolan Principles to secure ethical, transparent, and compliant operations which meet statutory requirements.



RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT GOVERNORS

The College is looking to recruit Independent Governors to bring fresh perspectives aligning with the College's mission and future goals. We encourage applications from individuals and employers willing to commit their time to supporting the College's ongoing development to ensure that it meets the needs of local businesses, other stakeholders and the communities that it serves.

The recruitment process will be overseen by the Corporation's Governance and Search Committee, which will make a recommendation to the full Corporation at the conclusion of the process. Any decision on appointment is made by the full membership of the Corporation. Appointments will normally commence from 1 August 2026 unless the Corporation considers another date appropriate due to particular circumstances.

WELCOME LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL.

Thank you for your interest in joining Heart of Worcestershire College at such a pivotal and exciting time in our journey. Over the past two years, our College has undergone a remarkable transformation – rooted in resilience, ambition and a deep commitment to our community. We have not only weathered challenges but have emerged stronger, more united and more determined to empower every learner who walks through our doors.

At the heart of our progress lies our values: **Honest, Optimistic, Welcoming, Collaborative, Ambitious, Respectful, Empowering and Supportive.** These aren't just words on a wall; they shape our culture, guide our decisions, and inspire our people. From curriculum innovation to community partnerships, every stride we have taken has been driven by a belief in the transformative power of education and the strength of collective purpose.

As we look ahead the role of the Corporation is more vital than ever.

We are seeking an individual to join the Corporation who shares our vision and values, and who understands the importance of strategic governance in shaping the future of education. In collaboration with the College Leadership Team, the Corporation sets the tone, upholds integrity, and ensures that our College remains agile, accountable and ambitious. This is more than a governance role – it is an opportunity to influence lives, shape futures and be part of a College that truly cares.

Michelle Dowse

Principal and Chief Executive
Heart of Worcestershire College



OUR VISION. OUR VALUES.

MISSION

Improve lives through learning.

VISION

To be recognised for nurturing the brilliance of every student and addressing the skills needs of local and regional employers, through innovative and impactful education.

VALUES

#HOWCARES

Honest

Optimistic

Welcoming

Collaborative

Ambitious

Respectful

Empowering

Supportive



Honest	We are open and transparent and recognise, accept and take action when things aren't working or would benefit from change. We are confident to respectfully challenge others.
Optimistic	We see opportunities in challenge. We are positive and passionate about our College and the communities we serve, and are aspirational for our students.
Welcoming	We create positive first impressions and foster loyalty.
Collaborative	We work as a team and leverage diverse skills and perspectives. We pursue partnerships to benefit the communities we serve.
Ambitious	We seek to improve, build on our strengths and expand. We are innovative and consistently encourage and inspire our colleagues and students to achieve their best.
Respectful	We value all contributors, acknowledge diverse opinions and foster inclusion.
Empowering	We delegate authority and encourage decision-making and initiative, to increase engagement and productivity. Through fostering a culture of accountability, we promote resilience in a no-blame culture.
Supportive	We help others with empathy and kindness at our core. We are responsive, enabling colleagues, students and stakeholders to find solutions and achieve.

ABOUT HEART OF WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE.

Heart of Worcestershire College delivers vocational, professional, technical qualifications and community education at sites located across the county and is the largest provider of post 16 education. Our vision is to be recognised for nurturing the brilliance of every student and addressing the skills needs of local and regional employers, through innovative and impactful education.

The College serves the entire County of Worcestershire. Our provision and our sites in Worcester, Malvern, Bromsgrove, and Redditch reflect the diversity of the county we serve. We work closely with a wide range of employers and key stakeholders including the LEPs, our district and county councils, the West Midlands Combined Authority, and the Chamber of Commerce.

More information about our outstanding facilities, including some virtual tours of our sites can be found at [Our Campuses | Heart of Worcestershire College \(howcollege.ac.uk\)](https://www.heartofworcestershirecollege.ac.uk) and provide a useful insight into life here at College.

Below are some of the highlights in terms of our progress:

PROGRESS

- Significantly Improved achievement rates
- Clear Estates Strategy
- Better staff satisfaction (88% - 94%) Add - Staff satisfaction above industry and sector norm
- Improved Good financial position
- Employers engaged across the College Add - Employers actively engaged across all curriculum areas
- Exciting opportunities and partnerships being developed Add - Strong partnerships and sector leading initiatives working with the NHS and the creation of our AI Centre of Excellence
- Happy students 91% who thrive in a safe and inclusion environment
- Increasing student numbers (230) Student numbers increased by 20% in 2 years
- Reduction in carbon Commitment to the planet and highly successful reduction in the College's carbon footprint
- Award wins and recognition –; Planet Earth Games: AOC Tier 2 Winners; Bees' Needs Champion 2025; Nominated For North Worcestershire Employer Of The Year Award; Shortlisted for Provider Of The Year (Worcestershire Apprenticeship Awards); Commended for the AoC Beacon Award in Mental Health & Wellbeing; Achieved The Matrix Standard and Winner of the Institute of Leadership Excellence Awards (won by our Principal/CEO)

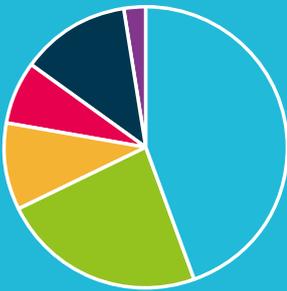
ABOUT HEART OF WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE.



Largest provider in Worcestershire of 16 – 18, adult and apprenticeship provision.



OVER 560 STAFF



- 6762 Students**
- 16-19 - **2757**
 - Adult Skills - **2054**
 - Apprenticeships - **623**
 - Tailored Learning - **710**
 - Higher Education - **518**
 - Loans - **100**

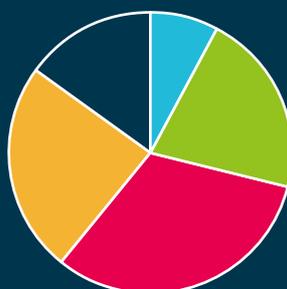


HoW College Apprentices by level



- Intermediate - **51.12%**
- Advanced - **43.59%**
- Higher - **1.28%**

HoW College Learners by level



- Entry Level - **9.53%**
- Level 1 - **24.58%**
- Level 2 - **31.93%**
- Level 3 - **22.01%**
- Level 4+ - **11.89%**

% Students by site



- Worcester - **51.24%**
- Redditch - **31.45%**
- Bromsgrove - **14.48%**
- Malvern - **2.83%**

INDEPENDENT GOVERNOR ROLE DESCRIPTION.

THE ROLE

As independent members of the Corporation, Governors at Heart of Worcestershire College contribute their expertise and judgement to support the College's mission and advance its strategic themes, ensuring that its strategic priorities deliver positive outcomes for learners, staff, employers and the wider community

ACCOUNTABILITY

The role reports to the Chair of Corporation.

Governors work closely with:

- The Chair of Corporation and Vice Chair of Corporation
- The Governance Professional
- Principal / CEO
- Senior College Management

RESPONSIBILITIES

Be an active member of the Corporation.

Serve as a member of at least one Committee aligned to the individual Governor's skills and experience.

Be prepared to act as Lead Governor for a designated specialist area that matches their particular skillset if the requirement arises due to a vacancy in the role (this will usually be discussed as part of the Governor recruitment process).

Participate in any reviews undertaken by the Corporation of its own performance, effectiveness, structures, and the information it receives – for example External Board Reviews, inspections or any audits focused specifically on governance.

Participate in scrutinising and approving strategic plans, policies, annual reports, financial forecasts and other non operational documents at Committee and Corporation level.

Seek assurance from the Principal and College Management on quality, curriculum, student outcomes, finance, risk, and compliance, offering support and providing robust, evidence based challenge when required.

Ensure that risks are identified, mitigations are realistic, and actions are completed.

Ensure the College remains financially sustainable and solvent.

Access regular updates and information on College, governance and sector matters provided to Governors via email or the Governor Portal.

Gain a good understanding of the needs and challenges faced in the communities in and around the College sites across Worcestershire (Bromsgrove, Malvern, Redditch and Worcester) and the impact on the College, its students, staff, and stakeholders.

Be willing to promote the College positively within the community and within individual employer networks.

Be aware that individual members have no specific powers, and statements may only be made on behalf of the Corporation by those authorised to do so.

INDEPENDENT GOVERNOR ROLE DESCRIPTION.

Respect the rules on confidentiality, as they apply to the work of the Corporation and the College as a whole.

Ensure compliance within the Instrument and Articles and Standing Orders and other key documents referred to in the conduct of Corporation business.

Commit to undertake personal development in the role as appropriate.

TIME COMMITMENT¹

Governors are expected to commit sufficient time to be effective in the role and attend:

- Corporation meetings – normally three per year.
- A Corporation Workshop and an annual Corporation Strategic Planning Day.
- Committee meetings – normally one per term.
- Beyond the Boardroom programme – for events or activities outside of the normal Governance meeting structure.

Occasionally there may be a need to arrange a Special Corporation Meeting or an additional Committee meeting to deal with any urgent matters.

Governors should allow time for meeting preparation, College visits, and participation in training and networking events.

TRAINING & INDUCTION

Governors will:

- Complete the online induction modules and confirm completion to the Governance Professional.
- Complete Module 4 – a face-to-face meeting with the Chair of Corporation and the Principal.
- Complete the required mandatory Governor training within the specified timeframe.
- Participate in relevant training and development activities when necessary – webinars, network meetings or ad-hoc activities.

¹Note - The time commitment may vary at certain points in the year (usually near the end of term), or when the demands on the College in a particular year are unprecedented – for example, an Ofsted inspection is imminent.

INDEPENDENT GOVERNOR ROLE DESCRIPTION.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Governors will have the following:

Necessary Skills

- Demonstrate a strong personal commitment to the College mission and values.
- Possess a skillset that contributes to the overall capability of the Corporation.
- Act fairly and impartially in both the Corporation's and the College's interests.
- Understand the distinction between governance and management.
- Undertake mandatory training specified for Governors.
- Be able to contribute effectively to financial and/or strategic planning discussions and ask challenging or probing questions.
- Commit to undertake personal development in the role as appropriate.
- Be willing to attend events organised by the College and other bodies.
- Be able to work positively with others and to contribute as a member of a team.

Desirable Skills:

- Experience of the wider education and skills landscape.
- Experience of working with boards and understanding board leadership.
- Experience gained outside the education sector – for example in business or industry

TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office for a Governor is four years, with the option to serve a second term of four years, subject to reappointment; normally Governors serve for no more than eight years.

NOTICE PERIOD

Governors will be expected to give reasonable notice of their intention to step down in the role, although it is acknowledged that no mandatory requirement exists. Notice is to be given in writing to the Governance Professional.

Remuneration & Payment of Expenses

The role is voluntary and unremunerated. Reasonable expenses are reimbursed in line with the Policy for the Payment of Expenses for Staff & Governors.

ELIGIBILITY

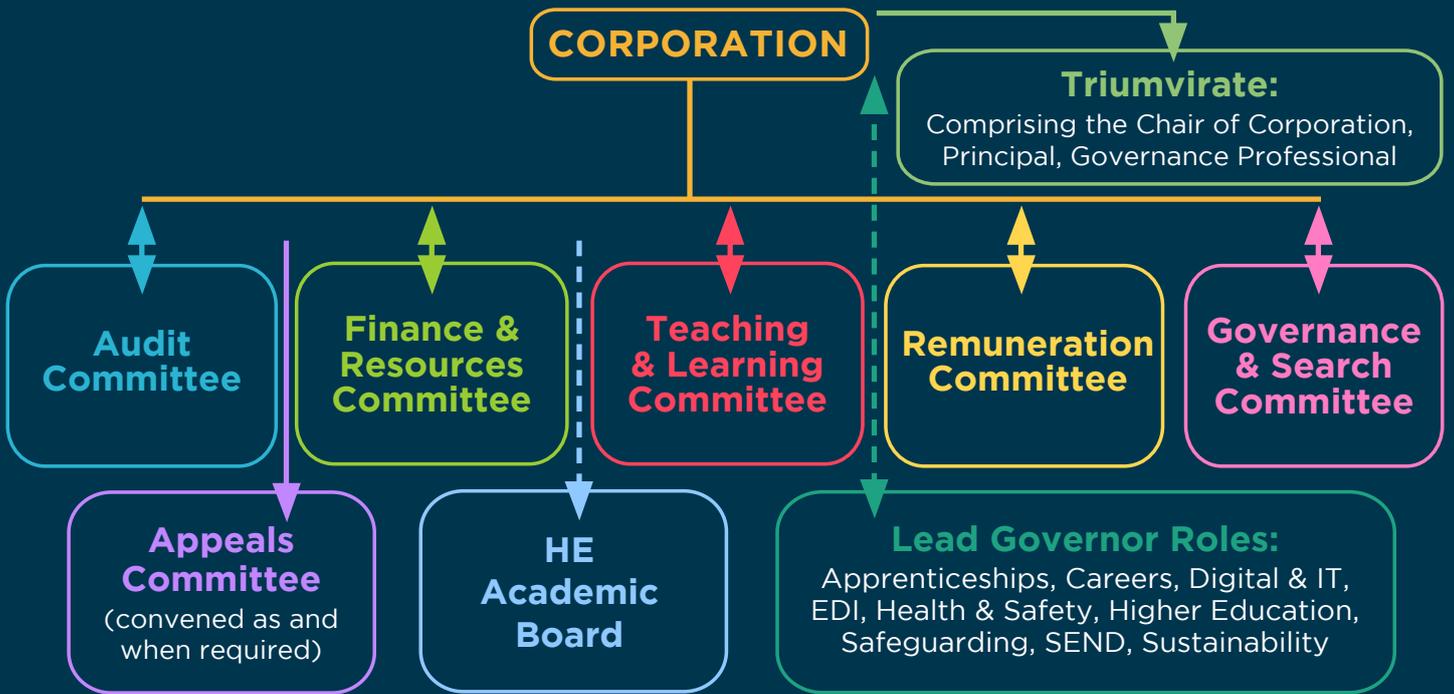
The following are required to be completed annually by all Governors:

- A Register of Interests.
- A declaration confirming eligibility to be a Governor.
- Skills Audit.

In addition, all Governor appointments are subject to a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service Check.

OUR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE.

HEART OF WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE - COMMITTEE STRUCTURE 2025 - 2026



GOVERNANCE MEETINGS.

Governors discharge their responsibilities through regular meetings of the Corporation (for the current academic year this is by way of a workshop, a strategic planning day and three full Corporation meetings) and through its Committees.

There are currently five main committees: Audit, Finance and Resources, Governance and Search, Remuneration and Teaching and Learning. In addition, the Corporation has a Corporation Appeal Committee and has representation on the HE Academic Board.

As an example, the current Governance calendar is shown below (it should be noted that the Chair / Vice Chair do not attend all Governance meetings)

GOVERNANCE MEETING DATES 2025 - 2026

	DATE & START TIME	MEETING	VENUE	NOTES
Term 1	Tuesday 9 September 2025, 5.30pm	Corporation Workshop	The Source, All Saints Building, Worcester	On Site
	Tuesday 7 October 2025, 5.30pm	Remuneration Committee	Exec Boardroom, All Saints Building, Worcester	On Site
	Wednesday 15 October 2025, 5.30pm	Governance & Search Committee	Exec Boardroom, All Saints Building, Worcester	On site
	Tuesday 4 November 2025, 5.30pm	Teaching & Learning Committee	Online via Teams	Remote
	Tuesday 11 November 2025, 5.30pm	Finance & Resources Committee	Online via Teams	Remote
	Tuesday 20 November 2025, 5.30pm	Audit Committee	Exec Boardroom, All Saints Building, Worcester	On Site
	Tuesday 16 December 2025, 5.30pm	Corporation Meeting	Function Room, Peakman Campus, Redditch	On Site
Term 2	Thursday 15 January 2026, 5.30pm	Governance & Search Committee	Exec Boardroom, All Saints Building, Worcester	On Site
	Thursday 22 January 2026, 8.45am	Corporation Strategic Planning Day	Function Room, Peakman Campus, Redditch	On Site – All Day
	Tuesday 3 February 2026, 5.30pm	Remuneration Committee	Exec Boardroom, All Saints Building, Worcester	On Site
	Tuesday 10 February 2026, 5.30pm	Teaching & Learning Committee	Online via Teams	Remote
	Tuesday 3 March 2026, 5.30pm	Finance & Resources Committee	Online via Teams	Remote
	Thursday 5 March 2026, 5.30pm	Audit Committee	Exec Boardroom, All Saints Building, Worcester	On Site
	Tuesday 24 March 2026, 5.30pm	Corporation Meeting	B105 -106, Bromsgrove Campus	On Site
Term 3	Tuesday 19 May 2026, 5.30pm	Teaching & Learning Committee	Online via Teams	Remote
	Tuesday 2 June 2026, 5.30pm	Governance & Search Committee	Exec Boardroom, All Saints Building, Worcester	On site
	Tuesday 9 June 2026, 5.30pm	Finance & Resources Committee	Online via Teams	Remote
	Tuesday 16 June 2026, 5.30pm	Remuneration Committee	Exec Boardroom, All Saints Building, Worcester	On Site
	Tuesday 23 June 2026, 5.30pm	Audit Committee	Exec Boardroom, All Saints Building, Worcester	On Site
	Tuesday 7 July 2026, 5.30pm	Corporation Meeting	B105 -106, Bromsgrove Campus	On Site

PROGRESSION WITHIN THE GOVERNOR ROLE.

Co-Opted Committee Member	Governor	Committee Chair	Vice Chair of Corporation	Chair of Corporation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are not full Board members • Bring specialist expertise and sector specific knowledge to strengthen Committees where there may be a skills gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full member of the Corporation • Attends Corporation Meetings • Member of at least one Committee • Contributes to discussions at meetings • May hold role as a Lead Governor for a designated subject area (e.g. Safeguarding, Apprenticeships) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads a specific committee (e.g., Audit, Finance & Resources, Teaching & Learning) • Guides discussions at Committees, ensuring that there is adequate assurance, challenge & support • Approves Minutes of Committee meetings • Member of Governance and Search Committee due to being Chair of another Corporation committee • Reports Committee activities & recommendations to the Corporation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Chair of Corporation sits on key committees Audit, Remuneration • Leads any board or committee meeting in the Chair's absence, and may assume broader responsibilities during extended absences • Deputises for Chair for various duties of Chair specified in College legislation • Supports the Chair in maintaining high standards of governance and strategic direction • Member of Governance and Search Committee due to being Chair of another Corporation committee • Potential future Chair, the Vice Chair may be involved in succession planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides discussions at Corporation meetings, ensuring that there is adequate assurance, challenge & support • Approves Minutes of Corporation meetings • Member of Triumvirate with the Principal & Governance Professional • Oversees the effective operation of the Corporation to ensure effective Governance and board performance • Performs various duties specified in College legislation (eg is Spokesperson for the Corporation jointly with the Principal, Authorised signatory on use of the College Seal) • Represents the College externally at events and on various networks
<p>Can become a Governor (subject to vacancies)</p> 		<p>Governor Progression</p> 		

Internal Training & Development	External Training & Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor Induction • Mandatory Training For Governors • Support from existing Board members including Mentor (optional) • Participation in Beyond The Boardroom activities (various cross college activities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AoC Governor Induction • Tailored Governance Training Modules selected from Education & Training Foundation • External networks (such as AoC)

WHAT IS IN IT FOR YOU?

- Contributing to shaping the College’s strategic direction.
- Making a positive contribution to shaping the delivery of skills to meet the needs of the local communities.
- Enhancing your knowledge, skills and understanding of Governance in an education environment.
- Collaborating with colleagues from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Developing a strong understanding at Board or Committee level of the complexities involved in managing a large, multi-campus further education institution.
- Supporting the students by attending key events that celebrate their achievements such as the Further Education Awards or Higher Education Graduation Ceremony.

USEFUL LINKS.

To find out more about Heart of Worcestershire College, please visit: [HOW College | Heart of Worcestershire College](#)

[Governance | Heart of Worcestershire College](#)

[61963-accountability-agreement-25-v12.pdf](#) (full version)

[61963-accountability-agreement-short-25-v5.pdf](#)

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION.

Prior to submitting an application interested parties are encouraged to have an initial conversation with either the Chair of Corporation, or the Principal. This can be arranged by contacting the College's Governance Professional – Donna Gibson, either by email to dgibson@howcollege.ac.uk or calling **01905 743482**.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

To proceed with making an application please email your CV and a supporting statement to the College's Governance Professional – email dgibson@howcollege.ac.uk.

Supporting statements should explain how you believe your knowledge, experience and skills relate to the role. Ideally, statements will not exceed 2 A4 pages.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews will be conducted in person by a panel of members from the Governance & Search Committee. The Governance Professional will check availability of all involved in the interview process and will advise when the interviews are to be held.