

Confidential

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Purpose of the Role

The Chair of the Board of Trustees provides strategic and regulatory leadership to BCNO as a regulated higher education provider and registered charity. The Chair ensures that the Board fulfils its responsibilities for institutional sustainability, academic quality and standards, student outcomes, and compliance with company and charity law and Office for Students (“OfS”) regulatory requirements, while advancing BCNO’s charitable mission and public benefit.

Key Responsibilities

Governance, Regulation, and Compliance

- Lead the Board in discharging its responsibilities as charity trustees and as the governing body.
- Ensure compliance with company and charity law and the regulatory framework of the Office for Students, including ongoing conditions of registration.
- Ensure that the Board understands and oversees institutional performance in relation to student outcomes, quality, standards, access and participation, and financial sustainability.
- Promote the highest standards of governance, integrity, transparency, and accountability, consistent with public interest obligations.
- Ensure effective oversight of risk management, safeguarding, freedom of speech duties, equity, diversity and inclusion, data protection, and consumer protection requirements.

Strategic Leadership and Institutional Sustainability

- Lead the Board in setting, approving, and reviewing BCNO’s mission, vision, and long-term strategy within the context of a regulatory environment.
- Ensure that academic strategy, financial planning, estates, digital infrastructure, and workforce planning are coherent, realistic, and sustainable.
- Oversee BCNO’s response to changes in higher education policy, regulation, funding, and market conditions.
- Ensure the Board considers the student interest and public value in strategic decision-making.

Academic Governance and Student Outcomes

- Ensure that robust governance arrangements are in place for the oversight of academic quality and standards
- Seek assurance that academic standards meet sector expectations and that quality assurance processes are effective.
- Ensure that student outcomes, continuation, completion, progression, and student experience are regularly reviewed at Board level.
- Support a culture of continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and assessment.

Board Effectiveness

- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees ensuring meetings are well-planned, inclusive, and focused on strategic and regulatory oversight.
- Set Board agendas in partnership with the Chief Executive and Company Secretary.
- Foster a culture of constructive challenge, informed decision-making, and collective responsibility.
- Lead the recruitment, induction, development, and succession planning of trustees, ensuring the Board has the skills, independence, and capacity required.
- Lead regular evaluations of Board and trustee effectiveness.

Relationship with the Executive and Senior Academic Leadership

- Build a strong, professional, and effective working relationship with the Chief Executive and wider Senior Management Team (“SMT”).
- Provide support and challenge to the SMT while maintaining a clear distinction between governance and management.
- Lead the appraisal of the Chief Executive.
- Ensure that the Board receives timely, accurate, and relevant information to meet its regulatory and fiduciary responsibilities.
- Relate any concerns of the Board to the SMT.

Financial Oversight and Risk

- Ensure robust oversight of BCNO’s financial sustainability, including budgets, cash flow, reserves, investments, and major capital commitments.
- Ensure that financial planning supports long-term academic quality and compliance with OfS financial viability requirements.
- Oversee arrangements for audit, internal controls, value for money, and risk assurance.

External Relations and Representation

- Act as an ambassador for BCNO, representing it externally with regulators, partner institutions, alumni, and other stakeholders.

- Support constructive and transparent engagement with the OfS and other relevant bodies as appropriate.
- Protect and enhance the BCNO's reputation and standing.

Person Specification

Essential

- Strong commitment to higher education, student success, and BCNO's charitable purposes.
- Significant credibility and authority to lead the Board and represent BCNO to stakeholders.
- Ability to inspire and facilitate diverse individuals and their points of view to achieve consensus.
- Strategic insight, sound judgement, and the ability to provide constructive challenge in a regulated environment.
- Understanding of governance, finance, risk, and accountability in the public interest.
- High standards of integrity, independence, and professionalism.
- Experience of being a Trustee.

Desirable

- Experience as a trustee, governor, or chair within higher education or another regulated sector.
- Familiarity with the OfS regulatory framework and expectations of governing bodies.
- Understanding of academic governance, quality assurance, and student outcomes.
- Experience of organisational change, growth, or financial recovery.

Time Commitment

Typically 2 to 3 days per month, including preparation for and attendance at Board and committee meetings, engagement with senior leaders, stakeholders, and representation at key events.

Term of Office

The Chair is appointed for a term of 3 years, which may be renewed up to two further three year terms, subject to BCNO's governing documents.

Remuneration

This is a voluntary, unpaid role. Reasonable expenses incurred in the course of duties may be reimbursed.