



# **Board of Governors Information Pack**

August 2021

## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Non-Executive Board member at West Lothian College. Colleges play a critical role in Scotland, supporting people, communities and the economy. This is particularly the case as the country emerges from the crisis created by the pandemic. Our Board of Governors witnesses the impact of colleges first-hand and contributes to the strategic direction of West Lothian College.

West Lothian College is located in Livingston and is one of thirteen college regions in Scotland. The college is renowned for its successful collaborations with partners including employers and the business community, universities, public sector, the Scottish Government and community organisations.

Supporting nearly 9,000 students each year, we offer a wide range of courses – all focused on developing confidence and skills for employment to help students enhance their current or future career prospects. To help us achieve our vision of delivering a highly skilled, enterprising and resilient workforce, we are looking to build additional capability and diversity on our Board of Governors.

We have an immediate vacancy to complement the skills and experience of our current Boards members, and bring insight and challenge from across a wide range of sectors. On our Board we have people with experience of working in universities, business, law, human resources and finance, as well as elected student and staff representatives.

We want to attract the candidates from the many diverse communities across West Lothian, as well as people with specific skills in technology and accounting. Our open recruitment process aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify strong and suitable candidates to fill the current vacancies;
- Establish strong relationships with a wider community across West Lothian;
- Identify suitable candidates for succession planning.

This information pack explains more about the nature of the role and how decisions are made on appointments to the Board. It includes information on:

1. About Our College
2. Our Board
3. About You
4. About the Role
5. About the Process

Thank you for your interest in making a strategic contribution to West Lothian College. I look forward to hearing from you.



Alex Linkston  
Chair of the Board of Governors

# About Our College

**West Lothian College is an innovative college, delivering education and training to around 9,000 students each year across a wide range of subjects.**

Our vision is to deliver a highly skilled, enterprising and resilient workforce through high quality vocational education, workplace experiences, apprenticeships and supporting progression on to university. Our four strategic goals and three values, illustrated in the diagram below, aim to make that vision a reality.



The college is led by Jackie Galbraith who was appointed as principal in August 2018, and is situated on a modern, single-site campus in Livingston in the heart of Scotland's Central Belt.

Our campus is twenty years old this year and we are working through a five-year estates plan to ensure that our learning environment keeps pace with the changes experienced in wider society and with the industry sectors we support.

We have five faculties offering courses to meet the needs of the local and national economy –

- Access, Employability and Schools
- Business, Creative and Enterprise
- Care, Business and Sport
- Computing, Engineering and Built Environment
- Workforce Development.

# About Our College

Our college cares deeply for our students and staff.



Reflecting our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion we have achieved the LGBT Charter Silver Award, the Carers' Trust Going Further for Student Carers Award, and the Carers' Federation Quality Standard for Student Carers.

We are proud to be a Disability Confident Employer and a Living Wage Accredited Employer, and we hold Silver status for both Investors in People and the NHS Healthy Working Lives award.

## Our Board

The Board of Governors is ultimately responsible for the affairs of the college and is accountable to the Scottish Government which approves all appointments.

Board members are responsible for ensuring the quality of the education provided by the college, and also that is delivered in a way that offers value for money. The Board is the governing body of the college and has a legal responsibility to manage and conduct its affairs in such a way that its staff deliver the required services.

The Board's role is a strategic one which means it focuses on:

- Deciding the strategic goals of the college;
- Monitoring delivery of those goals;
- If the goals are not being achieved, understanding why and either ensuring the approach is adjusted or changing the goals.

The governance role of the Board is vital and Board members are required to abide by the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges.

You can access the Code at <https://www.cdn.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Code-of-Good-Governance.pdf>

Board members are part of a national network of bodies responsible for delivering quality education across Scotland. In West Lothian, the responsibility for delivery lies with West Lothian College, as a single Regional College.

The membership of the Board of West Lothian College includes two staff members, two student members, and the Principal, as well as 13 non-executive members.

You can find out more about the existing members of the Board at <https://www.west-lothian.ac.uk/corporate-and-governance/board-members/>

## About You

The overarching duty of Board members is to use your skills, knowledge and time to work as best as you can with your Chair, Board Governance Advisor, fellow Board members and staff to provide oversight and ensure that the College fulfils its responsibilities.

Board members make an individual contribution to the collective work of the Board and this is based on their personal experiences and network. All members bring their own unique combination of skills and knowledge but all Board members are expected to:

- Contribute to Board matters in an informed, constructive and supportive manner;
- Raise awareness on matters that may difficult to define or challenge current perceptions, but require deliberate action to resolve;
- Consider matters that may impact the reputation of the college, if not addressed sensitively;
- Scrutinise the college's performance and be prepared to provide challenge to senior staff and fellow Board members, where appropriate;
- Contribute time and effort to the college, as required;
- Accept and share corporate collective responsibility;
- Devote time to understanding the college and its operational environment;
- Take part in an annual board member appraisal process;
- Represent the organisation at events as required;
- Build relationships of trust and mutual respect with other Board members and senior staff;
- Abide by confidentiality requirements subject to Freedom of Information laws;
- Uphold and promote the required standards of behaviour and values.

All Board members are expected to adhere to the **Nine Principles of Public Life** and act at all times in good faith and in the best interests of learners.

These principles are:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership
- Public Service
- Respect

You can read more about the role of Board members in the Guide for Board Members in the College sector, available here: <https://www.cdn.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Guidance-Notes-for-Boards-in-the-College-Sector.pdf>

# About the Role

## **Time Commitment**

This will vary, depending on your role on Board, level of experience and appetite to be involved. As a minimum, you will be expected to attend four full Board meetings per year and at least three Committee meetings. Full Board meetings are held once a quarter at 4.30pm and the Committees, at least one of which you will be required to be a member, meet on different days. The Board is always open to discussing flexible and more innovative ways of working. Each meeting will normally last approximately two and a half hours. In light of COVID19 restrictions meetings are held virtually using zoom.

## **Remuneration**

The position of Board member is not remunerated. You will, however, be able to claim reasonable travel and subsistence expenses for your participation in Board activity. Should you have childcare or carer commitments, the College will reimburse you for reasonable expenses associated with alternative care arrangements.

## **Induction and Training**

The successful candidate will receive an induction programme to develop their understanding of the College. They will have the opportunity to participate in additional training and briefings at a National and local level to enhance your skills and knowledge.

They will participate in a one-day national induction workshop outside of the College within the first six months of your appointment. With COVID19 restrictions the National Induction Programme will be delivered online.

## **Term of Appointment**

The successful candidate will be appointed for a term of up to four years from the date of appointment. After this period, should you wish, you are able to re-apply for a further term of service. Such reappointment will be subject to your performance on the Board and also consideration of the skills requirements of the Board at that time.

## **Code of Conduct**

All Board members will be asked to sign the College's which can be found here;  
<https://www.west-lothian.ac.uk/media/2698/code-of-conduct-for-west-lothian-college-board-members-2014.pdf>

## Restrictions

The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 makes provision for persons not eligible for appointment as a board member. A note of these provisions is at Appendix 1.

The appointment is subject to confirmation of suitability by requesting PVG scheme record. It is an offence under section 34 of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act for any person who is barred from regulated work with children to seek to be a board member. Offers of appointment are conditional upon receipt of a written reference from a third party, confirming your suitability for the post.

## About the Assessment Criteria

Your application will be considered in relation to the criteria as set out below. These will be assessed as part of application and during interview process.

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<b>Specific Knowledge and Skills</b>		
Finance & Account Management	X	
Experience of a strategic role in the private or public sector	X	
<b>Governance</b>		
Recent experience of a working with a Board		X
Awareness of the need for good governance	X	
Understanding the 9 principles of public life	X	
<b>Strategic Contribution</b>		
Understanding of the needs of West Lothian region and its communities		X
Ability to challenge constructively and provide a different point of view	X	
Understanding of challenges and opportunities in the College sector		X
Ability to assess complex data	X	
Ability to communicate clearly and effectively	X	

## About the Recruitment Process and Timetable

The closing date for applications is Friday 3 September 2021.

Your application will be considered by a panel who will review the information you have provided against the person specification and the overall skills matrix for the Board.

Applicants not selected for interview will be notified.

If you are to be interviewed, you will be sent an invitation letter.

You will be advised of the names of the members of the interview panel in your invitation for interview letter.

Interviews will take place virtually using zoom.

The interview will last approximately 1 hour, during which the interview panel will:

- ask you questions based upon the information you have provided in your application to verify this and explore the skills and experience you could bring to the Board; and
- provide you with an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the College or service with the Board.

Following the interview panel's deliberations and decisions, the Chair of the Board is required to submit nominations for appointment to the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science for final approval. The Minister aims to consider nominations within a month of submission. It is hoped, therefore, to inform interviewees of the outcome by the 29 October 2021.

## How to Apply

If you would like to apply, please send us your CV and covering letter. Please indicate in the covering letter your availability for an interview on the week commencing 6 September 2021.

Your application should be returned by email to: [laitkenhead@west-lothian.ac.uk](mailto:laitkenhead@west-lothian.ac.uk)

If you need any help in providing the required information, or would like to find out more about role prior to applying please do not hesitate to contact the Board Governance Advisor, Lesley Aitkenhead, at

# Appendix 1

## **Restrictions**

As mentioned on page 6, certain people are not eligible for appointment as a board member. Please check the legislation below to ensure that the restrictions do not apply to you.

### **PARAGRAPH 5A OF SCHEDULE 2 TO THE 1992 ACT (AS INSERTED BY PARAGRAPH 2(7)(C) OF THE SCHEDULE TO THE 2013 ACT)**

5A(1)A person is not eligible for appointment as a member of the board if the person—

(a) has within 5 years of the date on which the appointment would take effect, been sentenced (following conviction for an offence in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Irish Republic) to imprisonment for a period of not less than 3 months, whether suspended or not, without the option of a fine;

(b) is an undischarged bankrupt; or

(c) has been removed from office under section 24 of this Act (in relation to any college) or section 23Q of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 (in relation to any regional board).

(2) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b), “undischarged bankrupt” means a person—

(a) whose estate has been sequestrated and who has not been discharged (or against whom a bankruptcy order has been made and is still in force);

(b) who has granted a trust deed for, or made a composition or arrangement with, creditors (and has not been discharged in respect of it);

(c) who is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, made under the Bankruptcy (Scotland) Act 1985 or the Insolvency Act 1986;

(d) who is the subject of a bankruptcy restriction undertaking entered into under either of those Acts;

(e) who has been adjudged bankrupt (and has not been discharged); or

(f) who is subject to any other kind of order, arrangement or undertaking analogous to those described in paragraphs (a) to (d), anywhere in the world.