



Department  
for Education



National College  
for School Leadership

# National College for School Leadership

## Framework Document

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## Ministerial foreword



I am pleased to introduce the framework for the National College for School Leadership, an Executive Agency of the Department for Education. The role of the Agency is to support the Secretary of State's vision for education reform which sees a strong emphasis on the way schools and early years are led. The Agency will provide a focus on the importance of leadership and enable the exchange of emerging practice between the key related sectors of schools and early years leadership with the aim of ensuring the best outcomes for children throughout their education.

I wish the Agency every success as it takes forward this important work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Gibb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Nick Gibb MP**  
**Minister of State for Schools**

## Introduction

1. The National College for School Leadership ('the Agency') is an executive agency of the Department for Education ('the Department'), created in 2012.
2. The Agency will be mainly based in Nottingham on two sites initially – the Learning and Conference Centre and offices in Ruddington. There will be a small presence at DfE Manchester and London sites. The staffing complement on 1 April 2012 will be 233, reducing over the SR period.
3. The National College for School Leadership (the College for short) has responsibility, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education ('the Secretary of State'), for helping to deliver the Secretary of State's reform agenda for schools, in particular the priorities and vision for school leadership set out in the Schools White Paper: *The Importance of Teaching*. It will also be responsible for leadership development for the foundation years, including children's centres.
4. This Framework Document sets out the arrangements for the governance, accountability, financing, staffing and operation of the College, agreed between the Secretary of State, the Director General for Educational Standards and the Chief Executive of the College, and approved by Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT).
5. This Framework Document and the operation of the Agency will be reviewed under arrangements agreed between the Secretary of State and the Chief Executive after one year, in March/April 2013 (but may be reviewed at any time if they so wish). The period before the next review will be agreed in March/April 2013 and will not exceed three years, in accordance with Cabinet Office guidance.
6. Any amendments to this Framework Document must be agreed by the Secretary of State and the Chief Executive, and by HMT. Any departure from the provision of this Framework Document must be agreed in writing on a case-by-case basis between the Secretary of State, or delegate, and Chief Executive, and an HMT minister if appropriate.
7. Any questions concerning the interpretation of this Framework Document will be resolved, if possible, by agreement between the Chief Executive and the Director General with responsibility for the Agency and, in default of agreement, will be referred for decision to the Secretary of State.
8. Copies of this Framework Document will be published on the Department's website and placed in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

## Aims and objectives

9. The Department has five medium-term strategic aims, which are mutually reinforcing:
  - i. raising standards of educational achievement;
  - ii. closing the achievement gap between rich and poor;
  - iii. reforming the schools system;
  - iv. supporting all children and young people, particularly the disadvantaged;
  - v. improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department.
10. Central to achieving these aims is the need to have excellent head teachers, academy principals, children's centre leaders and other school leaders to drive improvement in the school system and to foster a decentralised culture of self improvement. The College's role is to support the development of a self-improving system led by the leaders of schools and children's centres, working together to deliver improvement so that every child and young person has the opportunity to achieve their best.
11. The College has three medium-term strategic aims:
  - i. To assure the supply of high quality head teachers, principals and other leaders*
  - ii. To improve the quality of leadership of schools, academies and children's' centres*
  - iii. To enable head teachers, principals and childrens centre leaders to lead system improvement in partnership with each other*
12. In carrying out these functions the College is responsible for providing robust quality assurance, designation and de-designation of system leaders and teaching schools, accreditation and evidence-based provision.
13. The Agency will publish a business plan setting out its annual and longer-term strategic objectives as agreed with the Secretary of State at the start of each financial year.

## **Governance roles and responsibilities**

14. The Agency Chief Executive is accountable to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State is responsible for the policy framework within which the Agency operates; for determining its strategic objectives; for setting its annual key financial and performance targets (which are announced to Parliament by Ministerial statement); approving Corporate and Business Plans; and for monitoring performance against these targets. The Director General for Education Standards will perform an oversight role on behalf of the Secretary of State, but the Chief Executive and Secretary of State will meet regularly to raise matters of concern with one another directly as necessary. Specifically, the Chief Executive and Secretary of State will meet at least annually to discuss and review the Agency's performance. The Chief Executive will also have regular meetings with the Minister with responsibility for Schools.
15. The Secretary of State is accountable to Parliament on all matters concerning the Agency, and accordingly retains the right to intervene in the operations of the Agency if public or parliamentary concerns justify it.

### **Permanent Secretary (Principal Accounting Officer)**

16. The Permanent Secretary's responsibilities as Principal Accounting Officer include:
  - i. ensuring that the Department, including the Agency, uses its resources efficiently, economically and effectively;
  - ii. ensuring the Agency conforms to Departmental and Government policy;
  - iii. being satisfied that the Agency (as with the Department as a whole) has adequate financial management systems and procedures in line with Government standards, operates with propriety and regularity, and is using its funds for the purposes intended by Parliament.
17. The Permanent Secretary will appoint the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer of the Agency.

### **Role of the Director General for Educational Standards**

18. The Secretary of State has asked the Director General for Education Standards to take responsibility for oversight of the College and to line manage the Chief Executive. In doing so, the Director General will support the work of the Agency by:
  - i. agreeing the budget, strategic long-term and annual objectives (as set out in the annual business plan), strategic performance and management framework, and impact indicators for the Agency before submitting these for agreement by the Secretary of State;

- ii. monitoring and challenging the Agency's performance against these objectives (including financial performance, risk management and forward planning);
- iii. advising Ministers, the Permanent Secretary and the Chief Executive on the Agency's performance;
- iv. ensuring the Agency has the overall delegations and authorities it needs for effective delivery and continuous improvement;
- v. ensuring that the Agency is engaged in Departmental policy developments that affect it and consulted in a timely way on Government-wide policy developments.

## Chief Executive

19. The appointment of the Chief Executive is overseen by the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners with the process chaired by a Commissioner and the appointment made on merit.<sup>12</sup> Chief Executive remuneration will be agreed in accordance with the performance and reward arrangements for members of the Department's Senior Civil Service.
20. The Permanent Secretary, as Principal Accounting Officer, will designate the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer for the Agency. The Chief Executive will be accountable to the Secretary of State, the Principal Accounting Officer and Parliament for their responsibilities, which are set out in an appointment letter. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the requirements of HM Treasury and Cabinet Office guidance are met.
21. The Chief Executive's governance responsibilities include:
  - advising on and effectively implementing the strategic policy set by Ministers;
  - providing leadership and resource management for the College and being held accountable as designated Accounting Officer for all expenditure, accounting and budget management;
  - preparing the College's annual business plan and performance objectives and signing the annual report and accounts (see para 46);
  - efficient and cost-effective management of the College so as to ensure it achieves its objectives and targets within the financial parameters set out in the Delegation letter issued annually and supported by Departmental and HMT guidance;

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to change by the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners.

<sup>2</sup> This will apply to future CEO appointments. The first CEO will be S. Munby who transferred to this role as he has a COSOP right.

- effective leadership and management of the staff of the College;
- ensuring robust financial planning and a full understanding of the costs of the Agency's activities;
- reporting regularly to the Permanent Secretary via the Director General for Educational Standards on Agency delivery performance, finance, risk management and forward planning;
- informing senior officials or Ministers of any issues which appear novel, contentious or repercussive, or which could give rise to substantial media, public, Parliamentary or Ministerial concern;
- ensuring the College complies fully with all relevant legislative and corporate governance arrangements; and that sufficient controls are in place to ensure similar compliance by providers commissioned by the Agency.

## **External Support and Challenge**

22. The Agency will have an Advisory Group. The primary purpose of the group will be to provide the Chief Executive with sound advice and appropriate challenge on the effectiveness of the Agency's policy delivery and its impact 'on the ground'. This is a consultative group to test ideas and offer feedback. It has no decision making powers and is not part of the performance management of the Agency. The group will be reviewed within two years of its creation.
23. An external expert with relevant private sector experience who is independent from any commercial conflict will provide support and challenge to both the Chief Executive and the Director General for Educational Standards on an ongoing basis. The skills specification for this expert will be agreed between the Director General and the Chief Executive, and the appointment will be approved by the Department's Nominations and Governance Committee (a sub-committee of the Department's Board).
24. The Department will also put in place arrangements to provide the Chief Executive with additional support and challenge. One of the Department's Non-Executive Directors will have oversight of the Agency for at least the first year of operation (April 2012 – April 2013).

## **Relationships within the Department and with other bodies**

25. The Agency will work with Departmental policy teams and other Agencies to advise on and effectively implement the strategic policy set by Ministers. The Agency will also work collaboratively with other bodies, including other Government departments that have an interest in its work.



## **Governance arrangements**

### **The Agency Senior Leadership Team**

26. The Agency will have a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) chaired by the Chief Executive. The SLT will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Agency's programme of work and managing risks and issues.

### **Department for Education Boards**

27. The Department's Board provides strategic and operational leadership for the Department, with a major emphasis on monitoring progress against the Departmental Business Plan. All Ministers sit on this Board, along with the Permanent Secretary, the Directors General and four Non-Executive Directors.
28. The Executive Management Board (EMB) assists the Principal Accounting Officer (Permanent Secretary) in the discharge of his duties and ensures the efficient and effective management of the Department. At its monthly meetings, which consist of the Permanent Secretary and Directors General and the Director of Finance and Commercial, the EMB monitors use of financial and human resource, risk management, and progress on outputs, outcomes and performance.
29. The Agency's work will feature in the Director General's regular reporting to both Boards as part of their work portfolio. The Chief Executive may be asked to attend either Board to answer questions about the Agency's work.

### **Education Single Programme (ESP)**

30. The Department manages delivery of its education strategy through the Education Single Programme. The monthly Education Programme Board (EPB), one of the programme boards within the ESP, which is chaired by the Director General for Education Standards and the Director General for Infrastructure and Funding, is responsible for successful management and delivery of the overall Programme and management of programme-level issues and escalated risks. The EPB periodically reviews components of the Programme to monitor and manage dependencies, horizon scanning, possible pinch points and programme long-term and short-term affordability, as well as to refresh the Programme Delivery Plan.
31. The Agency is within scope of the Education Programme Board. The Agency will report to EPB regularly on performance, risk management and forward planning to allow the Education Programme Board to fulfil its functions and to report and escalate issues to the Executive Management Board as necessary. The EPB maintains strong links with the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) programme board to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to cover the elements of the Agency's work related to CYPF.

## **Strategic Performance Reviews**

32. The Director General for Educational Standards will hold strategic performance reviews with the Chief Executive, the relevant Non-Executive Director and the appointed external expert. The DG and CE will decide who else will attend. These reviews constitute part of the Department's governance structure for managing the Agency. They will be held at least quarterly and will allow the Chief Executive to present the work of their Agency in the round, and allow the Director General, Non-Executive Director and the external expert with responsibility for the Agency to scrutinise and challenge that work in some depth.

## **Delivery Assurance, Risk and Audit Committee**

33. The Agency will report to and be scrutinised by the Department's Delivery Assurance, Risk and Audit Committee (DARAC). DARAC is a sub-committee of the Department's Board which provides scrutiny and challenge of key delivery programmes and risk areas within the Department. DARAC will make recommendations to the Principal Accounting Officer, the Agency Accounting Officer and the Board on the Agency's risk management.

# Accountability to Parliament

## Parliamentary Committees

34. The Chief Executive and the Permanent Secretary may be asked to appear before the Public Accounts Committee concerning their respective Accounting Officer responsibilities.
35. The Chief Executive may be asked to represent and answer for the Secretary of State at hearings of Parliamentary Committees when operational matters concerning the Agency are discussed.

## Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration

36. The College is subject to the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (PCA). Cases may be referred to the PCA by an MP once the Department's complaints procedure<sup>3</sup> has been exhausted.
37. The Permanent Secretary is the Principal Officer of the Department for Education for the purposes of PCA referrals but delegates the responsibility for handling any matters concerning the College to the Chief Executive through this Framework Document.

## Parliamentary Questions and Parliamentary Correspondence

38. The Chief Executive, or nominated representative, will advise Ministers on Parliamentary Questions and Parliamentary Correspondence addressed to Ministers as required on all College matters. The Agency and policy teams will work closely on responses to Parliamentary Questions and Correspondence. The Secretary of State may ask the Chief Executive to reply direct to correspondence and written PQs that concern issues delegated to the Chief Executive.

## Fulfilling the Accounting Officer role

39. As Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive is personally responsible and accountable to Parliament for propriety and regularity, value for money, efficient and effective use of available resources and the organisation and management of the Agency.
40. The Agency's Accounting Officer is required to provide assurance that the Agency's funds are used for the purposes intended by Parliament, are properly accounted for, and that the Agency has in place an effective and appropriate system of internal control. That assurance will be provided through the Agency's Governance Statement which must be signed annually by the Accounting Officer.

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<sup>3</sup> this can be found at (<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/complaintsprocedure>)

# Financial management and reporting

## General Accounting Rules

41. The Agency is subject to public expenditure controls as well as the rules and policies laid down by the Department and by HMT in Managing Public Money, Consolidated Budgeting Guidance, Financial Reporting Manual and other accounting instructions that are issued from time to time.

## Funding Allocation

42. The Secretary of State agrees the budget and resource allocation for the Agency on the advice of the Director General for Educational Standards as part of the Departmental Annual Business Planning or Spending Review process.

## Delegations

43. Responsibility for all financial matters relating to the National College for School Leadership's business functions will be delegated to the Chief Executive (as Agency Accounting Officer) in a formal delegation letter. The Agency will operate within the limits confirmed in the letter, which will be reviewed at least annually.
44. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Principal Accounting Officer and to Parliament for expenditure incurred within the Agency in delivering its services and any income it receives, including income and expenditure of the International Business Unit. The Chief Executive has the right to approve all items of expenditure and use of receipts, authorise write off losses and make special payments which are within the provision of and limits specified by the delegation letter and this Framework Document, and are consistent with the Agency strategic and business plans. This delegation is subject to the financial delegations, controls and approval processes set by the Department, HMT and the Cabinet Office.

## Financial Management and Reporting

45. Monthly Financial Management reports will be provided as part of shared services provision. The Agency will use this financial information for its monthly performance reports. The Chief Executive will approve the report for submission to the Department's Executive Management Board.
46. The Chief Executive is responsible for raising concerns if the Agency's management information and accounting systems do not allow for detailed and effective control over its use of resources. The Department's Corporate Finance and Commercial Director will work with the Agency to ensure the Agency can comply with its financial responsibilities.

## Annual Report and Accounts

47. As part of shared services provision, the Department's Finance team will prepare the Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with the guidance and accounting policy set out by the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury with the Agency providing the narrative on performance and achievement. The Chief Executive, as

Accounting Officer, is responsible for signing the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts and the Governance Statement and passing them to the Comptroller and Auditor General for external audit.

48. DARAC will provide independent advice and challenge of the Accounts.
49. The Annual Report and Accounts will be prepared and audited according to an agreed timeline and, following audit by NAO and endorsement by the Permanent Secretary and the Director General for Educational Standards Directorate will be submitted to the Secretary of State. The Accounts will form part of the consolidated Whole of Government Accounts return for the Departmental group.
50. The Secretary of State will lay the Annual Report and Accounts in Parliament.

# Audit and assurance

## Internal Audit

51. The Agency can set up its own Audit Committee (AC) to provide direct assurance to the Agency Accounting Officer (AAO) and to permit escalation of issues and support good corporate governance. The AAO should, in line with the H M Treasury Audit Committee Handbook good practice guidelines, review the value and effectiveness of the Committee on an annual basis.
52. Independent members on the Audit Committee will be paid fees and appointed through a standard appointment process on standard pay rates and terms and conditions.
53. To support the wider DfE group governance there will be a strong link between the Agency Audit Committee and the Departmental Delivery, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (DARAC). An interim and annual report to DARAC will be required from the Chair. The Chair of the DARAC will have at least an annual meeting with the Chair of the Agency Audit Committee to discuss wider concerns, issues and ways of working. Overarching all of these elements, the Permanent Secretary as Principal Accounting Officer will always retain the right to vary these arrangements at any time.
54. A secretariat function will need to be established to support the Committee. The Department's Internal Audit Unit (IAU) will work with the Agency to support the Audit Committee set up process and to establish clear guidelines around issue escalation.
55. Work will be carried out in accordance with the Government Internal Audit Standards, the Institute of Internal Auditors Code of Ethics and relevant legislation.

## External Audit

56. The Comptroller and Auditor General will, in line with an audit timetable agreed with the Department:
  - i. conduct a financial audit of the Agency's accounts;
  - ii. examine the regularity and propriety of transactions;
  - iii. give an opinion on the accounts and transactions to Parliament; and may
  - iv. carry out investigations into the value for money of Agency spending.
57. The Comptroller and Auditor General will have access to any books and records of the Agency in order to follow up any concerns over matters of regularity and propriety, and to carry out examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which the Agency has used its resources in discharging its functions.

## **Risk Management**

58. The Agency will develop and maintain a risk management process that is consistent with the wider Departmental risk management policy and principles of good risk management. Risk escalation will be through the appropriate routes in line with this policy. The Agency and the rest of the Department will share risk information with each other and notify each other of risks that need or may need action by the other party as necessary as part of its ongoing joint working.
59. The Agency's risk management will be scrutinised by DARAC.

## College Staff

60. All staff working in the College are civil servants employed by the Department for Education on Departmental terms and conditions of service (subject to harmonisation). As such, posts in central Department functions and the Department's Executive Agencies are open to all Departmental staff. In the case of recruitment to the senior civil service, the Agency should observe the requirements and processes imposed by the Civil Service Commissioners
61. The Agency will follow Civil Service and Departmental human resources policy, guidance principles and organisational values, behaviours and general ways of working.



## Shared Services

62. A number of corporate functions will be provided as a shared service across the Department reflecting the Department for Education operating model. The quality of service provision will be reviewed at regular intervals and any issues discussed between the Chief Executive and the Director responsible for the relevant shared service.

## Human Resources

63. The Department's HR Group will be responsible for the delivery of HR services to the Agency, including the provision of advice and guidance on matters such as culture, engagement, training and development, performance management, case work and recruitment/brokerage advice. In addition, the Agency will be able to call on the services of the Education Standards Directorate dedicated HR Business Partner for advice at a strategic level.
64. On behalf of the Agency, the Department's HR Group will also manage those elements of the HR service which are provided by third parties. This includes, for instance, payroll (provided by the Department of Work and Pensions) and administration of pensions (provided by the Cabinet Office), occupational health and childcare funding.

## Estates and Facilities Management

65. The Agency will be responsible for managing its Nottingham estate and facilities. This arrangement will be reviewed when the current contract for managing the National College estate and the facilities management support arrangements comes up for renewal (in 2016)
66. The Department's Property Assessment Management Unit (PAMU) will provide strategic advice, including on health and safety management and the disaster recovery component of business continuity planning. The Agency will be responsible for its own Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity plans. The Agency will adopt the Department's Flexible Workspace policy.

## Communications

67. The Agency will retain responsibility for internal and external communications, including media / press handling working closely with the Department's central communication function, especially in relation to strategy and approach, sourcing specialist skills and using relevant Departmental contracts.
68. The Agency will be responsible for the management and delivery of operational communications which are required to carry out its core membership business.
69. The Agency will ensure that communications are planned and co-ordinated in line with Agency and Departmental priorities set out in their respective business plans.

70. The Agency will maintain the National College brand, but use the standard strapline or wording 'An executive agency of the Department for Education' on new material.

## **Finance and Procurement**

71. The Department's Finance & Commercial Group (FCG) will provide professional finance and commercial services, including provision of heads of profession for finance and procurement, to ensure that the Agency has the commercial skills and capability that it needs. FCG will set finance and commercial policy and standards for the Department as a whole, including the Agency. The Agency will have a small dedicated team focused on specialist commercial support for its operational associates, licensing, leadership and training frameworks and income generation work. A forward workplan will be agreed with Commercial Division to establish levels of support and timescales applicable to this commercial activity.
72. Financial management support for the Agency will include production of the Agency's statutory annual report and resource accounts, Board Reporting, financial and management accounting. FCG will consolidate the Agency's annual report and accounts into the Department's Whole of Government Accounts return.
73. A dedicated business partnering team will provide financial expertise to support the development and continued operations of the College including commercial operations such as licensing and international. The business partnering team will support the AAO in the discharge of his responsibilities.
74. FCG will provide procurement policy and procurement advice to the Agency as well as procurement support for the Agency's Major Procurements. In addition FCG will ensure that the Agency has access to deals for common goods and services either from the Department's own deals or by providing access to the Government Procurement Service deals and where necessary and required by the Agency FCG will put in place bespoke deals for the Agency. It is expected that the GPS deals will be used unless it can be shown that the deal does not meet the needs of the department or the agency.
75. FCG will provide advice on governance, propriety and regularity, and wider data and information solutions and processes.
76. All processing of finance and commercial transactions will be provided by the DWP Oracle RM system. DWP shared services also undertake all procurements with a value under £100 which are not within the specialist areas covered by the College's small dedicated team. As part of the Department, the Agency will be covered by the Department's assurance processes with DWP shared services.
77. The Department's Business Insight and Reporting team will interrogate the resource management system and provide routine workforce reports and analysis covering the Agency.

## **Legal Services**

78. The Legal Adviser's Office (LAO) will provide the Agency with flexible, timely and

high quality legal services to enable it to operate effectively within the law, achieve best legal outcomes and minimise legal risk. These services involve legal advice on operational issues, enhancing the legal awareness of staff and supporting the procurement, management and quality assurance of external legal services.

79. The Legal Adviser's Office and the Agency will work in partnership to maximise the value for money of legal services. Service provision is specified in a Memorandum of Understanding between the LAO and the Department.

## **Information, Communication and Technology Services**

80. All IT services will be provided under four categories ranging from core services to bespoke services developed in conjunction with the Agency. Agency staff will receive the same level of service as other Departmental staff.
81. The Chief Information Officer's Group (CIOG) will work with the Agency to agree the arrangements for service delivery and supplier relationships. CIOG will appoint a National College for School Leadership Business Partner to manage and oversee these arrangements.
82. The Agency will retain responsibility for the development, delivery and support of its customer facing ICT systems. It will work closely with CIOG to ensure the efficiency and value for money of these services and also to identify opportunities to further rationalise, integrate and standardise in line with the Department's ICT Strategy in order to drive out further cost savings across the DfE family.

## **Internal Audit and Assurance**

83. The DfE Internal Audit Unit (IAU) will provide a consultancy and advice role to the Agency. The Agency will be included in any cross-Department compliance and themed audits where relevant. It will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive, as the Agency's Accounting Officer, to agree the audit programme for the Agency with the Head of Internal Audit.



Department  
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