

Board Orientation and Education Policy

Policy Type: Governance Process

Original Date Approved: October 22, 2015

Date Reviewed by Governance Committee: September 23, 2021, February 11, 2026

Date Revised: September 23, 2021, June 8, 2023, February 11, 2026

1. Policy

While it is expected that Governors will possess sufficient knowledge, experience and expertise at the time of their appointment to serve in such capacity, it is recognized that they will not be experts in all disciplines or in all aspects of governance. Therefore, ongoing professional development is encouraged of the Board, the Board chair and individual Governors. New Governors must participate in Colleges Ontario and the College Employer Council's College Centre of Board Excellence orientation session(s).

In addition, the Board will ensure that each new Governor receives a comprehensive orientation at the annual Board retreat to help them become an effective Board at the onset of the Board cycle. Ongoing education to enhance the Board's and individual Board members' governance capacity will also be planned and offered to the Governors.

The following principles will guide the Board's orientation and ongoing education:

- a) The Board will proactively define its requirements for orientation and ongoing education;
- b) The Board will develop an annual education plan through the Governance Committee and include items related to good governance, policy related matters relevant to the governance function and strategic matters of importance to the College;
- c) Governors will commit time to participating in the orientation and education sessions as part of their overall commitment as Governors of the College; and

- d) Wherever possible, all Governors will participate in the same educational offerings; customized education may be required to support specialized Committee work from time to time.

2. Responsibilities

The Board, through the Governance Committee and the President, are responsible to:

- a) define the key elements of a comprehensive orientation for new Governors;
- b) provide leadership in the delivery of the orientation program (normally through the Board chair);
- c) annually take stock of its collective and individual needs for professional development of Governors; and
- d) develop an annual education program delivered in one or more special meetings or incorporated into the regular meeting agendas of the Board.

The President's responsibility is to co-ordinate all aspects of the orientation and ongoing education programs, once the Board has defined them.

The President and the Board chair have responsibility for monitoring and implementing the orientation and ongoing education program.

3. Orientation

All new Governors will receive a comprehensive orientation about the College and its mandate, the role of the Board, and the expectations for individual Governors.

The orientation will be geared toward the needs of all Governors, with specific focus paid to new Governors. Orientation should include the following:

- Legislative framework;
- The College's operations;
- Board governance, including structures and processes;
- Stakeholders and key relationships; and
- Post-secondary education environment.

4. Board Partner Program

The Partner Program matches a new Governor with an experienced Governor for the new Governor's entire first year on the Board. It serves as a way to provide the new Governor with an informal point of contact regarding the Board, i.e. culture, history, process.

- **Goals of the Partner Program**
 - Create a positive experience for each Governor
 - Provide personal and professional development opportunity
 - Ensure a successful Board experience
- **Roles and Responsibilities of the Partner**
 - An introduction will be made by the Board liaison by email during the onboarding process, and in person at the first Board or Committee meeting.
 - Upon being introduced, the Partner will connect with the new Governor to welcome them to the Board and provide contact information.
 - The Partner will be available to answer queries by email or in person.
 - The Partner will socialize the new Governor to the Board portal.
 - The Partner will reach out to the new Governor one day prior to the Committee or Board meeting to ask if they have any questions regarding the agenda package.
 - The Partner will sit beside the new member during Board meetings (seating assignment will be developed with this in mind).
 - The Partner will assist during Board and Committee meetings by answering queries, and making introductions.
 - The Partner will reach out again, no more than 2 days following the Committee or Board meeting to see if the new Governor had any questions relating to the meeting.

5. Ongoing Education

In recognition of the evolving nature of a Governor's responsibilities, ongoing education may be necessary. In most cases, all Governors should be exposed to the same education.

On an annual basis, the Board (through the Governance Committee) and the president will develop an education agenda for the entire Board based on a

consideration of the following:

- a. Suggestions from Governors as part of the annual Board evaluation;
- b. Key strategic directions of the College;
- c. Major decisions on the horizon;
- d. Appropriate and significant risk management themes;
- e. Other factors as considered appropriate; and
- f. Training related to any legislated requirements.

6. Board Retreat

The purpose of the Board retreat is to address Board planning needs. While the format, content and duration may vary from year to year, every year there will be an additional meeting of the Board, referred to as the Board retreat. All Governors are encouraged to participate each year in a Board retreat, designed to supplement orientation to all Board members, provide Board development and learning activities, support Board governance, and promote team building and cohesion.

7. Off-Boarding Process

Once a Governor has completed their term, they will be asked to complete an exit survey and participate in an exit interview. This will be facilitated by the Nomination Committee. The results provide the Board will valuable information that will contribute to the growth and improvement of the Board. As well, it allows the departing Board member to share their experience.