**Governance Professional**

The Governance Professional of EQUA Mead will be committed to improving the life chances of the pupils we educate and ensure we give *Every Child, Every Chance*. As a growing Trust, currently educating almost 6000 pupils across 22 different schools (pre-school, primary, secondary and sixth form) we are immensely proud of our staff and endeavour to be an employer of choice. This is an exciting time as we continue to grow the number of schools and children we support.

At EQUA Mead Learning Trust, we are proud to include 13 Church of England schools within our family of 22 schools. Each of these schools has its own unique character and history, but all are united by a commitment to offering an education that is inclusive, hopeful and rooted in love and service. We believe that every child is made in the image of God, with the potential to flourish, academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

The Governance Professional will oversee all aspects of governance effectiveness and compliance within the trust, ensure governance adheres to good practice and meets all statutory and regulatory requirements, and provide strategic leadership of services that support governance across the trust. You will also act as the Data Protection Administrator and work closely with our external partner (One West) on this, as well managing the process of escalated Trust level complaints.

You will provide a professional, comprehensive administrative service to the Trust. You will be a highly skilled administrator with a positive disposition, who can navigate a complex workload and troubleshoot as necessary.  You will be an excellent planner, organiser, with proficient communication and literacy skills that support your ability to problem solve. An innovative and creative approach is key as well as the ability to influence and build strong trusting relationships with colleagues in schools.

You will be responsible to the Chair of Trustees of EQUA Mead Trust and will demonstrate a genuine commitment to our Equality and Diversity policy. You will have strong people skills and have a dynamic ‘can-do’ attitude who is keen to make a positive difference to young peoples’ lives.

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| **Pay**  **Working hours** | Grade M points 30 to 32 to be paid pro rata  20 hours per week 41 weeks per year flexible working as much as you like |
| **Location:** | We have offices in John of Gaunt School and Lavington School but are happy to take a flexible approach to the location of work, including the potential to work at times from home. Travel between schools will be necessary, therefore, being able to drive is important due to the remote nature of some of our schools. |
| **Responsible to:** | Chief Executive |
| **Line Management** | Local Governing Board Clerks |

**ACCOUNTABILITIES**

The post holder will be line managed by the Chief Executive. You will have responsibilities across the Trust and also be open to following other duties as prescribed by the Chief Executive. You will work closely with the Diocese, One West, Trustees and Senior School Teams.

**Role purpose**

To oversee all aspects of governance effectiveness and compliance within the trust, ensure governance adheres to good practice and meets all statutory and regulatory requirements, and provide strategic leadership of services that support governance across the trust.

This is achieved by:

* supporting the efficient and effective operation of the trust board and its committees
* ensuring governance at all levels is carrying out its functions
* leading on development of the trust’s governance framework and driving improvements to its systems, processes and structures
* managing and coordinating the delivery and ongoing improvement of governance support across the trust

**Strategic leadership across schools**

* Leading governance services
* work with executives, strategic and operational leads to ensure support for governance is compliant, effective and contributes towards strategic priorities being met
* act as the lead adviser on issues relating to the governance of schools and or the trust
* developing and implementing the MAT’s strategy for effective governance support services
* designing and monitoring the governance support structure
* assessing capacity and developing the structure in line with organisational growth
* ensuring effective communications are maintained with governing boards, governance professionals and stakeholders such as the DfE
* writing and presenting training and briefings

**Lead adviser for issues relating to Governance across the Trust**

As well as acting as the main point of contact for queries relating to governance within the trust, lead governance professionals proactively update those governing by providing advice and guidance on:

* complex, technical issues that relate to governing structures, procedures and the legal framework that underpins them
* quality assuring governance advice given by others ensuring that it is informed by an intelligent assessment of risk
* risk informed assessments of options for support and interventions to strengthen governance
* high level issue resolution
* highlighting evidenced based best practice, policy and thought leadership in school governance
* carrying out the duties of a company secretary (see below)

**Developing governance**

In many cases, lead governance professionals clerk meetings of the trust board and its committees, ensuring these enable the successful delivery of strategic objectives. As such, there is a key role in:

* keeping the board focused on its core strategic priorities, their strategic leadership responsibilities and their duty to maintain the highest professional standards of conduct and ethics
* setting the cycle of trust board and committee meetings and preparing focused agendas
* ensuring all meetings are inclusive and well structured
* satisfying all aspects of meeting compliance as stipulated in the trust’s articles of association and the Academy Trust Handbook, and in accordance with arrangements agreed by the board
* developing governing structures, particularly in relation to committee structures and the scheme of delegation, and routines across schools (hubs, locality models etc.) and monitoring effectiveness
* ensuring governing structures are developed in parallel with organisational growth strategies
* developing, reviewing and maintaining governance documents, such as articles of association, schemes of delegation, terms of reference, role descriptions and code of conduct
* developing record management and communication methods that are fit for purpose and maintain confidentiality
* overseeing a strategy and protocol for recruiting governors and trustees that ensures the board and its committees are properly constituted, inclusive, diverse and meet the needs of the organisation
* leading on the strategy and planning of governance induction and CPD
* developing and overseeing systems for board self-evaluation and review, including commissioning of external reviews

**Training**

Training and support is available for the successful candidate. As part of the role, you would be expected to work closely with the Diocese (Salisbury). There is a minimum expectation that you would be expected to undertake the Diocese training on Governance which is part of their Church Schools Flourishing Program. All costs would be met by the Trust.

**Leading on compliance**

Lead governance professionals manage information and documentation that clearly details the trust’s governance arrangements and satisfies other statutory requirements, including (but not limited to):

* maintaining appropriate records of trust board and academy committee membership, along with any terms of reference
* maintaining a trust policy register and advising on the policy review and approval cycle
* ensuring copies of statutory policies and other statutory documents such as the scheme of delegation and register of interests are published as agreed (on the trust and/or school website) and in line with statutory requirements
* responsible for the maintenance of data protection policies in liaison with our Data Protection Officer
* ensuring that governance-specific risks are included in the trust’s risk register
* supporting production of the annual report and governance statement published with the trust’s annual accounts
* managing the flow of information between the trust board and academy committees and members, maintaining an up-to-date record of academy committee business
* developing trust-specific documents such as a governance code of conduct and skills matrix
* maintaining the trust’s online governance portal or equivalent
* the application of policies, procedures, and relevant legislation/guidance across the trust

**Leadership management**

* overseeing recruitment and induction of the governance support team/clerks
* briefing and training staff
* Oversee and coordinate Stage 4 complaints (Trust Level)
* conducting performance management and appraisals
* succession planning for different roles in the structure
* managing any budget and resources allocated to the governance support function
* Maintaining relationships and communication
* Lead governance professionals develop and maintain productive working relationships while maintaining independence by:
* working collaboratively and holistically with stakeholders in and outside of the organisation so that governance supports and enables the operational delivery of strategic objectives
* ensuring relevant authorities are notified of changes to membership and governance structures as appropriate
* being a role model for effective and ethical governance

**Providing coordinated support**

* Acting as a central point of contact
* providing advisory support to boards
* being an expert resource for clerks and the wider organisation
* quality assuring advice – acting as a high-level resource
* responding to issues including concerns and complaints related to governance
* facilitating networks and communication between governing boards

**Line managing clerks**

* recruitment, management and quality assurance
* assigning work and deployments
* ensuring board and committee meetings are efficient, effective and properly recorded
* delivering induction, training and briefings
* conducting annual appraisals

**Delivering wider and targeted support**

* overseeing recruitment, election/appointment and induction for different governance tiers
* overseeing a governor CPD offer/development programme
* organising reviews and self-evaluation
* presenting training, briefings and at events
* organising targeted support and intervention when circumstances require

**Compliance monitoring across a group of schools**

* maintaining a central records system to include attendance at meetings and training sessions by members, directors, governors, trustees and governance professionals
* routine reporting, such as regarding board vacancies
* ensuring different tiers of governance are properly constituted
* monitoring compliance with schemes of delegation
* ensuring systems and controls are in place to comply with obligations under education legislation, funding agreements, charity legislation, company law, data protection legislation, safeguarding guidelines and health and safety legislation

**Personal development**

The clerking competency framework supports individuals in assessing their own practice, skills and knowledge and identifying their development needs. Continuing professional development in the role of lead governance professional should include:

* liaising with relevant professional organisations and networks
* undertaking regular training including the pursuit of professionally recognised qualifications
* keeping abreast of policy developments affecting academy trust governance
* participating in regular performance management, led by the chair of the board of trustees

**Carrying out the duties of a company secretary**

* advising the board of trustees on their role, constitutional and procedural matters
* maintaining statutory registers
* ensuring compliance with Companies House annual filing requirements
* The Chartered Governance Institute (CGI) have a [model role description for a company secretary](https://www.cgi.org.uk/knowledge/resources/icsa-specimen-role-description-for-the-company-secretary-of-an-academy).

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| **REQUIREMENTS**  The post holder must be able to demonstrate: | ESSENTIAL (E) Desired (D) |
| **QUALIFICATIONS** | |
| GCSE (or equivalent) grade C or above in English and Mathematics | E |
| Evidence of continuing professional development | E |
| Educated to A Level/Level 3 | D |
| Higher education or relevant professional qualifications in admin, business or project management | D |
| **EXPERIENCE** | |
| Experience in preparing agendas, papers, and minutes for formal meetings | D |
| Experience in researching data/information, production of reports and presenting the findings using a range of computer software | D |
| Demonstrable experience in producing high quality professional communications, especially accurate editing and proof reading | D |
| Communicating and working effectively and confidently with senior colleagues  whilst maintaining confidentiality | D |
| Experience managing complaints and sensitive issues | D |
| **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS** | |
| Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills, to enable professional interaction with a wide range of contacts, both internal and external to the Trust | E |
| Ability to organise and plan own work | E |
| Excellent attention to detail, with the ability to maintain a high level of accuracy | E |
| A flexible, pro-active approach to work including the ability to prioritise and re-  prioritise | E |
| Ability to work on own initiative | E |
| Ability to deal with sensitive information with discretion and to maintain  confidentiality | E |
| Excellent IT skills, including a working knowledge of presentation software  packages, preferably Microsoft Office Word, Excel and PowerPoint | E |
| The ability to present information in an accurate and appropriate format | E |
| **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES** | |
| Highest level of professionalism, discretion and diplomacy in dealing with  confidential information, sensitive issues or high-profile contacts | E |
| Willingness to work flexibly occasionally having to work early or late to meet the  demand of the role | E |
| Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines | E |
| Flexibility and adaptability | E |
| Enthusiasm, optimism, energy and a sense of humor | E |
| Ability to prioritise a busy and varied workload to meet strict deadlines with  minimal supervision | E |