Ormiston Academies Trust   
Trustee Recruitment Policy

Policy version control

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1. Scope and purpose
   1. The Trustees to the Board of Ormiston Academies Trust serve as the custodians of the Trust's strategic vision, governance, and accountability. They play a pivotal role in shaping the direction of the Trust, overseeing its educational and financial performance, and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory obligations.
   2. Their collective expertise and commitment significantly impact the quality of education and the well-being and overall outcomes of the students within OAT care. Attracting and selecting the right trustees is essential to the overall effectiveness, performance, and long-term viability of OAT.
   3. This policy outlines the objectives and procedures governing the recruitment of trustees within OAT. It applies to the selection and appointment of individuals who will serve on the Board of Trustees, with a focus on recruiting individuals who are committed to “achieving more together” whilst upholding the trust's strategic vision, values, and standards of governance.
   4. This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for the recruitment of trustees, with a focus on transparency, diversity, and the alignment of individual strengths with the Trust's strategic objectives.
2. Objectives
   1. The Trustee recruitment objectives collectively serve to reinforce the importance of securing trustees who are not only qualified, but also dedicated to advancing the trust's mission and enhancing the educational outcomes and well-being of students within the OAT. The recruitment objectives are as follows:

* Alignment with our Trust's Vision and Values: Ensure that prospective trustees align with the vision, mission, and values of OAT and are committed to advancing the trust's strategic objectives.
* Diversity and Inclusivity: Promote diversity and inclusivity by actively seeking candidates from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to enrich the Board's composition and decision-making processes.
* Expertise and Skillset:  Recruit trustees with a diverse range of skills, expertise, and professional backgrounds that are relevant to the needs of the OAT, including but not limited to education, finance, legal, governance, and community engagement.
* Ethical and Legal Compliance:  Ensure that all trustee candidates meet ethical and legal requirements, including compliance with safeguarding regulations, conflicts of interest, and any other statutory responsibilities.
* Transparency and Fairness:  Maintain a transparent and fair recruitment process that provides clear information about the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of trustees.
* Candidate Assessment:  Implement a rigorous selection process that includes interviews, reference checks, and other assessments to evaluate candidates' suitability for the role of trustee.
* Engagement and Induction:  Facilitate comprehensive trustee orientation and induction processes to familiarise new trustees with OAT's governance structure, policies, and expectations.
* Commitment and Dedication:  Seek individuals who demonstrate a genuine commitment to the educational well-being and success of students within OAT and who are willing to dedicate the necessary time and effort to fulfil their trustee duties effectively.
* Term Limits and Succession Planning:  Ensure consideration of term limits for trustees to promote fresh perspectives and encourage succession planning within the Board, ensuring continuity of governance.
* Review and Continuous Improvement:  Ensure regular review the trustee recruitment process to identify opportunities for improvement and adapt to changing needs and circumstances.

1. Process

3.1 All trustee processes must adhere to the Trust’s [Articles of Association](https://www.ormistonacademiestrust.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/oat-articles-of-association-adopted-12-Jan-2023.pdf).

* Needs Assessment:  The Board delegates responsibility for identification of any skills gap on the Board to the Trust’s People Committee with the associated processes facilitated by the Head of Governance. The Trust’s People Committee will conduct a skills audit annually to identify the specific skills, expertise, and experience required on the Board of Trustees to align with the strategic goals of OAT. The People Committee will make proposals to the Board for approval prior to any recruitment process.
* Transparent Vacancy Announcements:  The Trust will use the most appropriate channels to publicise vacancies, including for example the trust's website, local communities, educational networks, and professional associations, ensuring clear information about the application process is available.
* Equality and Diversity: The Trust values diversity and equality, and the recruitment process will promote inclusivity and prevent discrimination based on protected characteristics.
* Application Review:  A shortlisting panel, comprising of at least 2 trustees, will thoroughly review all trustee applications against predetermined criteria, including alignment with the trust's values and expertise relevant to the Board's needs.
* Interview and Assessment:  Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview.  For interview purposes, the Trust will establish a selection committee composed of current trustees, members, senior staff, and external experts, as appropriate, to oversee the recruitment process and ensure its fairness and impartiality.  The panel will conduct interviews and assessments with shortlisted candidates to evaluate their suitability, commitment, and compatibility with the trust's vision and mission.
* Ratification: Once a successful candidate has been identified, the Trust Board will approve the decision to appoint.
* Reference Checks:  Prior to commencement in role, the Trust will undertake comprehensive reference checks to verify the qualifications and suitability of prospective trustees.
* Induction and Training: The Trust will provide a comprehensive trustee induction and training program to orient new trustees to their roles, responsibilities, and the governance structure of OAT.
* Term Limits and Succession Planning:  The Articles of Associated sets out clear term limits for trustees, with provisions for extensions or reappointments as needed, to ensure a balance of experience and fresh perspectives on the Board.
* Notice Period: Trustees planning to step down are requested to give 6 months’ notice to enable OAT to ensure effective succession planning.
* Feedback and Continuous Improvement:  The trust will solicit feedback from candidates who participated in the recruitment process to identify areas for improvement and enhance the overall recruitment experience.
* Timely Appointments:  The Trust will strive for timely trustee appointments to maintain a fully functioning Board and minimise disruptions to governance.
* Public Accountability:  The trust will maintain transparency throughout the recruitment process, providing regular updates to stakeholders on the progress and outcomes of trustee recruitment.
* Evaluation:  Through the Trust’s People Committee, OAT will regularly assess the effectiveness of the trustee recruitment strategy and make necessary adjustments to align with evolving trust priorities.

1. Roles & responsibilities
   1. Trust Board
      1. The Trust Board is responsible for:

* overseeing and approving the overall trustee appointment process.
* agreeing the defined criteria, skills, expertise, and attributes required for prospective trustees in alignment with the trust's strategic objectives and needs.
* approving the final appointment of trustees based on recommendations from the selection panel and ensure that the trustee appointment process is conducted transparently, fairly, and in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.
* approving use of external recruitment agencies, should this be deemed necessary.
* ensuring continual improvement of the appointment process by undertaking regular review and refining the trustee appointment process to enhance its effectiveness.
  + 1. Whilst the Board has overall responsibility for the process and its ongoing refinement, they will delegate responsibility for this to the Trust’s People Committee.
  1. Trust People Committee
     1. The Trust People Committee will:
* assume delegated responsibility for ensuring that the make-up of the Trust Board is and remains appropriate to meet the strategic needs of OAT.
* be responsible for identifying any skills and diversity gaps on the Board and recruiting to address these in a transparent and timely fashion.
* define the criteria, skills, expertise, and attributes required for prospective trustees in alignment with the trust's strategic objectives and needs.
* be responsible for agreeing advertising strategies with the People & Culture team and Company Secretary including the use of the Trust’s website, relevant education forums, and professional networks.
* be responsible for appointing members of the selection panel, ensuring that the members are suitably qualified and experienced and that the panel is appropriately broad.
* recommend the use of external recruitment agencies to assist with the recruitment process as necessary if the Trust faces challenges in attracting a suitable pool of candidates independently. Any recommendation to use a recruitment agency will be made following a thorough review of the situation and a consideration of associated costs.
* oversee the dissemination of trustee vacancy announcements, ensuring they are clear, accessible, and widely distributed.
* verify the qualifications and suitability of prospective trustees through comprehensive reference checks.
* collect and review feedback from candidates who participated in the recruitment process to identify areas for improvement.
  1. Selection Panel

* + 1. The selection panel will:
* consist of current trustees, members and senior staff members. External experts may be called upon if applicable.
* collaborate with the People Committee to assess the specific skills and expertise needed on the Board of Trustees.
* evaluate trustee applications against predetermined criteria. Prospective candidates will be required to submit a summary of their background, highlighting their qualifications, experience, skills, and reasons for wanting to become a trustee.
* create a shortlist of qualified candidates.  A shortlisting panel, comprising of at least 2 trustees will review applications against predetermined criteria to select candidates for interview. Shortlisting will focus on achieving a diverse and skilled group of candidates.
* conduct interviews and assessments of shortlisted candidates to assess their suitability, commitment, and alignment with the trust's vision and mission. Interviews will include questions that assess candidates' suitability for the role and their commitment to the Trust's values. Interviews will be carried out in line with the safer recruitment principles outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.
* represent recommendations for trustee appointments to the Trust Board, providing detailed justifications for each candidate.

* 1. The Company Secretary

* + 1. The Company Secretary will:
* oversee the operational aspects of the trustee appointment process, including scheduling interviews, coordinating assessments, and managing logistics.
* ensure clear and timely communication with candidates throughout the recruitment process, including notifying them of outcomes and providing feedback as needed.
* collaborate with the induction team to ensure that newly appointed trustees receive comprehensive orientation and training.
* provide administrative support for the trustee appointment process, including managing application submissions, scheduling meetings, and maintaining records.
* ensure that all aspects of the trustee appointment process adhere to legal and regulatory requirements, including record-keeping and data protection.
  1. People & Culture Team
     1. As part of the recruitment process, the People & Culture Team will:
* support the people committee in the advertising of trustee vacancies.
* support the operational aspects of the trustee appointment process as required.
* manage the vetting process, in line with safer recruitment principles outlined in KCSiE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) so as to include checks for any prohibitions, directions, sanctions and restrictions that would prevent an unsuitable person from being a trustee of an academy trust, as well as checks for criminal records, financial interests, conflicts of interest, and any potential barriers to fulfilling the trustee role effectively.
* obtain references to confirm candidates' suitability and their alignment with the Trust's values.

* 1. Induction Team

* + 1. The appointed induction team will:
* develop and deliver a comprehensive trustee induction and training program to familiarise new trustees with their roles, responsibilities, and the governance structure of the trust.
* provide ongoing support and resources to assist new trustees in fulfilling their duties effectively.

* 1. External Experts (if applicable):

* + 1. External experts will contribute their expertise and insights to the selection panel's assessment of trustee candidates, particularly in areas where specialised knowledge is required.

1. Review
   1. The Trust will review and update this policy periodically to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with best practice.