



Summary of the External Board Review 2024

The Department for Education requires that all Further Education Colleges commission an External Board Review of governance at least every three years. The Governing Body at City Lit appointed the Association of Colleges to undertake its review which was carried out by Rob Lawson OBE during the period May- July 2024.

The External Board Review recognised that City Lit's Board has an impressive spread of skills and expertise which it uses to support and challenge City Lit's executive team. Scrutiny, self-evaluation and succession planning are strengths and while interactions between governors and the executive team are good-natured, respectful and courteous, challenge is strong and can be persistent.

The Board has an excellent range of skills and experience, and good diversity in terms of disability, age and gender providing a variety of perspectives and life experiences.

Through observation of meetings, through the governor survey and through the 1-2-1 interviews it is evident that governors are curious and committed (attendance is excellent) to the students of City Lit.

The Board structure works well and provides the requisite platforms and opportunities for oversight, challenge and scrutiny. There is ample evidence of the impact governors make through their work on the Board, and through the diligence of an experienced clerk, the Board is compliant with the relevant codes and requirements.

City Lit's triumvirate works well together, governors get on well with each other and there is mutual respect between the Board and the executive team.

There is the requisite amount of challenge and scrutiny, with questions being asked respectfully, and sometimes persistently. The executive team reacts well to challenge – positively and constructively, with no signs of defensiveness.

Through the survey and through the interviews, it was clear Board members felt valued and their contributions appreciated.

The overall conclusion is that there is strong evidence that the Board is highly proficient and consistently impacts positively on college strategy, effectiveness, and outcomes.



An action plan is already in place to address the small number of areas for development as identified in the review to support governance further. Progress on this is being monitored by City Lit's Governance & People Committee and reported to the Governing Body.

For further information or to view the full report please contact Katrina O'Sullivan, Director of Governance (katrina.osullivan@citylit.ac.uk)