

Code of Governance Forum and Commission

HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION CODE OF GOVERNANCE

Overview

1. The Higher Education Commission Code of Governance is an agreement between the Secretariat, Commissioners and Associate Members of the Group on the rules under which the Higher Education Commission operates and is administered. A copy is made publicly available on the website. The intention of the Code is to ensure full transparency.
2. The Higher Education Commission is committed to ensuring its activities and funding are entirely transparent. The Higher Education Commission is funded through a combination of core funding from associate membership and ad hoc sponsorship of particular events and research. The Higher Education Commission does not endorse, support or campaign on behalf of one organisation. Rather, it campaigns for evidence based policy development in Higher Education. The group operates according to a strict Code of Governance, and its work is driven by its Commissioners and its Secretariat.
3. As the group's Secretariat, Policy Connect provides all secretariat services. Policy Connect is a membership-based cross-Party thinktank with an extensive network of parliamentary groups, research commissions, forums and campaigns working to inform and improve UK public policy. Policy Connect is committed to upholding the principle of transparency in UK parliamentary and public affairs and welcomes any questions you may have on its work and activities. Further details on this are provided below.

Parliamentary membership

4. The Higher Education Commission exists in order to help parliamentarians fully engage with HE policy.
5. The Higher Education Commission is open to members of all parties and both Houses.
6. The agenda of the Higher Education Commission is set by the group's Secretariat in consultation with the Commissioners. Associate members will be able to provide advice to the Secretariat and Commissioners but will have no executive decision-making powers over the content of the programme.

Associate membership

7. The associate membership is open to non-parliamentary organisations.
8. Membership subscriptions from these organisations provide a source of funding that allows the Higher Education Commission to maintain a secretariat. The Secretariat will facilitate the running of a regular meeting programme, parliamentary work and support information distribution such as the website in order to shape and influence public policy.
9. The associate membership also offers the group a useful insight into present developments and the views of the relevant sectors.
10. Associate member organisations are invited to send representatives to all group meetings and are registered to receive all official group correspondence.

11. At meetings, associate members are asked to participate actively in discussions, whilst recognising that the Higher Education Commission is intended as a means of disseminating impartial information and that parliamentarians have priority in their contributions.
12. Associate members are also invited to sponsor additional resources, research or meetings that fall outside the standard programme. No editorial influence is conferred by such sponsorship.

Secretariat

13. The Higher Education Commission is administered by a full time secretariat, responsible for executing the programme and activities of the group agreed by the Officers.
14. The secretariat and other administrative services are provided by Policy Connect.
 - a. Policy Connect is a membership-based, not-for-profit cross-Party thinktank working to inform, influence and improve UK public policy development and delivery. It leads and manages an extensive network of parliamentary groups, research commissions, forums and campaigns working to bring together the public and private sectors with parliamentarians and leading experts on important issues. Policy Connect provides support services to a number of parliamentary groups and initiatives.
 - b. Secretarial and other administrative services include provision of: management staff; project and event management; shared costs of telephone, IT, web and email hosting; financial services; and shared office space.
 - c. Policy Connect sets the group's agenda and programme in consultation with the Commissioners.
15. The finances are administered as follows:

- i. Annual membership subscriptions and any additional sponsorship for the [NAME] are managed by Policy Connect. Policy Connect prepares annual accounts which are externally audited and published at Companies House. The work of Policy Connect is overseen by a separate scrutiny committee to ensure governance of the use of funds, and chaired by parliamentarians. Please find more information on Policy Connect's financial governance arrangements here:
<http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/policy-connect-financial-governance>
- ii. The group shares administrative and accommodation costs with other Policy Connect groups.

16. The above arrangements act as a safeguard to the financial liabilities of the Parliamentary Officers.

Other organisations

17. Where possible and appropriate, other relevant organisations are invited to participate in meetings and resources.

- a. Internal to Westminster, meetings and resources are open to other parliamentary bodies such as Committee and Parliamentary Office staff, the House of Commons and Lords Libraries, and Member's own research staff.
- b. External to Westminster, representatives from charity and voluntary sector agencies and other relevant organisations are invited to attend meetings at which their contribution is of relevance to the subject area.
- c. Attendance at meetings must be by invitation of and response to the Higher Education Commission.

Endorsement

18. This code of governance is endorsed by the Commissioners and associate membership of the group, representing an agreement on how the group operates and is administered.