MAKING A DIFFERENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
SCHOOL GOVERNOR INITIATIVE
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Volunteer school governors play a crucial role in raising educational standards. The University’s School Governor Initiative (UMSGI) aims to contribute to the leadership and improvement of state schools by engaging our staff and alumni in creating the largest growth of school governors in the UK.

As part of the University’s social responsibility strategy, the School Governor Initiative encourages and supports staff and alumni to become school governors by:

- Helping staff and alumni to find volunteering placements as governors in local schools through our dedicated partner organisations.
- Providing a network and training opportunities for University staff working as governors to share best practice, support each other and act as positive ambassadors for the University’s work with schools and colleges.

Governors do not manage a school day-to-day, but are required to oversee its long-term development. Anyone aged over 18 and living in the UK can be a governor. Volunteer governors do not have to be parents, nor do they need first-hand experience of the education system.

In essence a governor’s role is to:

- Support and challenge the head teacher to ensure accountability and recognise good performance.
- Provide strategic management to help set the school’s aims and objectives and monitor progress.
- Make executive decisions regarding budgets and the appointment of head-teachers.
WHY BECOME A SCHOOL GOVERNOR

In a recent survey, 93% of staff questioned said that they had gained new skills through being a school governor.

Becoming a school governor will contribute to your own professional development. Being a school governor can be very rewarding, as well as broadening your skills and experiences you will be making an important contribution to the development of a school or college. You may become involved in issues as diverse as capital planning, marketing, pupil welfare, curriculum development, HR or finance.

SUPPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY

The University recognises the value of staff becoming school governors and the positive impact this can have on individuals, the University and the local community.

Support is offered locally through UMSGI to build skills and boost self-confidence. Staff and alumni who become school governors are supported through workshops, networking events, training, an annual conference and a LinkedIn Group.

Many of the duties involved in being a governor take place outside of working hours and do not therefore require time off work. However, the University will provide reasonable amounts of paid time off during normal working hours (in addition to annual leave) where necessary. Staff cannot claim time off in lieu for school governor duties performed outside of normal working hours.

Commitment

Being a governor is normally a 4 year term and the average time commitment is 10-15 hours per term. This includes meetings, background reading and school visits.

How to get involved

Staff can register their interest in 2 ways;

- SGOSS Governors for Schools is a free service for volunteers, schools and employers. The University has a long-standing partnership with SGOSS. Go to www.sgoss.org.uk to register your interest online and someone will be in touch.

- Inspiring Governance is a new free service that connects volunteers interested in becoming governors with schools and colleges nationwide. Go to www.inspiringgovernance.org to find out more about the service they offer to schools, governing bodies and volunteers.

For enquiries about UMSGI and the support offered by the University, please visit: www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/umsgi
“The School Governor Initiative supports Manchester City Council’s School Governance Strategy by providing highly skilled governors for our schools who promote increased aspirations, higher-level skills and higher achievement. The calibre of governors from the University is very high and what is unique about the Initiative is that staff are supported to undertake the role and receive ongoing development through conferences and networks.”

Ruth Bradbury
School Governance Lead at Manchester City Council

“As a new Chair, I have been very fortunate over the past twelve months in being able to draw on the commitment, energy and expertise of talented people including the University’s staff who are willing to serve as governors at St Cuthbert’s. We are able to access support from a variety of sources as well as UMSGI who offer governor training and we have found it well worth the effort of attending these sessions.”

Rebecca Kennedy
Chair of governors at St Cuthbert’s Primary School

“I’ve been a local authority school governor for nearly a year and it has certainly been a positive experience. I contribute to; disciplinary procedures, curriculum setting, equality & diversity and health & safety. UMSGI has provided some excellent training, network support and the opportunity to share good practice. Within a short period, I have already broadened my knowledge and I am increasingly contributing to my school. The additional experiences as a governor are often helpful in my University work.”

Peter Crowe
Member of staff and local authority governor

“Effective schools are strategically led and a governing body with a broad skills set, rooted in its wider community is an essential part of the leadership team. As a governing body we have benefitted from the support of the University of Manchester’s School Governor Initiative. The University is clearly playing an important role in championing and valuing well trained and proactive governors in local schools and colleges.”

Cllr Suzannah Reeves
Chair of governors at Parrs Wood High School

“I have been a governor for three years in a secondary school and UMSGI has provided me with a wealth of information, links to a variety of sources of support and contacts, a wide range of training and access to many workshops and events.”

Dr Chris McLean
Member of staff and secondary school governor