

<b>Title:</b>	School Governor Skills Survey Report 2015
<b>Authors/Enquiries:</b>	Stephanie Lee, Head of Widening Participation and Outreach Alison Gregory, Student Recruitment and Widening Participation Officer
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<b>Description:</b>	This report provides a summary of the skills survey undertaken by staff at The University of Manchester who are members of the University of Manchester School Governor Initiative (UMSGI) Network.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In April 2015, member of the UMSGI Network were invited to undertake a survey linked to their role as school governors. The aim of this survey was to:
- Understand the range of skills
- 1.2 Through case studies we have qualitative feedback about the range of skills our staff bring to their school governor roles, but we also wanted to understand if there was any impact on the skills development of staff through as a result of undertaking this role.
- 1.3 The survey is the first stage of our UMSGI evaluation strategy. Over the next 12 months we will undertake further evaluation supported by a colleague, and UMSGI member, from the Manchester Business School. This will involve focus groups with staff and structured interviews with Head Teachers in schools where our UMSGI members are placed.

## **2. Survey overview – respondent school and governor background**

- 2.1 The survey was completed by 65 staff which represents 40% of our UMSGI Network. 49 (75%) respondents are Professional Support Services (PSS) staff and 15 (23%) are academic staff. Currently in the Network 64% are PSS and 36% are academic staff.
- 2.2 The majority of people completing the survey are primary school governors (68%). This is broadly reflective of the Network where 61% are primary school governors.
- 2.3 Respondents were most likely to be in Community or State schools (50%). The next largest group was faith schools (26%) followed by academies (10%).
- 2.4 32% of respondents are in outstanding schools with 50% in good schools and 18% in schools which require improvement. These are the judgements from the most recent Ofsted inspection at a governor's school.
- 2.5 Respondents were asked about their role on their Board of Governors and of the 62 staff who answered the question, 8 are Chairs and 12 are Committee Chairs.
- 2.6 The survey was completed by new and experienced governors with 27% having been a governor for more than 4 years.

### **3. Skills application**

- 3.1 When asked whether they had made use of existing skills and knowledge in their school governor role, 99% responded positively. 72% felt that this has been to a great extent and 27% to a small extent. Only 1% (1 respondent) felt that they had not made use of their skills or knowledge.
- 3.2 A bar chart showing the range of skills and expertise that staff have brought to their school's Board of Governors is provided in figure 1, appendix 1.
- 3.3 Respondents were also asked to give examples of ways in which they had applied their skills, examples are provided under key headings in appendix 2.
- 3.4 Respondents were asked whether they had improved existing skills. 86% responded positively, 28% felt this had been to a great extent and 58% to a smaller extent. 8% were unsure and 5% felt that their skills had not improved at all (3 respondents). Examples of ways in which staff felt their skills had developed as a result of their school governor role are listed on page X.

### **4. Skills Development**

- 4.1 When asked whether they had gained any new skills through being a school governor, 93% responded positively. 48% felt that this has been to a great extent and 45% to a small extent. Only 3% (2 respondents) felt that they had not developed any new skills at all.
- 4.2 Respondents were asked to tick the skills they had gained through the school governor role (Appendix 3, figure 1). Responses were relatively evenly distributed with the exception of project management which only 4% (2 respondents) selected. This could be because governors in the main will be involved in strategic decisions so are less likely to be managing projects, with the possible exception of major projects such as academisation or capital development.
- 4.3 Respondents were asked to list areas of knowledge they had developed as a result of their school governor role, examples included: capital development, education policies, chairing meetings. These are listed in table 1, appendix 3.

### **5. Support from the University**

- 5.1 Respondents were asked about the support they received from the University and there were specific questions about the termly network meetings, annual Conference and online support.
- 5.2 All respondents who had attended a network meeting found them useful (32% - quite useful, 45% - mostly useful and 24% - extremely useful.)
- 5.3 Of the respondents who attended the annual Conference, 27% found it quite useful, 31% mostly useful and 42% extremely useful.

Figure 1: What skills/knowledge you have been able to use on the governing body?

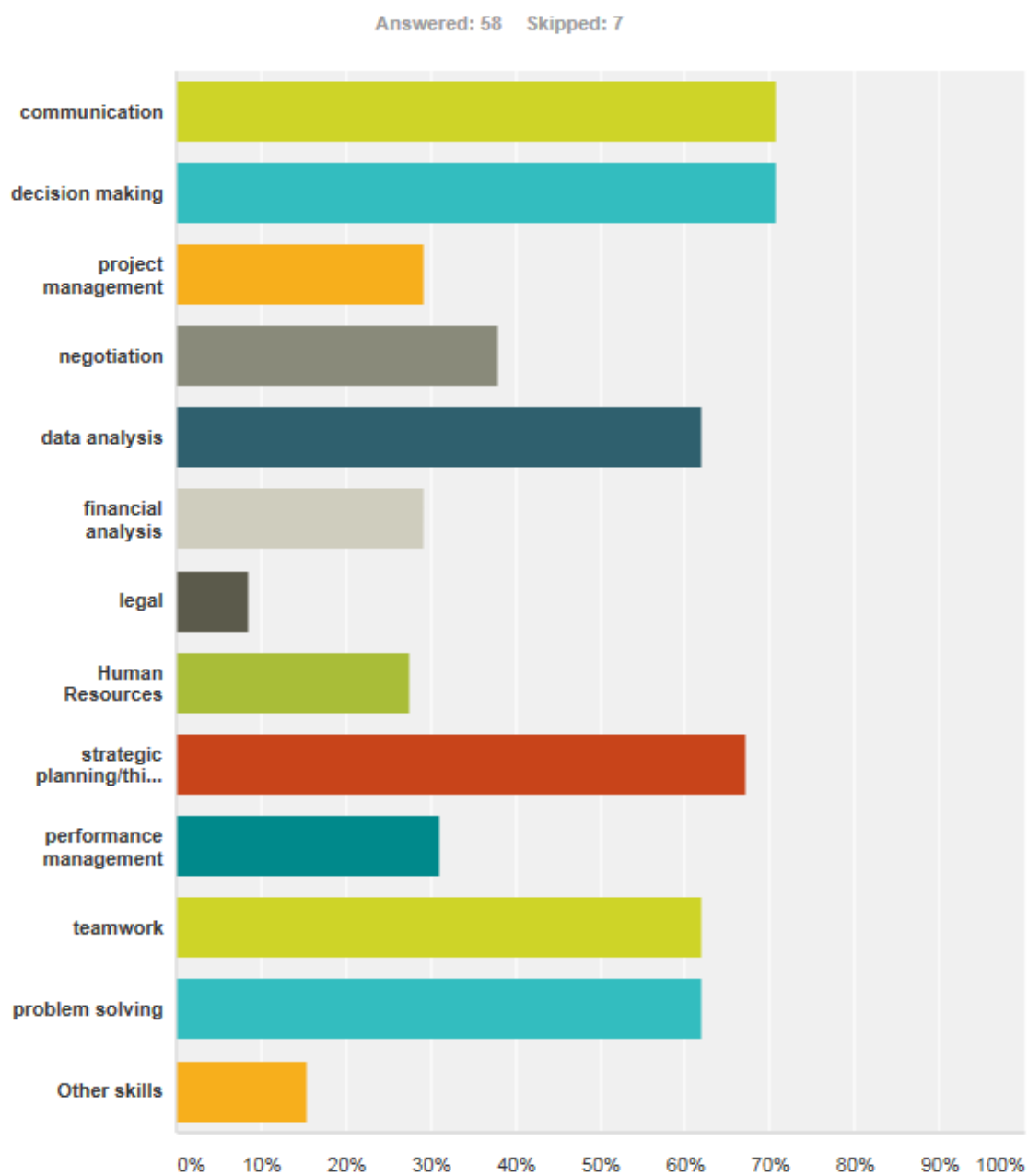


Table 1: How have you applied your skills?

Skill area	Examples of application
<b>Performance and Data</b>	Analysing data, patterns and interpretation of results, reviews
<b>Curriculum, Teaching and Admissions</b>	Curriculum development & supporting an improvement in maths; admissions; pedagogy
<b>Finance</b>	Business Cases; outsourcing; merger; due diligence; financial analysis
<b>Organization &amp; Management</b>	Meeting templates; Chairing: GB Admin; quality assurance; interpretation of policy; teamwork; time management; IT & learning technologies; supporting and challenging senior management team.
<b>Strategic Vision</b>	strategic planning; KPIs, long term planning; redesign; school improvement; academy conversion
<b>Behaviour, Disciplinary &amp; Complaints</b>	exclusions; anti-bullying, behaviour (links to HR policy and Data)
<b>Buildings &amp; Project Management</b>	Assessing Bids, grant applications (links to finance)

Table 1: Responses to the question 'What skills have you developed'

Answer Choices	Responses
communication	33.33% 19
decision making	35.09% 20
project management	3.51% 2
negotiation	24.56% 14
data analysis	38.60% 22
financial analysis	31.58% 18
strategic planning	42.11% 24
performance management	28.07% 16
confidence	33.33% 19
knowledge of a particular area of work, please state what this is below	38.60% 22

#### Examples of ways in which school governor role has enhanced skills/knowledge

**Confidence & Communication** – explaining accountability rules to lay people

**Decision-making** – problem analysis, data analysis

**Leadership & Relationships** – chairing meetings, challenging discussions, diplomacy, leading a team, negotiation,

**Strategic Thinking** – long term planning and decision making

**Education and Performance Data Knowledge** – continual changes, performance data, exam and assessment process.

**Local Community** – knowledge of local area, inner city issues

**HR issues** – Performance Mgt

**Building Premises and Project Mgt**

#### Examples of application to current University role

'I started a new job in project management where finance analysis and strategic planning have proven to be very useful skills.'

'It has made me more confident in having difficult conversations.'

'Supporting staff through change.'

'I have also recently achieved promotion which I believe is partly a result of my leadership experience gained through a governor.'

'Attitudes towards expenditure and value for money.'

'Chairing meetings.'