

Title:	School Governor Skills Survey Report
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Description:	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 2017, 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 used as a governor
- Understand the range of skills developed as a governor
- Understand the range of transferable skills which are utilised back in the workplace

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 as a result of undertaking this role.

1.3 The survey is the second survey of its kind, the first occurred in April 2015. This report is available at (Stephanie shall we link here to 2015)

2. Survey overview – respondent school and governor background

2.1 The survey was completed by 55 staff which represents 28% of our UMSGI Network. 33 (60%) respondents are Professional Support Services (PSS) staff and 20 (36%) are academic staff. 2 (4%) respondents were in the “other” category. Currently in the Network 60% are PSS and 40% are academic staff.

2.2 The majority of people completing the survey are primary school governors (56%). This is broadly reflective of the Network where 60% are primary school governors.

2.3 Respondents were most likely to be in Community or State schools (54%). The next largest group was joint between faith schools (13%) and academies (13%).

2.4 19% of respondents are in outstanding schools with 63% in good schools and 12% 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 55 staff who answered the question, 6 are Chairs, 7 are Vice-Chairs and 9 are Committee Chairs.

2.6 The survey was completed by new and experienced governors with 33% 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, 91% responded positively. 54% felt that this has been to a great extent and 37% to a small extent. No-one felt that they had not made use of their skills or knowledge but 9% thought it was difficult to say whether they had or not.
- 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 table 1, appendix 2.

4. Skills Development

- 4.1 Respondents were asked whether they had gained any new skills. 85% responded positively, 37% felt this had been to a great extent and 48% to a smaller extent. 11% were unsure and 4% felt that their skills had not improved at all (2 respondents).
- 4.2 Respondents were asked to select the 3 most prominent skills they felt had gained through the school governor role (Appendix 3, figure 1). Responses were relatively evenly distributed with the exception of project management which only 5% (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 The 3 most prominent skills selected from a list of 10 were knowledge of a particular piece of work (47.5%), confidence (37.5%) and financial analysis (35%). In joint 4th place, decision making, strategic planning and communication skills all came in at 27.5%. Table 1, Appendix 3
- 4.4 Respondents were also asked to list other areas they had developed as a result of their school governor role, examples included: knowledge of the education system, knowledge of special education, patience and chairing difficult meetings.

5. Application of new skills/knowledge in the workplace

- 5.1 Respondents were asked whether they had been able to apply any of the new skills/knowledge to their role at The University of Manchester
- 5.2 48% of respondents responded positively and 17% didn't know. Examples of how they felt they have been able to do this are shown in Table 1, Appendix 4
- 5.3 91% of respondents also said that they felt satisfied that they had enough knowledge and skills to perform the school governor role effectively. 48% to a great extent and 43% to a smaller extent. Only 1 respondent said not at all.

6. Contributions made elsewhere other than within the University

6.1 The table in Appendix 5 shows where governors feel they are making further contributions

7. Support from the University

7.1 Respondents were asked about the support they received from the University.

7.2 85% of respondents rated the support overall from the University as good or excellent

7.3 Respondents were asked to state what support in particular had been most useful. Of the 26 who responded to this question, 54% mentioned the network and networking, 15% mentioned the conference, 42% mentioned time and flexibility to perform the role and 12% mentioned the listserv updates and information.

7.4 64% of respondents had attended a network meeting

7.5 56% of respondents had attended an UMSGI conference

7.6 All respondents who had attended a network meeting found them useful (28% - quite useful, 38% - mostly useful and 34% - extremely useful.)

7.7 All respondents who had attended an annual Conference found it useful (17% found it quite useful, 29% mostly useful and 54% extremely useful.) *Please refer to [UMSGI Conference Report 2017](#) for details.*

7.8 92% of respondents said they found the online information via listserv useful. This was useful in many ways, for example, keeping up to date with events that are relevant to the school, to request information and experience from other governors and for sharing best practice

8. Summary

8.1 The UMSGI Skills and Experience Survey 2017 has revealed some very positive results which reflects the qualitative data received during the courses of the 5 years that the UMSGI network has been operating.

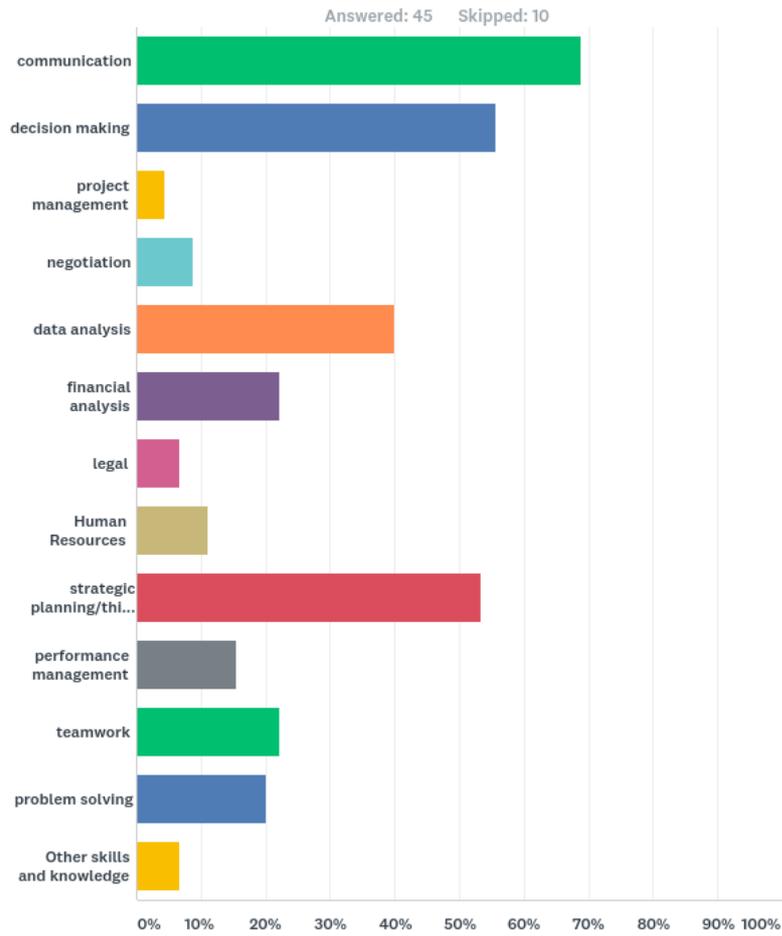
8.2 As the UMSGI network membership has now reached 200 members of staff it is satisfying to have strong evidence which suggests that staff are not only sharing their skills as we would have hoped but are also acquiring and developing new skills, experience and confidence and becoming more aware of their skills by undertaking this challenging and important role. In addition it is encouraging to see that those skills and experiences are having a tangible impact on their work at The University of Manchester.

8.3 As a co-ordinating team, we are also extremely satisfied that the survey reveals that the support offered by the University and the co-ordinating team is valued and effective. As well as appreciating the time off to perform the governor role, governors also highly rate the conference, network meetings and listserv notifications.

8.4 Further to this, the report demonstrates that schools and colleges are benefiting from an enhanced service from their school governor by means of additional activities offered by The University of Manchester. School governors working at The University are able to sign post schools to events and activities which schools may not otherwise have been made aware of or have been inclined to pursue.

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

Q19 Please select up to 3 skills that you have used the most.



Skill area

Examples of application

Performance and Data	Analysis of Ofsted data, reporting back on data analysis
Curriculum, Teaching and Admissions	I have been a sounding board for curriculum and performance review in the faculty of science, supporting the maths department
Finance	Understanding school budgets and chairing the finance committee, advice on contracts that my school is procuring, advising on funding applications
Organization & Management	Recruitment of Head Teacher in federation of two schools, reviewing policy and procedures to align them, appointment of key staff including HT and Deputy HT asked to take on a safeguarding role given my role in education
Strategic Vision	I have met with the head-teacher to go through the schools' mission statement and help map this onto an action plan, strategic planning input into the School Improvement Plan Committee
Behaviour, Disciplinary & Complaints	Participation in pupil disciplinary panels, dealing with challenging parent complaint, chairing exclusion panels
Buildings & Project Management	Providing knowledge and impartial direction on a £100k estates project that had staff welfare and safeguarding implications

Appendix 2

Table 1: How have you applied your skills?

Appendix 3

Table 1: Responses to the question ‘What skills have you developed’
(numbers in brackets show no. of respondents)

Answer Choices	Responses
communication	27.5% (11)
decision making	27.5% (11)
project management	5% (2)
negotiation	12.5% (5)
data analysis	30% (12)
financial analysis	35% (14)
strategic planning	22.5% (9)
performance management	28.07% (16)
confidence	37.5% (15)
knowledge of a particular area of work, please state what this is below	47.5% (19)

Appendix 4

Table 1: Examples of Application of Skills and Knowledge to current University role

'enhanced participation in and chairing of meeting'
"decision making and management"
"strengthened my supervisory experience"
"understanding university budgets better form studying school budget"
"understanding more fully the scale of university processes. Recognising the diversity of opinion"
"data analysis of surveys"

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Appendix 5

Table 1: What additional contribution do you feel you make to your school outside of the work on the GB and has the school directly benefited from your affiliation with The University of Manchester?

"I have promoted work experience and other schemes offered by the university to the school"
"I have initiated a discussion between the Head of the school and the WP Lead in my faculty"
"I now give up my day off to volunteer within the school in literacy based activities, school library and reading"
"I have put my school in touch with the University's volunteering team and Students Union who have helped develop a school allotment"
"The school has benefited greatly from student volunteers, READ with SEED and other SR initiatives"
"Furniture4reuse"
"Access to replacement equipment (PC donation)"

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