

Northern School of Contemporary Dance

Recruitment Pack: Governor

April 2026



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Introduction

Northern School of Contemporary Dance is seeking to appoint new Governors to its Board of Governors.

This pack contains background information regarding the Board of Governors and the role of a Governor.

Information regarding the School can be found at nscd.ac.uk

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact the Clerk to the Governors, who will be managing the appointment process, at ellen.wood@nscd.ac.uk





Welcome to Northern School of Contemporary Dance

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Governor for Northern School of Contemporary Dance. We are looking for new Governors, who wish to actively contribute, and use their skills to enhance the Board in its oversight of the School, and importantly, seek to provide professional insight across the School and its staff.

It is an exciting time to be joining the School as we embark on a period of significant transformational change. In 2025 the school will celebrate its 40th anniversary of inspiring people, creating opportunities, and working with other local organisations to contribute to the creative arts industry and develop world leading artistic talent. The School is an extraordinary place, and it is impossible not to feel a daily sense of pride at the collective dedication, knowledge and passion of its staff, and the sheer scale, depth, and quality of our services and support to those with whom it interacts. As we embark on our next phase, our priority is to ensure that we continue to evolve but also, transform our culture, support our people, but crucially, redouble our efforts as an institution to champion the positive impact and role the creative arts industry plays.

The Board includes a mix of independent Governors who have been appointed through open recruitment, alongside co-opted and staff representatives from key partners and employees of the School. You would sit alongside a friendly, diverse and effective team of Governors and staff and work to take the School forward. Don't worry if you have not held a Governor role before, previous Board experience is not required. If you believe that your background could be useful to us and you are interested, please get in touch. If appointed you would be given training and support to enable you to participate as a Governor. We are happy to answer any questions that you may have or discuss the role further with you.

We look forward to receiving an application from you.



Sharon Watson
CEO & Principal



Vinny Leach
Chair of the Board of Governors

The School

Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD) is an ambitious, specialist institution, internationally-recognised as a centre of excellence for dance education and with a growing reputation as a centre for dance development. Currently providing for approximately 250 students across under and postgraduate degrees.

Based in Chapeltown, Leeds, NSCD is the only institution of its kind to offer conservatoire-level professional dance training outside of London. It currently provides for approximately 250 students across undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

NSCD is committed to widening access and recruits the most talented students, regardless of personal circumstance; the School's mission is to provide inspirational learning, enabling aspiring artists of all backgrounds to shape the future of dance. As part of this commitment, NSCD strives to make increasingly visible the contribution of diverse voices to its EEDI agenda. The School's offer spans higher education provision, community outreach and prevocational training, a touring postgraduate company and professional apprenticeship placements. As a National Portfolio Organisation (2018-2027) of Arts Council England, NSCD also delivers artist development initiatives and a public performance programme of national and international work at its on-site Riley Theatre, for audiences to enjoy on their doorstep.

NSCD is a place of imagination and innovation with dance and education at its heart; a crucible of creativity where artists of all backgrounds meet and engage in creation.

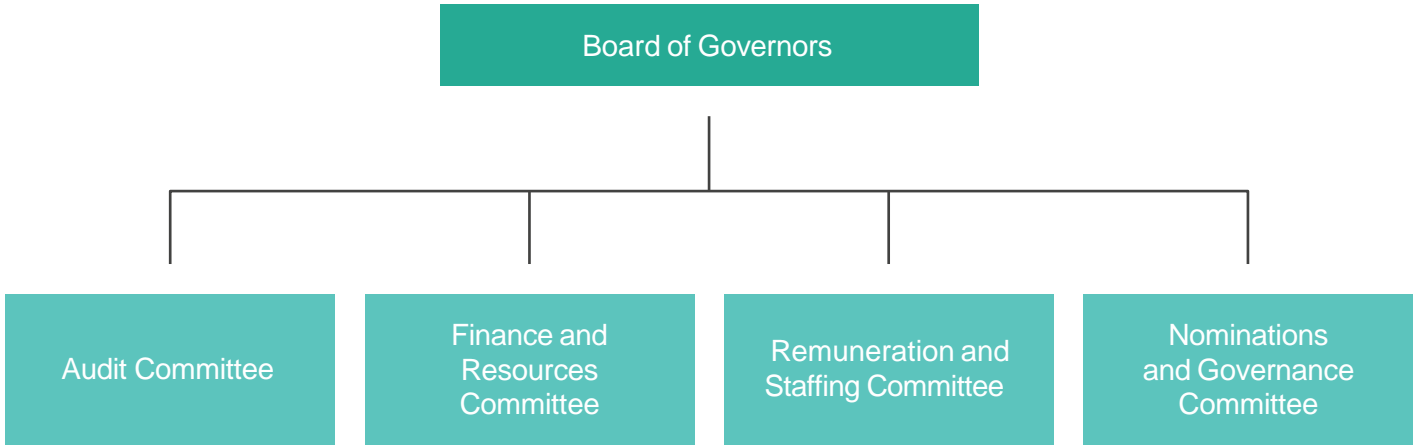
Context

NSCD is adapting and developing to meet the challenges of a rapidly shifting political and economic context. The Board of Governors have approved an ambitious strategic plan which includes:

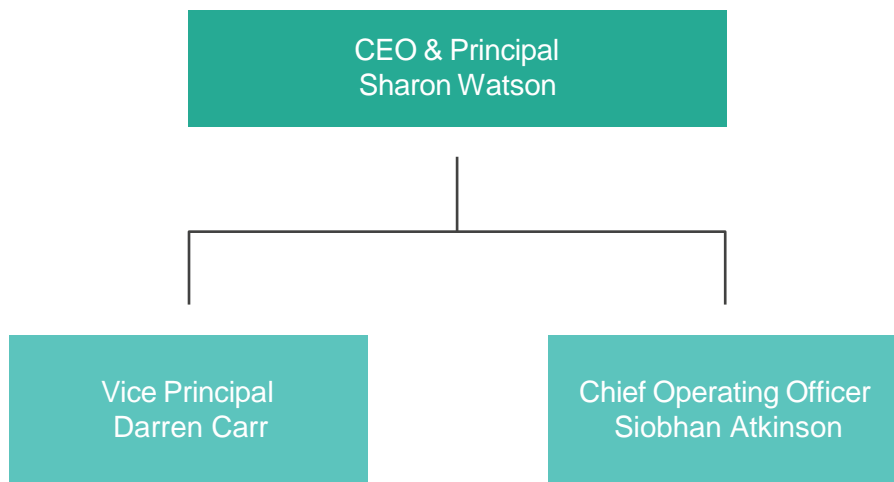
- Expansion of the School's course portfolio in addressing access, internationalisation and progression
- Furthering our research agenda and scholarly activity in dance
- Creating resilience and sustainability through artistic investment, supporting leadership development, partnership visibility and reputation building
- Diversifying our income streams and commercialising activities, where appropriate
- Ensuring that resources are developed and utilised to best support core aims

Key development areas for the School include exploring and developing potential areas of growth; exploring opportunities to expand/upgrade existing facilities; strengthening brand recognition and visibility; building partnerships and developing projects and events that promote excellence and innovation; ensuring financial stability, including identifying and accessing alternative sources of funding.

Governance structure



Senior management



Governance

Northern School of Contemporary Dance is a higher education corporation by virtue of the Education Reform Act 1988.

As a higher education corporation the School is listed as an exempt charity under schedule 2 to the Charities Act 1993. This means that for its charitable activities the School benefits from the status of a charity, but is not registered with the Charity Commission.

The Board of Governors of the School is its trustee board and the Governors are the School's trustees.

The Board of Governors consists of up to a maximum of 24 members and is currently made up of the Principal, two elected members of NSCD staff, two NSCD student members and one co-opted member. Governors are appointed for a term of four years and can serve up to a maximum of two terms.

The Chair of the Board is appointed for a period of two years.

The Board meets at least once per term, and normally four times per year. Meetings are usually on Tuesday evenings. The dates of these will normally be fixed in the spring for the following academic year (August to July).

The Board currently has the following committees – Audit, Finance and Resources, Nominations and Governance, and Remuneration and Staffing.

Applicants should particularly note the requirement to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest they may have in carrying out the role of a Governor. Conflicts may relate to any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with organisations relevant to the business of NSCD. If you are aware of any potential conflicts prior to your appointment please raise these during the application process.





© Elly Welford

What we are looking for

Northern School of Contemporary Dance is seeking to appoint a number of dedicated, self-motivated and talented Governors. We are particularly looking for Governors with skills and experience in the fields of:

- Finance/accountancy
- Dance and Creative Performance
- Education and/or Safeguarding

The role of Governor at NSCD requires a time commitment of around 40-50 hours per year, mainly in the early evenings. The Board meets approximately five times per year. The role is unremunerated although reasonable expenses will be paid. Meetings take place both in-person and online.

If you would like an informal conversation about the role, or would like to know more, please contact Ellen Wood, Clerk to the Governors: ellen.wood@nscd.ac.uk

The individual

We are looking for people who:

- Are sympathetic and excited to contribute to realising and evolving the School's vision and strategy
- Value the transformational power of an arts education, ideally with a special interest in dance
- Are willing to commit time and energy – not just to preparing for and attending meetings – but to inspiring, challenging and supporting the Leadership Team, attending some performances and acting as an ambassador for the School in contributing to our future development and sustainability
- Are innovative and creative thinkers able to stimulate and contribute to well-rounded and carefully considered strategic decision-making
- Have the highest aspirations for the School and strive for excellence at all times
- Are dedicated, committed and self-motivated
- Have a commitment to promoting equity, equality, diversity and inclusion; supporting NSCD to embrace and engender cultural diversity in all that it does

Particular skills

We are particularly looking for individuals with the following skills, experience and expertise:

- Local and National connection to the arts and in particular dance
- Senior-level experience in finance, accounting, or a related area
- Experience of the development of facilities and estates at a strategic level
- Connectivity to and influence with the Leeds business community
- Experience of working at executive leadership level within Higher Education

The School believes that diversity is critical to its future development and would therefore particularly welcome applications from individuals from the Global Majority and from those with a disability.

The posts are unremunerated but reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed, in line with the school's travel policy.

Recruitment and selection process

Application should be made by CV along with a covering letter addressing the requirements set out in the advertisement, job description and person specification.

Applications should be submitted by email to ellen.wood@nscd.ac.uk

- Deadline for applications Thursday 30 April
- Shortlisting will take place from Friday 1 May
- Interviews to be held in May and June

The Board of Governors will nominate a panel to undertake the shortlisting and interviewing process. We will deal with your application as quickly as possible.

Please note that due to the volume of applications that are received it may not be possible to provide feedback to those applicants not shortlisted for interview.

Further information

Information about the School and its governance can be found on the website at nscd.ac.uk. This includes the most recent financial statements; governance documentation (such as the Instrument and Articles and Governors Code of Conduct); the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Governors and the constitution and membership of the Board.



What can we offer you?



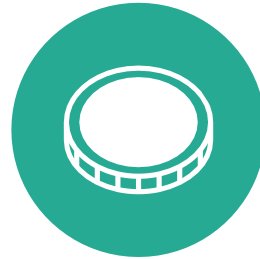
Opportunity to lead a respected academic institution recognised locally, regionally and nationally with key creative arts stakeholders.



Opportunity to join a charity with top rated governance and operations as recognised by independent assessments.



Comprehensive induction, training and ongoing learning opportunities.



Reimbursement for reasonable expenses during NSCD business.



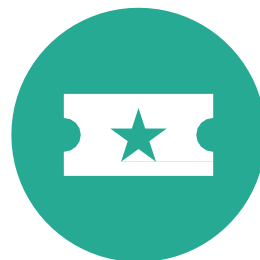
Opportunity to support School activities like working groups, sub committees and attending events.



Visits to NSCD programmes and outreach projects to experience our impact first-hand.



Commitment to equity, equality, diversity and inclusion ensuring everyone can fully use their skills, without discrimination or harassment.



Complimentary tickets to select shows at NSCD's Riley Theatre.

Role description

1. Duties of a Governor

Collectively Governors contribute their professional and general skills and knowledge to the School in a non-executive role to:

- Determine the educational character and mission of the School
- Consider, contribute to and approve the School's strategic direction and plan
- Support the Principal to enable the School's students to shape the future of the art form and contribute to the development of dance locally, nationally and internationally
- Support the development of appropriate partnerships and ensure the School is responsive to the needs of the communities it serves, including local and national strategic priorities
- Oversee the quality and effectiveness of the School's activities
- Set measurable annual targets and monitor the School's performance
- Oversee the effective and efficient use of resources and safeguard the School's assets
- Ensure the financial health of the School and approve the annual plan for income and expenditure
- Oversee the appointment, grading, suspension, dismissal and determination of pay and conditions of service of senior post-holders
- Set the framework for the pay and conditions of service of all other staff
- Provide support, constructive challenge and direction to the Principal and senior staff of the School

2. Individual Governors are required to

- Operate high standards of governance and probity and operate in accordance with relevant statutes including charity law, the Governors Code of Conduct and Rules and By-laws
- Serve on appropriate committees, or other groups established as required by the Board of Governors
- Contribute to the self-assessment review of governance
- Attend appropriate governor induction and training days as required

3. General

- Governors are required to be as flexible as possible in the conduct of their responsibilities and duties ensuring that the balance of "oversight" of the School and its business is seen as a positive contribution that does not interfere with the day to day operation and management of the School
- Governors are required to attend regularly the meetings of the Board of Governors and any committees to which they are appointed

4. Time commitment

- Approximately 40-50 hours per annum

Person specification

General	Essential	Desirable
A commitment to education and the needs and success of learners	✓	
A commitment to high standards of governance and probity and the ability to operate in accordance with the Governors Code of Conduct, the Principles of Public Life and Rules and By-laws of the Board of Governors	✓	
Experience		
Experience of working at board level (or equivalent) in either the public or private sector		✓
Skills		
Ability to think and contribute strategically	✓	
Financial awareness	✓	
A commitment to equity, equality, diversity & inclusion	✓	
Proven interpersonal, communication and people skills including critical listening and the ability to ask probing questions	✓	
Ability to work positively with others and to contribute as a member of a team	✓	
Ability to work within a framework of collective decision-making in the best interests of the School and the capacity to make objective decisions	✓	
Assimilation skills to help absorb and make use of a wide range of information and data	✓	
Analytical and problem solving skills	✓	
Ability to respect confidentiality	✓	
The ability to learn and develop as a governor through training and self-evaluation	✓	
Specific Skills		
Specific skills to strengthen the skill base of the Board of Governors as outlined for each vacancy	✓	
Knowledge of dance/creative arts industry		✓



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Northern School of
Contemporary Dance

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