Strategic Advisory Group (Governance) Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

1.1 The Strategic Advisory Groups (SAGs) have been established as part of Advance HE’s consultative approach to actively engage members in shaping the activity and future direction of the organisation to ensure that Advance HE meets the needs of members. This will involve:

- Reviewing and shaping Advance HE’s priorities within each relevant area
- Identifying current and emerging strategic issues, challenges and opportunities to inform the future work of Advance HE
- Considering the implications of thematic areas of work for each relevant area
- Advising Advance HE on implementing an integrated approach maximising the synergies between the areas of equality, leadership, governance and education.

2. Duties

2.1 The purpose of Governance SAG is to contribute to good governance of the sector by:

- Providing strategic advice and insight regarding the current provision and future development of support for governance effectiveness by Advance HE, to meet the needs of members and stakeholders
- Identifying current and emerging strategic governance issues, challenges and opportunities including for collaborative working, across sectors and in a global context
- Providing scrutiny to Advance HE’s priority plans for governance, offering critical challenge and advice as required
- Ensuring connectivity to other areas of HE policy and practice such as leadership development and equality, diversity and inclusion.

2.2 To consider any other governance related matters as may be referred to it by Advance HE’s Board and sub-committees.

3. Membership

3.1 The SAG will be made up of 16 members drawn from Advance HE member institutions and nominated organisations, to provide a range of skills and perspectives on governance in practice in higher education as well as Advance HE’s support. Members will be appointed for a two or three year term of office.
3.2 Ideally, membership will comprise:

Members:

- 1 x active or recent student union CEO (given charity governance experience, interface with institutions and understanding of HE)
- 1 x College-based HE member representative – governor or staff
- 1 x Chair of a specialist provider member
- 1 x Secretary from an international member
- 2-3 x governors (including Chairs or Chairs of Committees) from member institutions with corporate, health or charity governance expertise/experience (ideally one being a Chair or member of Audit committee)
- 1 x academic governance expert – i.e. Provost/Registrar
- 2 x active or recent student governors
- 1 x active governance researcher

Nominees:

- 2 x CUC member Chairs, one of which is a member of the Executive
- 3 x AHUA (one to be from Executive)
- 1 x Committee of the Chairs of Scottish Higher Education Institutions (CSC) Chair

3.3 The Chair will be selected from within the group membership. The SAG will require specific skills and expertise as outlined in the attached person specification.

3.4 The Advance HE Director Business Development and Delivery, the Director for Membership and Accreditation and the Assistant Director, Governance will attend the SAG and other members of Advance HE staff may be invited to attend as appropriate.

4. Meetings

4.1 GDAF shall meet normally twice each academic year in Spring and Autumn and secretariat support will be provided by Advance HE.
Strategic Advisory Group (Governance)

Person Specification

Experience and Expertise

- Successful track record of leading and/or managing in complex organisations (including student leadership)
- High level of understanding of HE in a variety of contexts
- Appreciation of the HE policy landscape in particular relation to the importance of governance
- Experience of Board and committee work
- Commitment to the values and principles of Advance HE
- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to understand complex strategic issues, analyse and resolve difficult problems
- Sound independent judgement, common sense and diplomacy

Diversity of Perspective

In selecting members, consideration will be given to having diversity of perspective through ensuring the following:

- A mixture of knowledge of types of HEIs (e.g. Small and specialist, research intensive etc.)
- Representation from the 4 UK nations
- Representation from different mission groups and sectors
- Representation from non-UK countries covering International members
- A mixture of understanding of staff and student issues
- Diversity of protected characteristics
- A range of understanding governance from student, secretary, governor and Chair roles