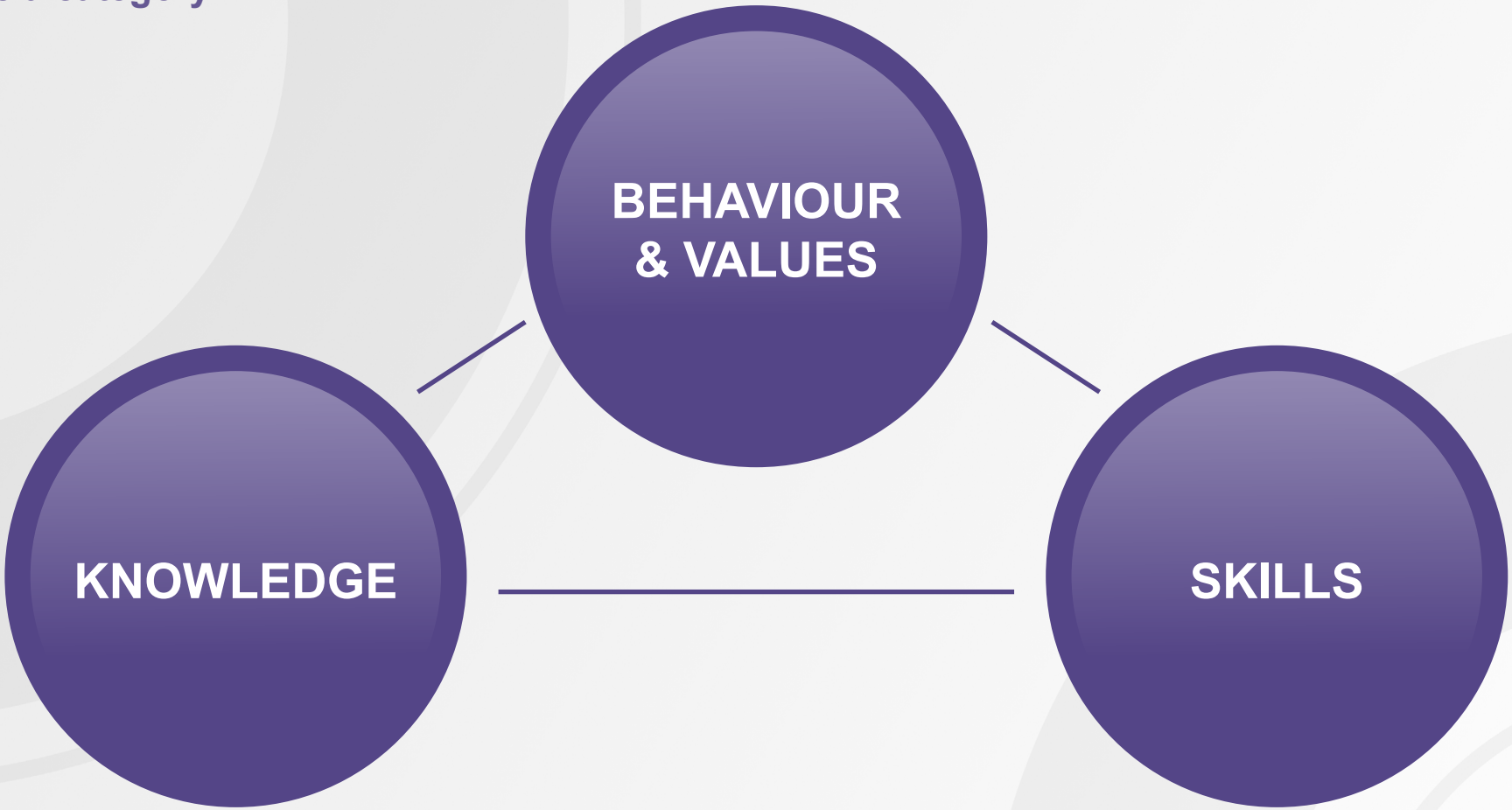
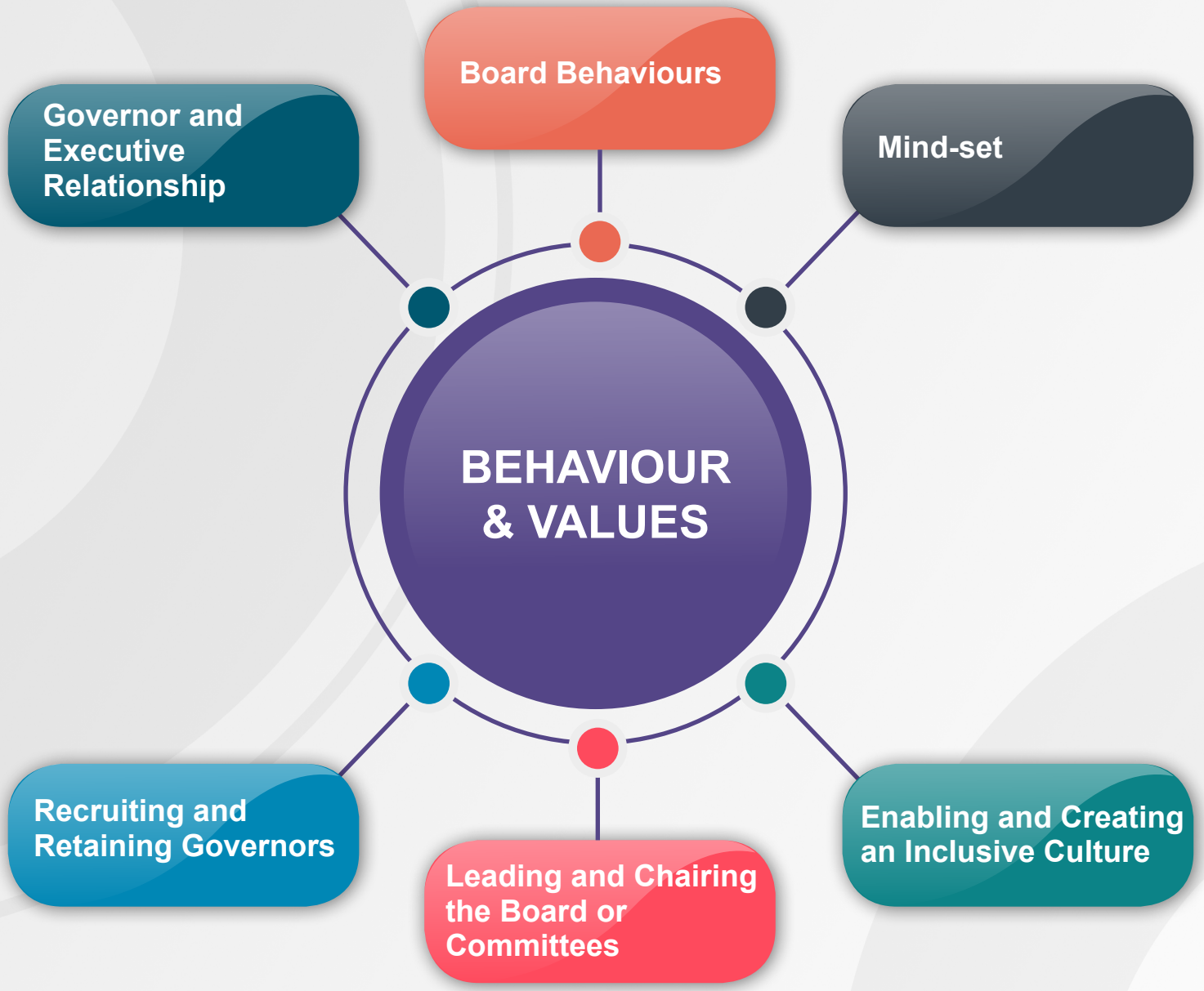
AdvanceHE

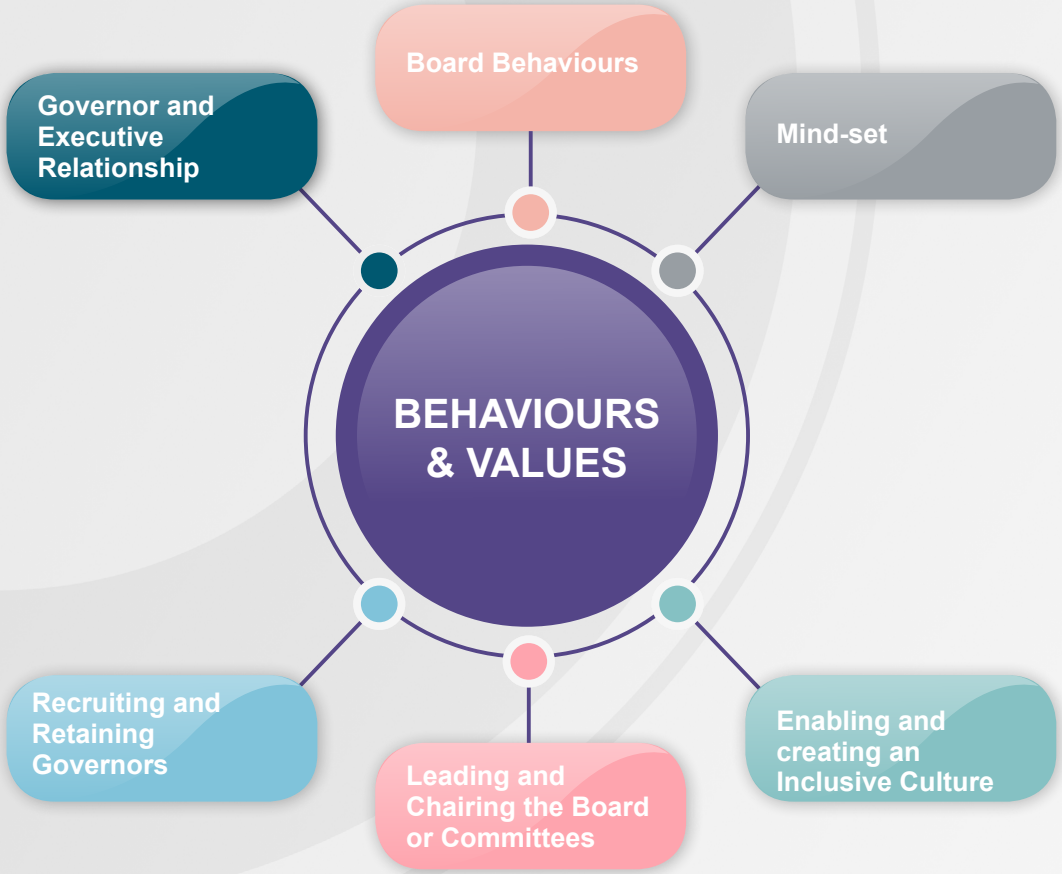
Governor Competencies Map

The below map is designed to be used as a **practical tool to support board members** with mapping their own individual progression and development needs as well as the board as a whole. There are a series of sub-categories behind our primary categories of **"Behaviours and Values, Knowledge and Skills".** You will be able to click on each category and access further **"Training and Development Opportunities"** and **"Resources and Support"** from Advance HE and across the wider higher education, charity and corporate governance sectors. This resource will be updated by Advance HE on an ongoing basis as we publish new resources to help boards and board members.

Choose a category:




Board Behaviours
Governor and Executive Relationship
Mind-set
BEHAVIOUR & VALUES
Recruiting and Retaining Governors
Leading and Chairing the Board or Committees
Enabling and Creating an Inclusive Culture



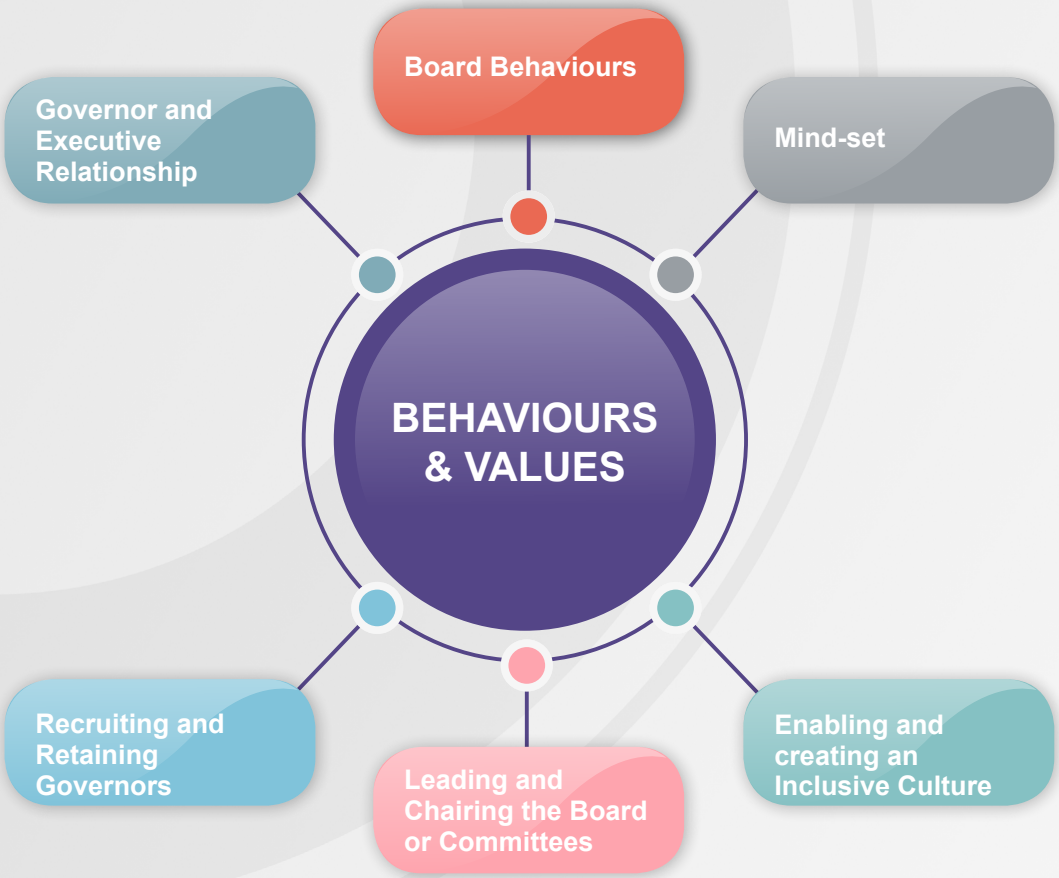
Governor and Executive Relationship

Governors and Executive are required to work together and understand each other's roles and responsibilities. In higher education governance the approach to this can differ from that of corporate governance where there is a clearer separation of duties and responsibilities as a trustee.

Resources and Support

Effective Governance – Board and Executive Relationships Video

Governor Dialogues: A baptism of fire



Board Behaviours

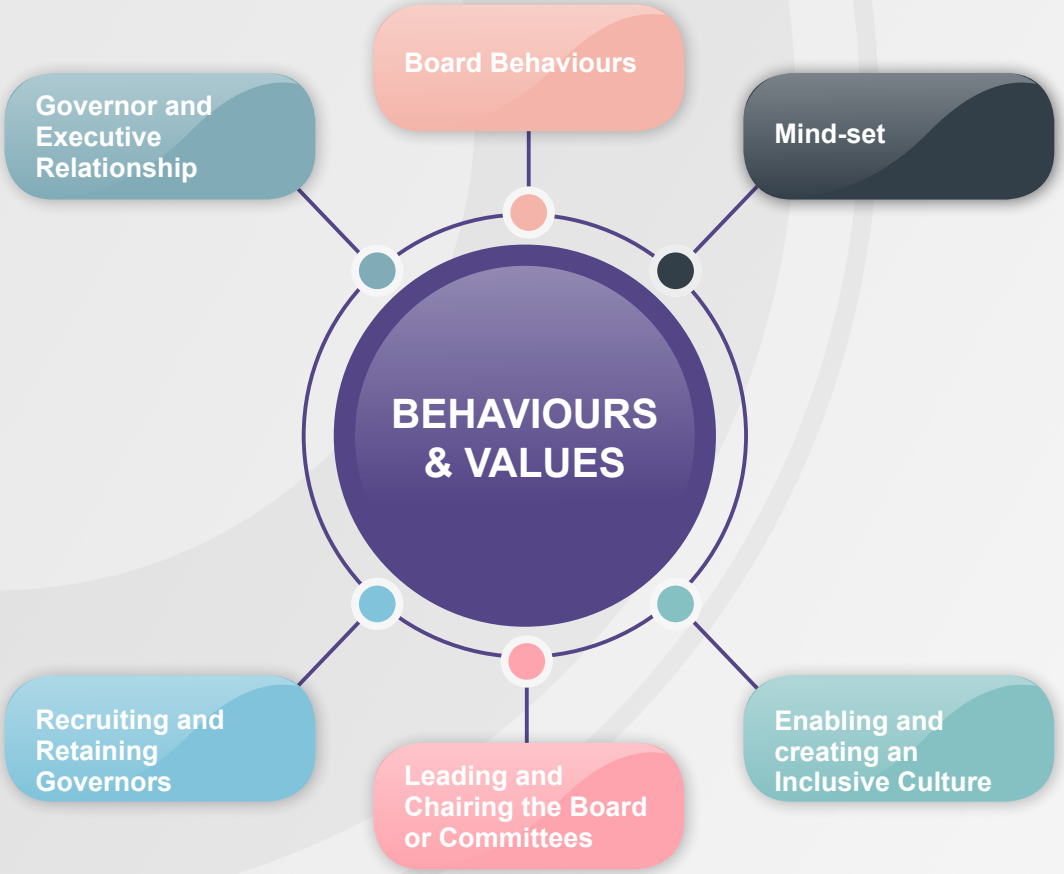
The effectiveness of a board depends on strong foundations; exhibiting the right behaviours; high-quality information, sound processes and skilled governance professionals. As such board members should consider their individual and collective behaviours and how this creates a governance culture while also adhering to the standards expected of those in public life.

Resources and Support

Governor Dialogues - Board Culture and Governance *Video (2018)*

The Seven Principles of Public Life (Gov.UK, 1995)

How Executives and Non Executives can Contribute to the Board *Video (2022)*



Mind-set

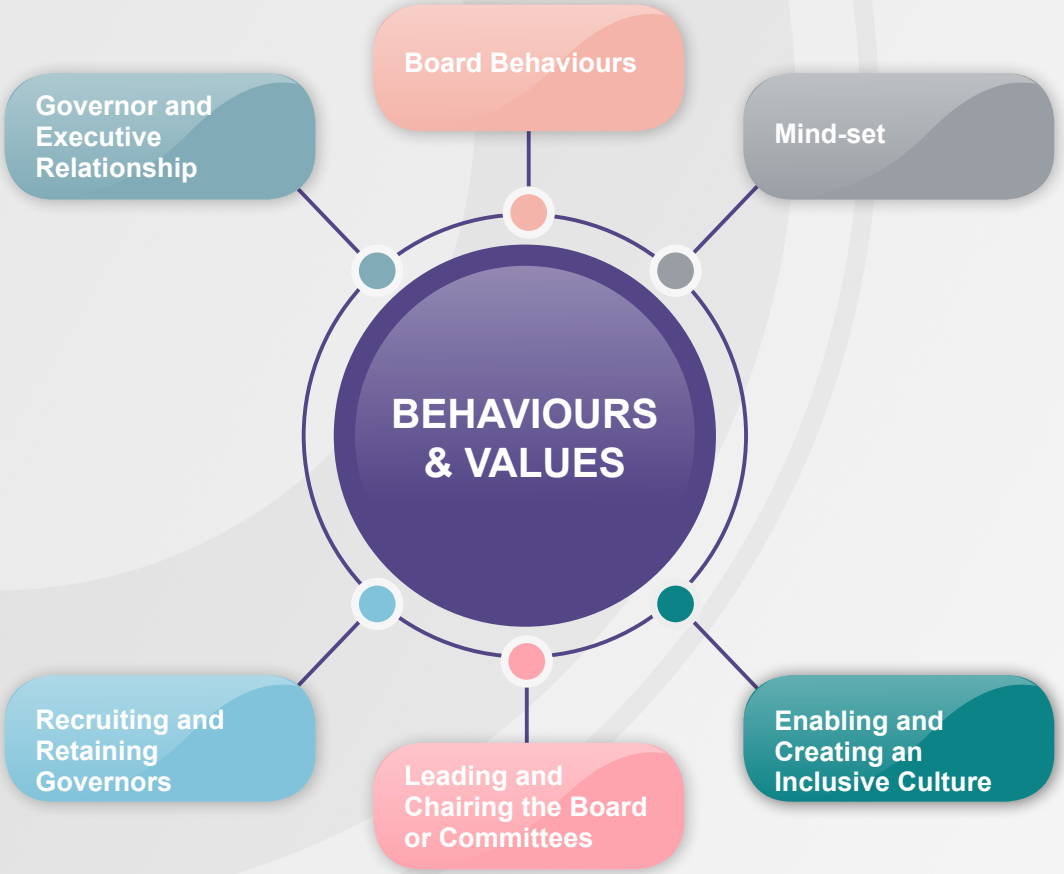
The mindest and focus of a baord is important in supporting the University, College or Institution to achieve its goals. Understanding the organisational sustainability is crucial in doing this alongisde the vision, mission and values of the instituion being able to withstand turbulence while adhering to achieving sustainable development goals where appropriate.

Resources and Support

Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance Principles

Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015)

Illustrative Practice Note 4: Institutional Sustainability (Committee University Chairs, 2017)



Enabling and Creating an Inclusive Culture

Creating an inclusive culture, both at board level and across the University, College or Institution is a collective responsibility that includes individual governors and the wider board. Creating an inclusive culture enables boards to ensure governance and strategy is informed by the talent and richness of a diverse modern society which must also include that of staff and students' lived experiences.

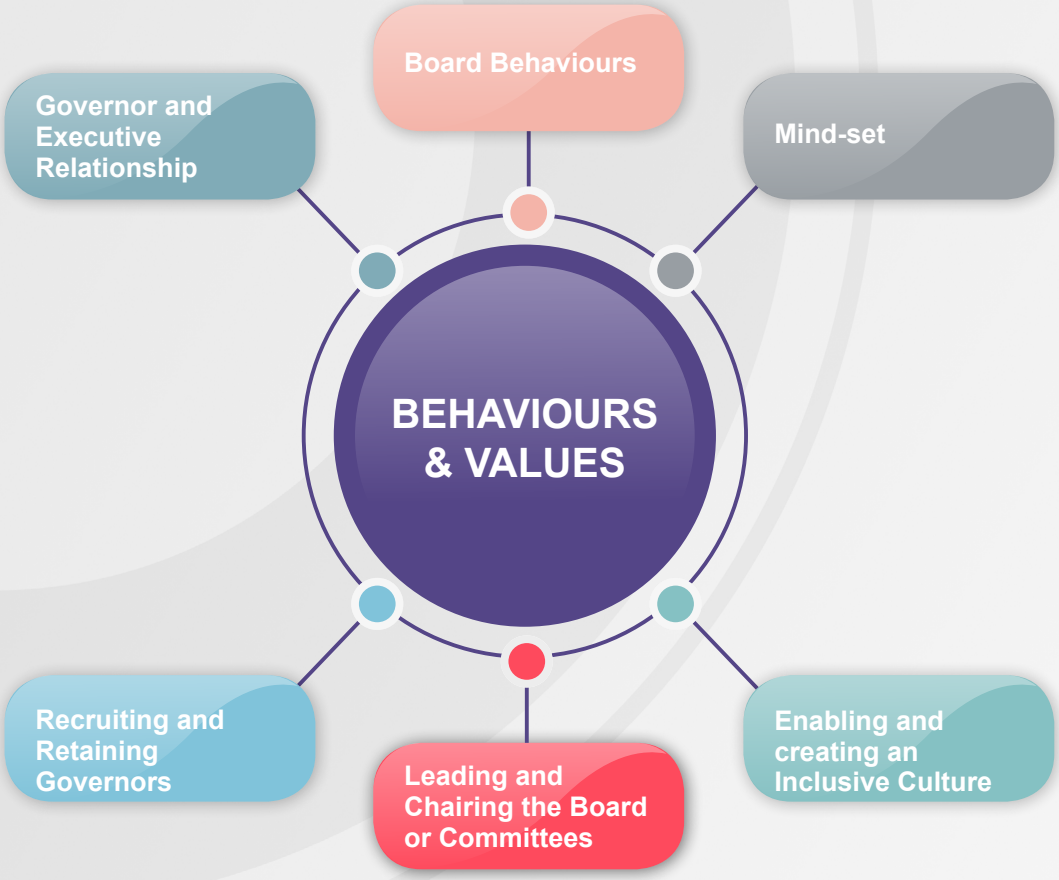
Resources and Support

The Higher Education Board Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit (2021)

Governor Dialogues: Board Diversity - Video

Governor Dialogues: Ethnic and cultural diversity: a personal reflection (2014)

Reflecting on the 'Diversity of governors in higher education' report (2020)



Leading and Chairing the Board or Committees

Chairing the board or a comittee is an incredibly complex role that requires a developed skill and mindset. This includes creating a strong culture of inclusion and an understanding of process to ensure all governors can contribute, that sufficent time is given for discussions and that the board or comittee are focusing on the right priorities for the institution.

Training and Development

GDP: Leading the Board for new and aspiring chairs

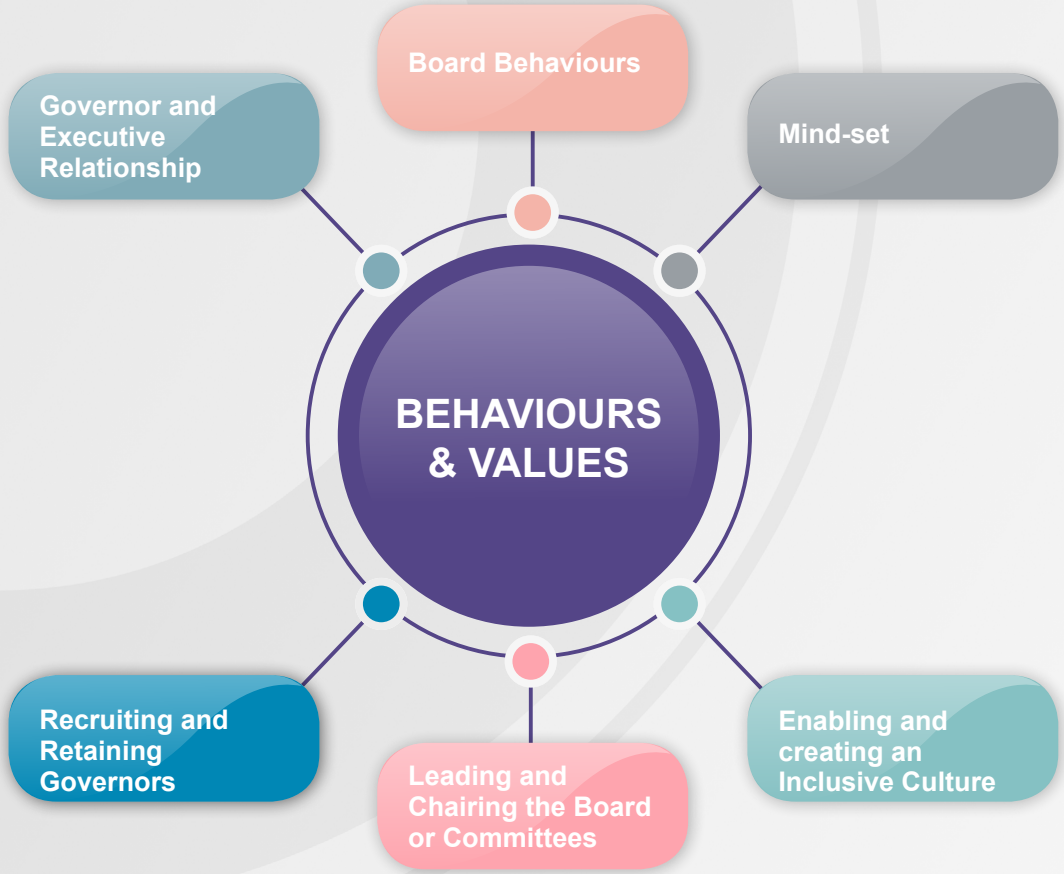
Resources and Support

Governor Dialogues: Leading the Board Through Challenge and Change (2015)

New guidance on university governance: to strengthen and to protect (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2020)

Managing the Chair/Vice Chancellor Relationship (2017)

Top tips to help new Chairs navigate their role on the board
Video – Interview with John Rushforth, Executive Secretary of the Committee University Chairs



Recruiting and Retaining Governors

As board members it is important to ensure that there is a suitable and fit for purpose process in place for recruiting and retaining governors. Most institutions have issues to address such as widening participation of students from different groups; ensuring fair degree outcomes; addressing pay gaps; supporting pipelines of diverse teaching and research talent; or connecting with and serving their wider communities. Boards need to be equipped with the range of perspectives and skills to navigate and challenge on these issues.

Training and Development

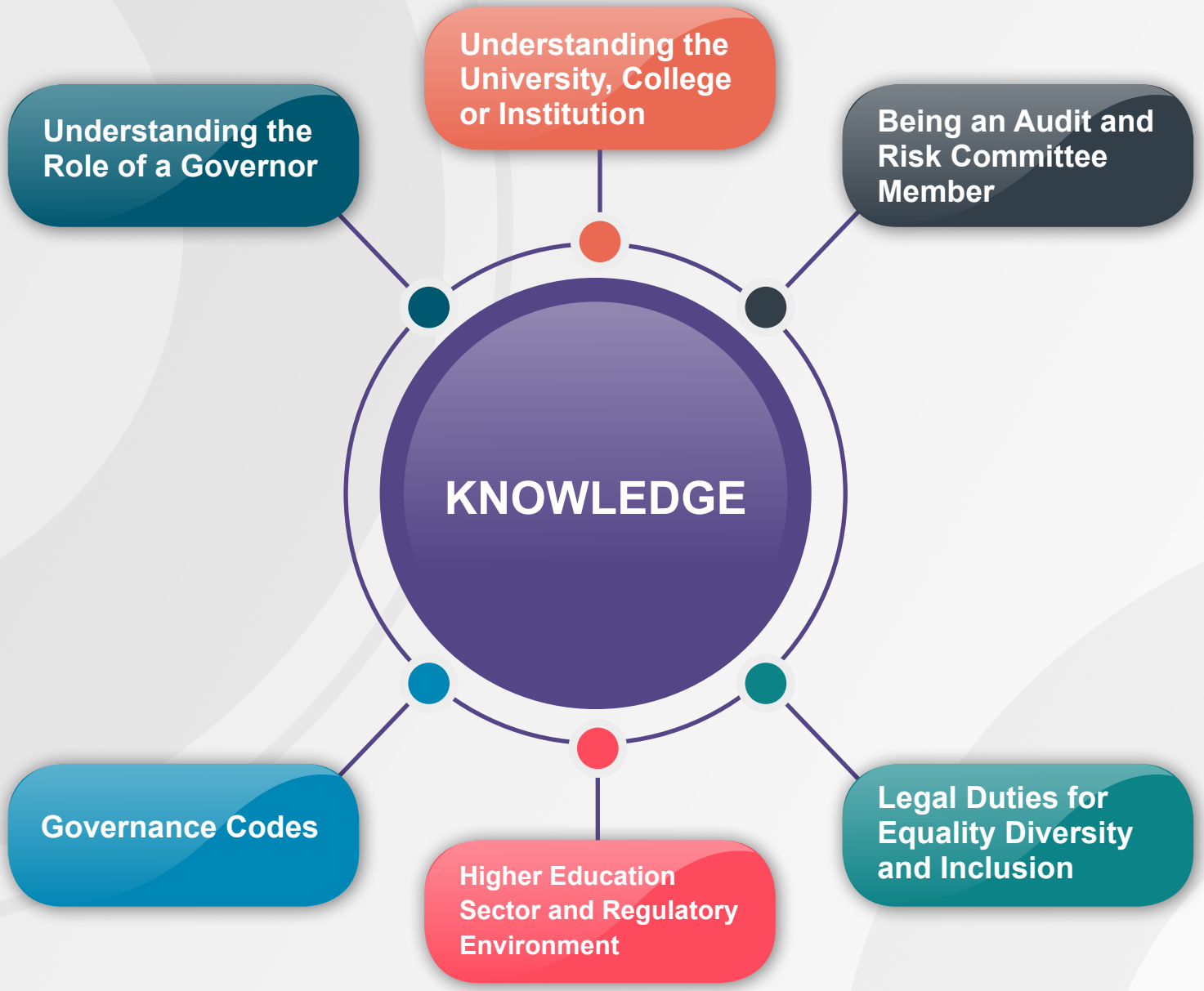
GDP: Nominations and Governance Committees; board diversity, succession and effectiveness

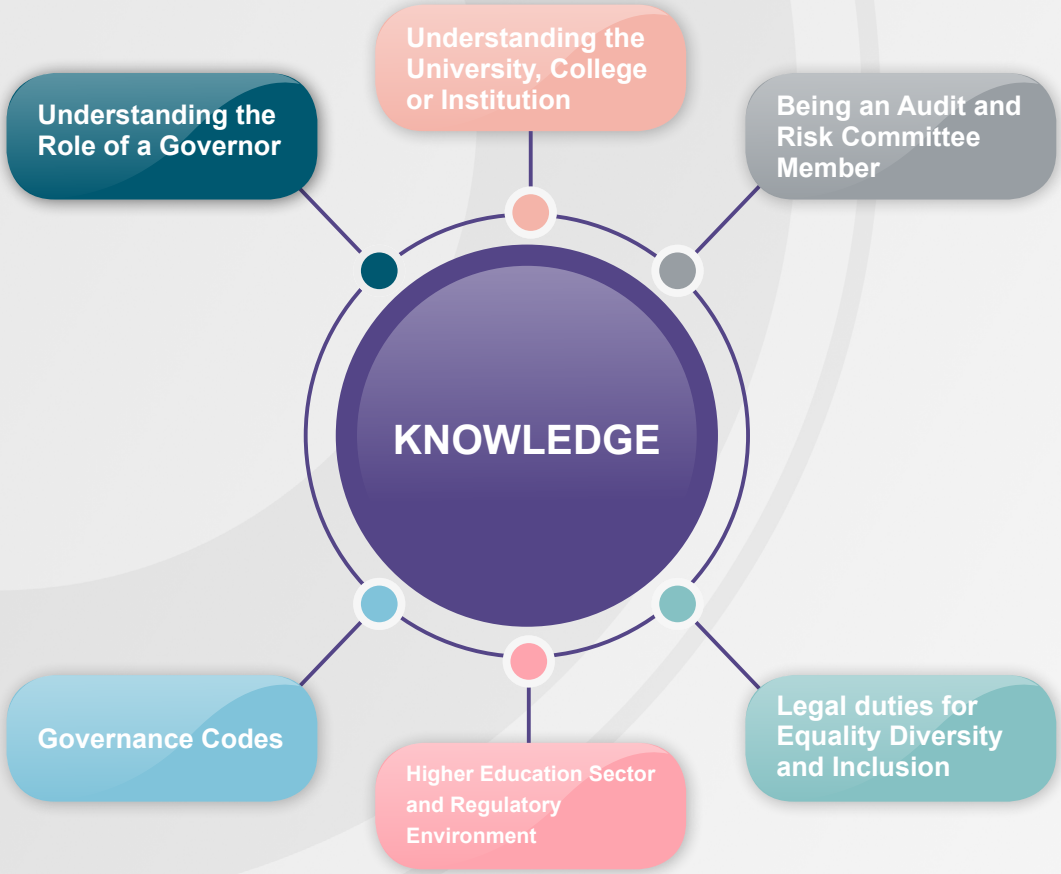
Success on the Board

Resources and Support

Board Vacancies Portal (Committee of University Chairs and Advance HE)

Board Apprentice Scheme (Board Apprentice)


KNOWLEDGE
Understanding the University, College or Institution
Being an Audit and Risk Committee Member
Legal Duties for Equality Diversity and Inclusion
Higher Education Sector and Regulatory Environment
Governance Codes
Understanding the Role of a Governor



Understanding the Role of a Governor

The role of being a governor at a higher education institution is a complex one requiring an understanding of many factors including policy landscape, regulation, and student experience alongside those of more traditional corporate governance.

Training and Development

GDP - Induction to Higher Education Governance for New Governors

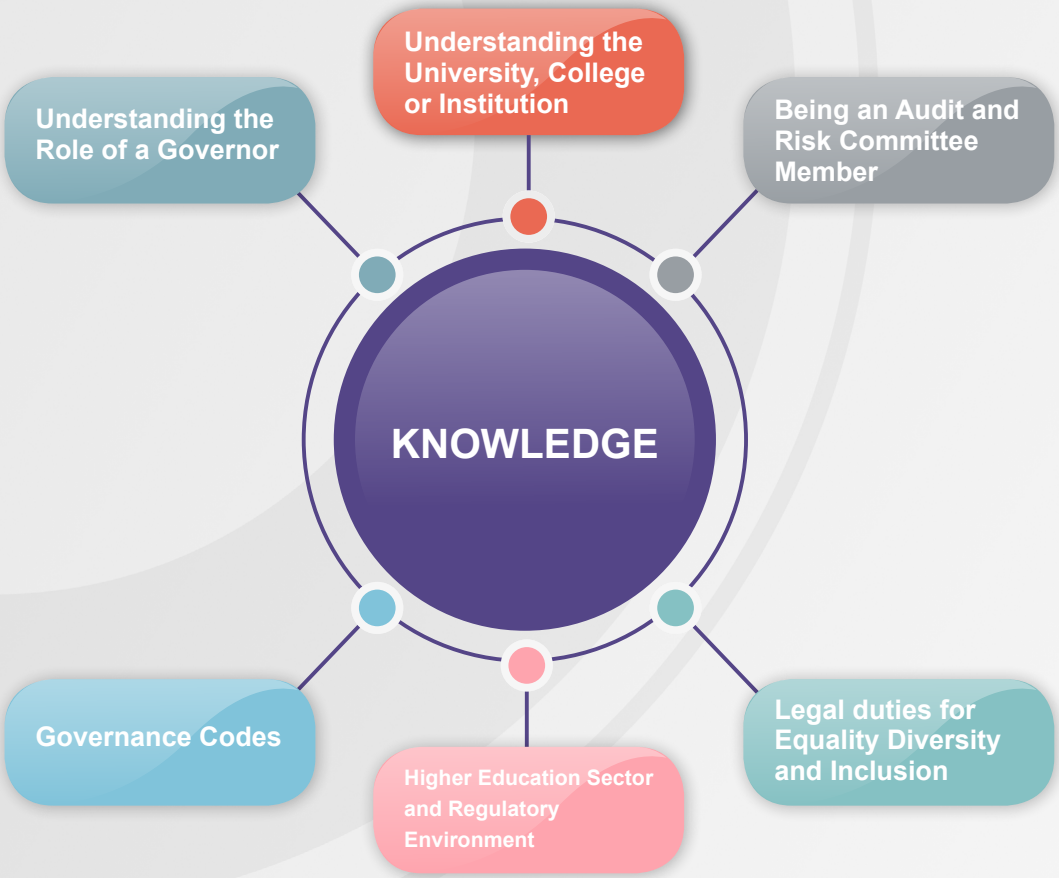
GDP: Roles and Responsibilities of a Staff Governor

GDP : Student Governor Training

Resources and Support

A guide to governor responsibilities (2022)

The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do (Charity Commission for England and Wales, 2012)



Understanding the University, College or Institution

As a governor, it is vital to have an understanding of the University, College or Institution for which you are responsible, including the performance metrics across the higher education sector; current trends in student experience, and how your institution performs alongside key priorities agreed with the regulator or sector body. The below resources offer support where you can find your institution or guidance on what you should be asking your Secretary to provide.

Resources and Support

National Student Survey Scores – Institutional and Benchmark Comparisons

Student Academic Experience Survey

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

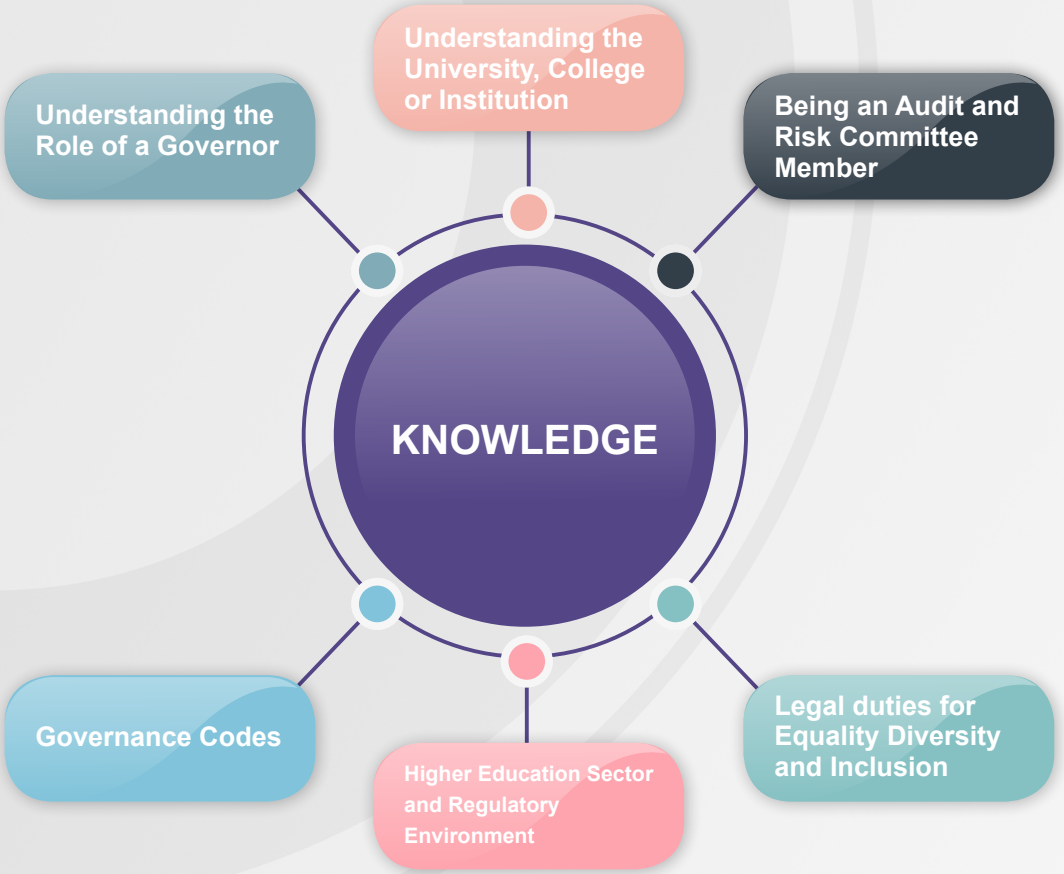
Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

Access and Participation Plans - England (Office for Students) – you can search for your own institution.

Fee and Access Plans – Wales – You will need to find this on your institution website or ask your Secretary to provide

Discover Uni (Office for Students, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Scottish Funding Council, & Department for the Economy) – provides information to applicants on institutional and course-based level

Institutional Strategy Documents – Separate for each institution, ask your Secretary to provide



Being an Audit and Risk Committee Member

The financial memorandum between the funding body and the institution requires the governing body to establish an audit committee. The work of audit committees is to ensure the governing body can be confident about the effective operation of the organisation's processes and systems, the management of risk, and the correctness and integrity of the information provided to governors and external bodies. Even if you do not sit on your Audit Committee it is vital to understand the role and function in seeking assurance of the work of the committee.

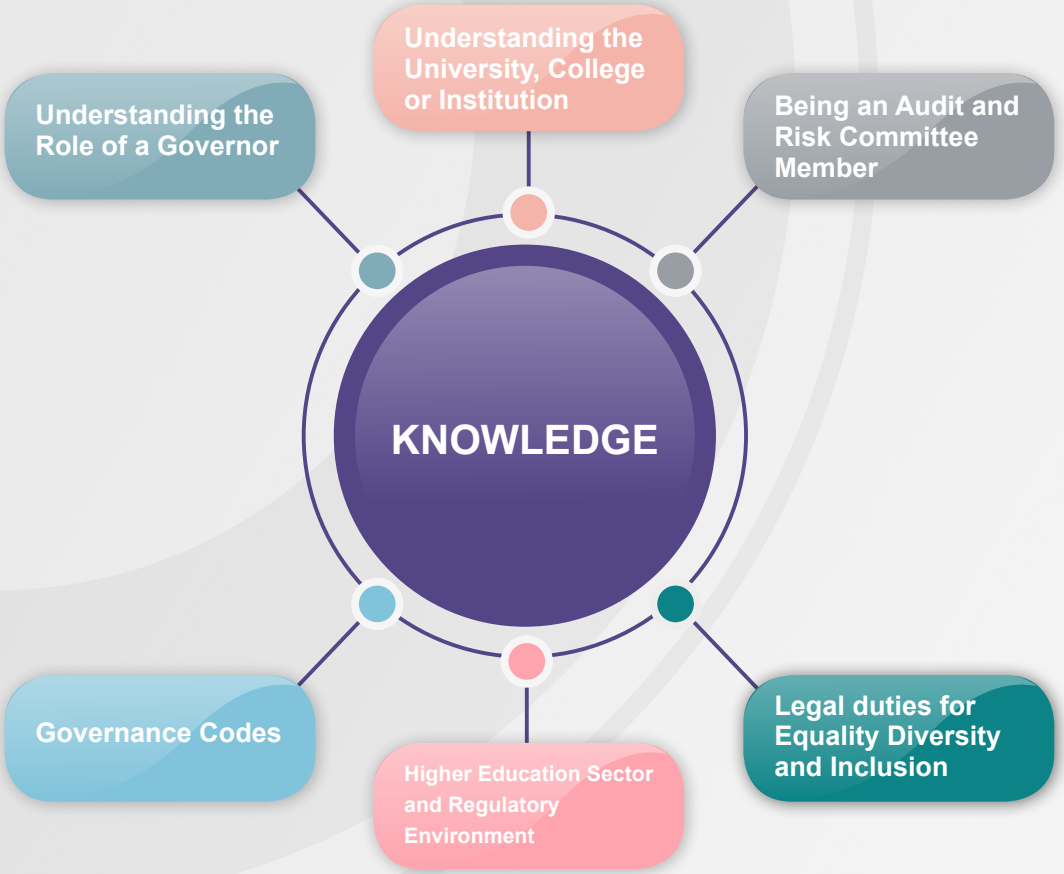
Training and Development

GDP: Audit and Risk Committees

Resources and Support

Governance Briefing Note: The work of an audit committee

Higher Education Audit Committees Code of Practice (Committee of University Chairs, 2020)



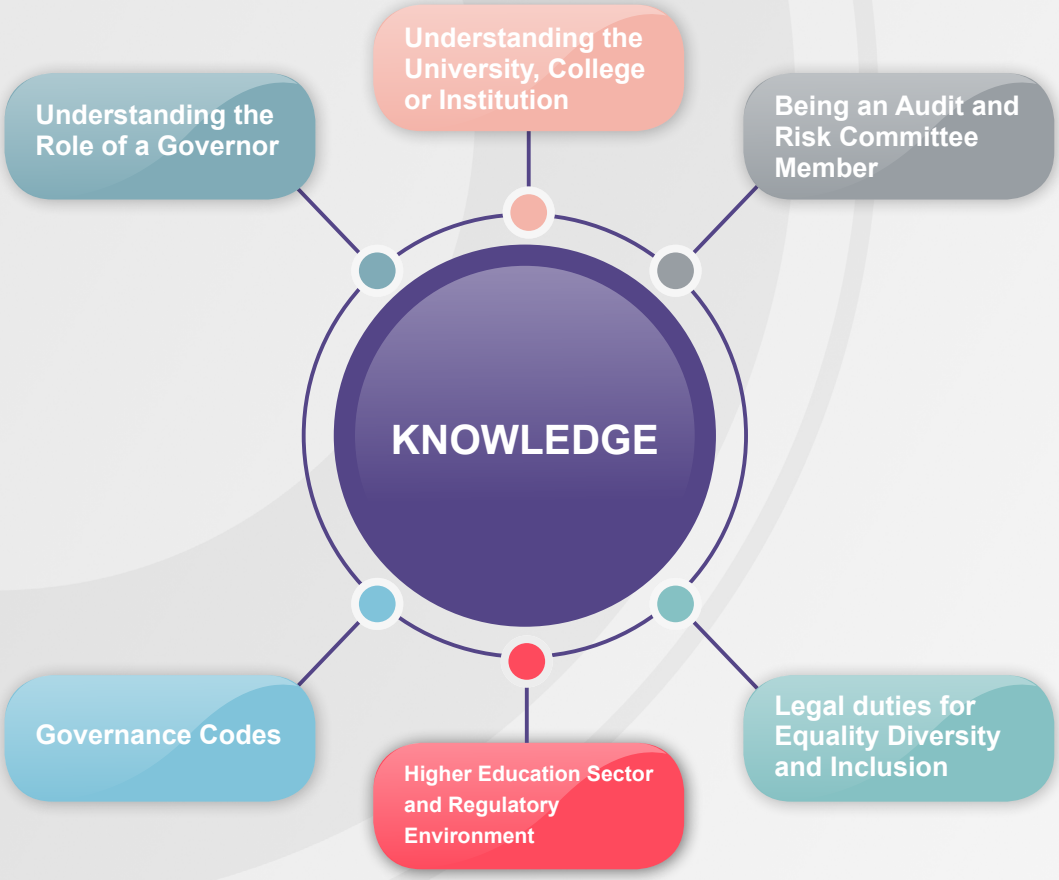
Legal duties for Equality Diversity and Inclusion

The board of governors or trustees has a responsibility to ensure that the organisation is compliant with up-to-date equalities legislation. This covers organisational policies and practices across a number of areas including staffing policies and wider regulations.

Resources and Support

Equality Act 2010 (Gov.UK)

CUC Code and Charity Code (Equalities – ((Both codes address EDI and role of the governing body))



Higher Education Sector and Regulatory Environment

It is vital to understand the policy or regulatory context in which your institution operates and for which you have overall responsibility in seeking assurances as a governor. This differs based on the nation in which you operate with the higher education sector being regulated and a need to ensure compliance with general and ongoing conditions of registration.

Training and Development

GDP: Symposium – Governance Scotland

GDP: Wales

GDP: Induction to HE Governance for New Governors

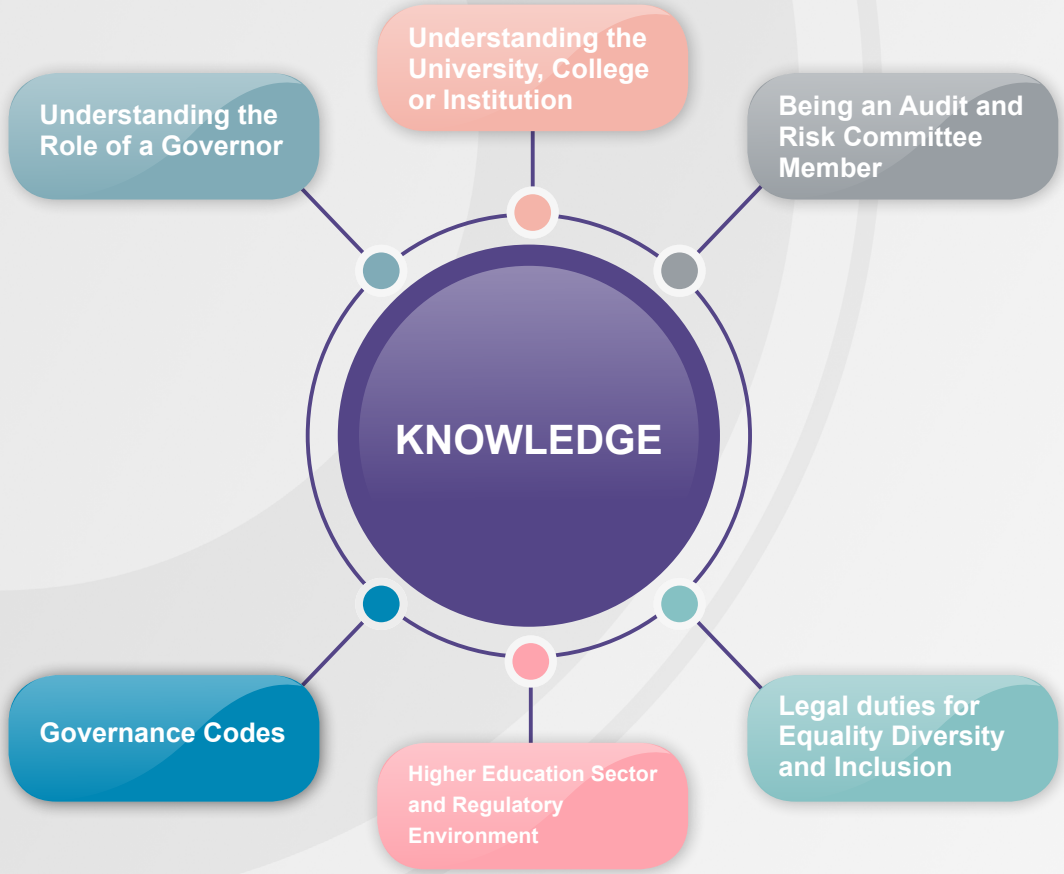
New Governors of Scottish HEIs

Resources and Support

Conditions of Registration (Office Students, 2018)

Post 18 Review of Education and funding: independent panel report *Augur Review (2019)*

A Review of Governance of the Universities in Wales *Camm Review* (Universities Wales, 2019)



Governance Codes

There are a variety of governance codes across the higher education sector designed to support best practices in governance. Your instituion should have signed up and followed one of these. It is important to understand the core requirements of the code and to ensure that you are assessing yourselves against this. Governors should also consider wider corporate and charity governance codes and where best practice can be adopted.

Resources and Support

The Higher Education Code of Governance (Committee of University Chairs, 2020)

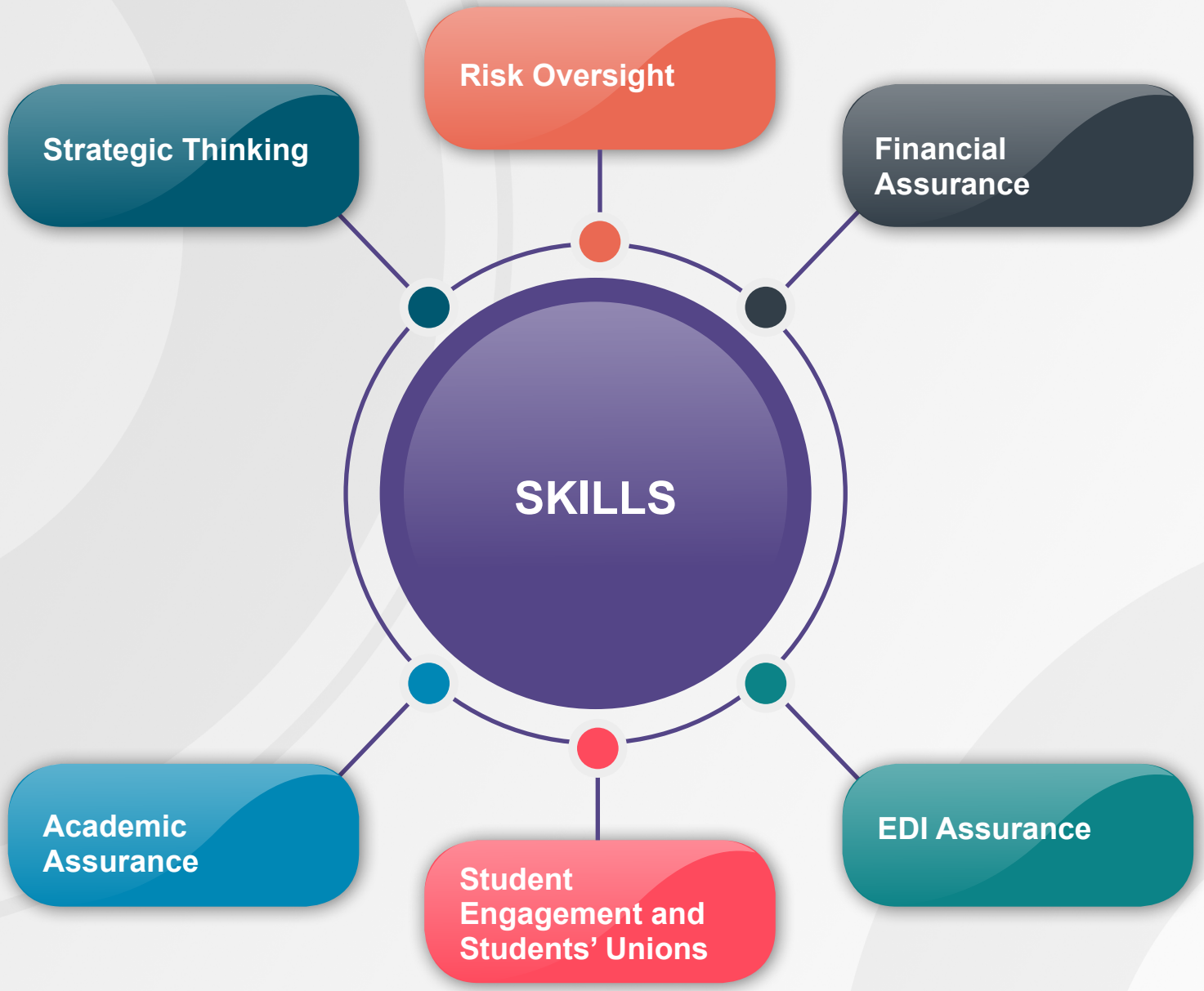
Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (Committee of Scottish Chairs, 2017)

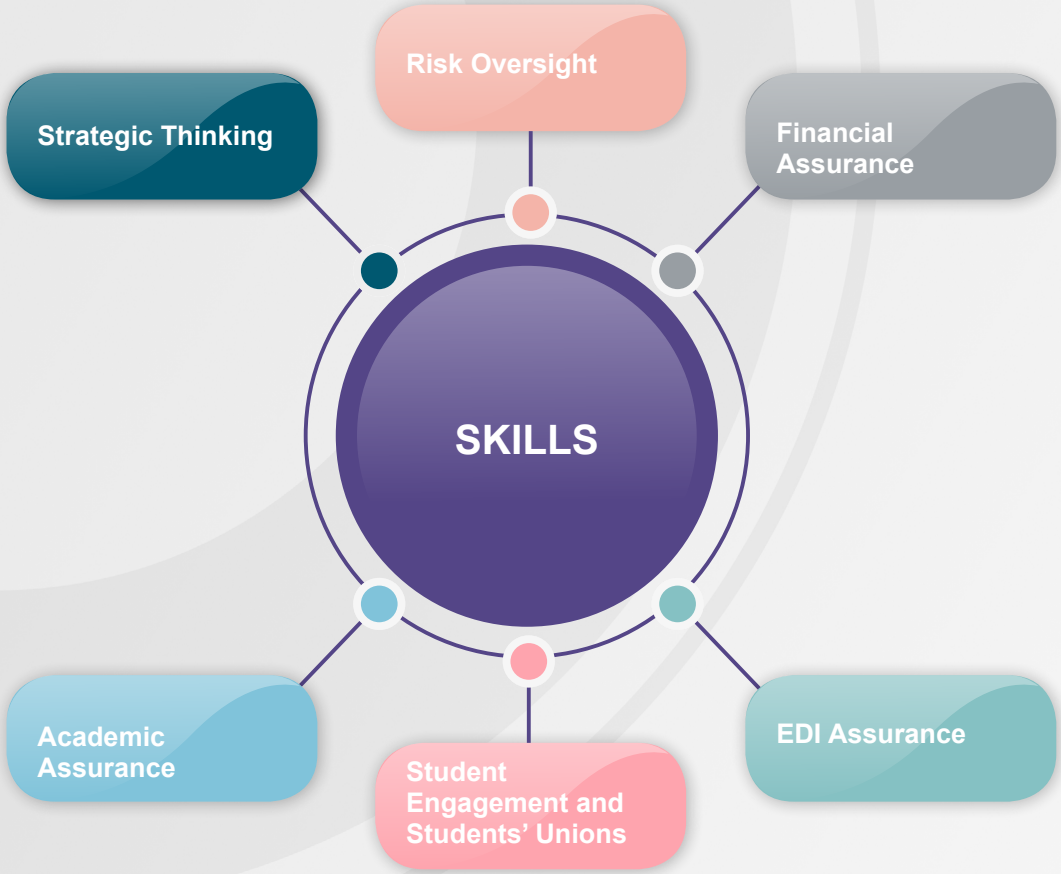
Independent HE Governance Code (Independent HE, 2021)

Code of Good Governance (Association of Colleges, 2019)

Charity Governance Code

UK Corporate Governance Code (Financial Reporting Council, 2018)


Risk Oversight
Strategic Thinking
Financial Assurance
SKILLS
Academic Assurance
Student Engagement and Students' Unions
EDI Assurance



Strategic Thinking

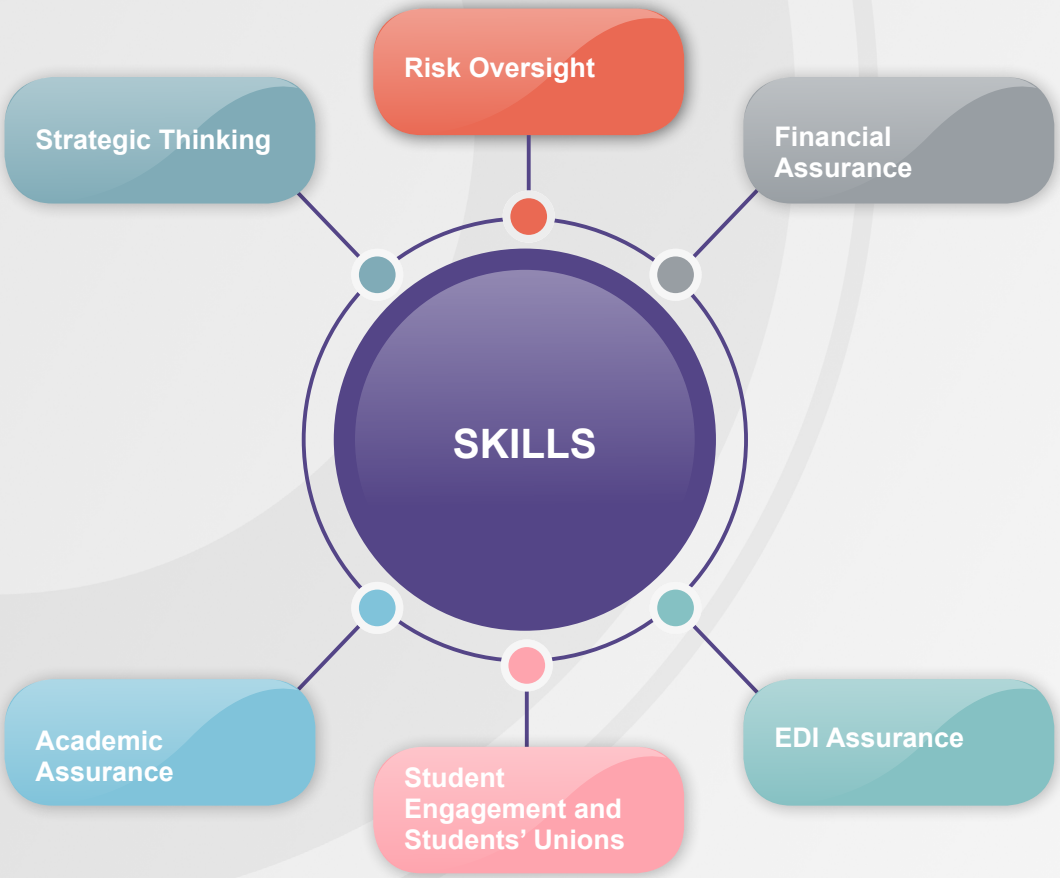
The board is required to make strategic decisions and ensure the direction of the organisation is supporting achieving its strategic plan and aims. This includes ensuring that key areas for the instition are included as part of strategic thinking as governors and leaders plan for an ever-developing higher education environment.

Training and Development

GDP: Understanding and assuring academic outcomes and the student experience

Resources and Support

The Board's role in wellbeing as a strategic imperative (2022)



Risk Oversight

The governing body exercises oversight of the provider's risk management and seeks assurances from the executive that key risks have been identified and are being effectively managed. Governors need to be confident in understanding their own skills to seek these assurances and ensure risk is managed effectively across complex organisations.

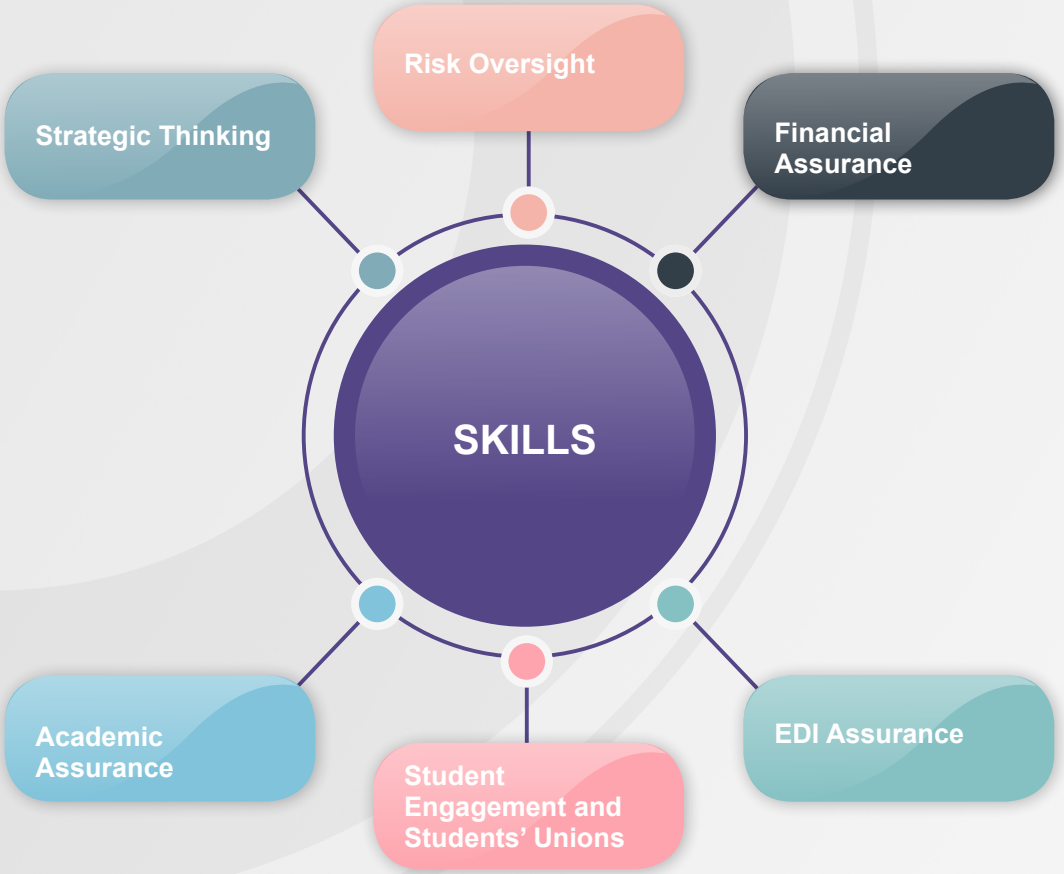
Training and Development

GDP: Audit and Risk Committees

Resources and Support

Integrated Risk Reporting Framework (Value Reporting Foundation)

CIMA Strategic Scorecard (CGMA)



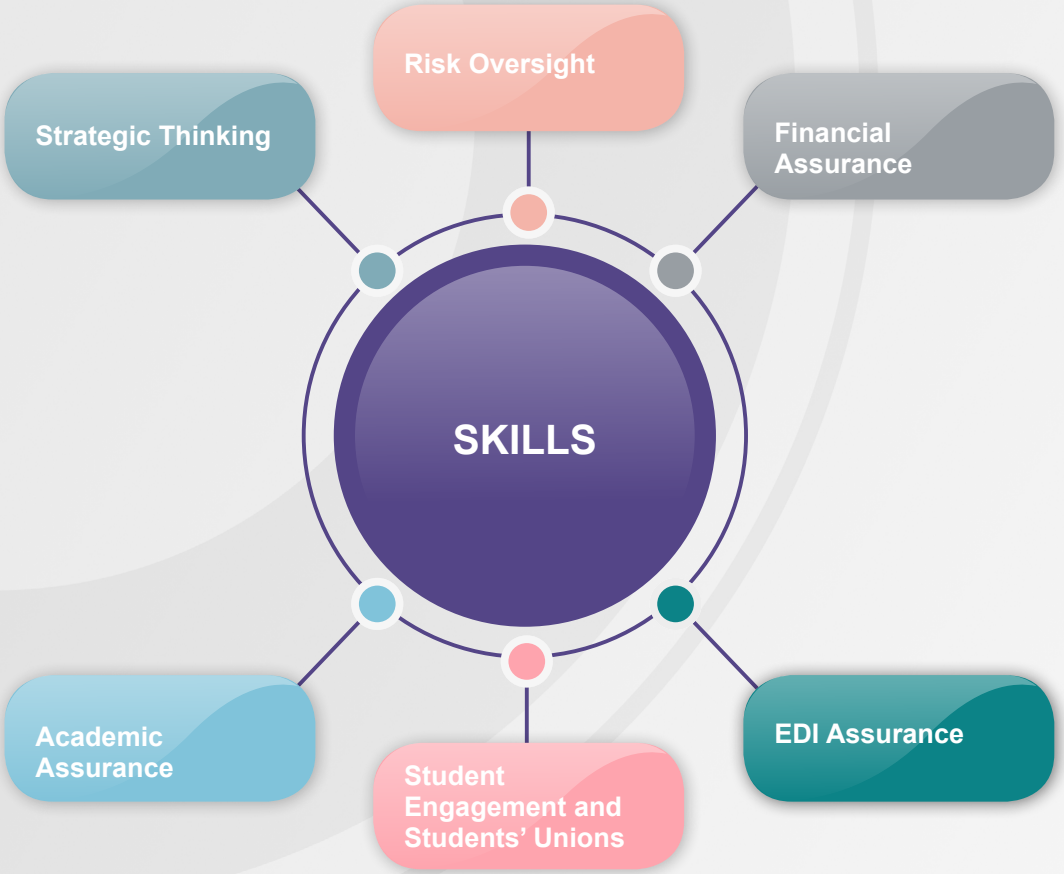
Financial Assurance

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are independent entities and governing bodies need to oversee the institution's financial health. They need to ensure the institution is both solvent and sustainable. Board members need to ensure there are adequate processes in place for managing finances and that they can seek assurance about the organisation's financial performance.

Resources and Support

The Higher Education Senior Staff Remuneration Code (Committee of University Chairs, 2021)

Understanding Finance Guides (British Universities Finance Directors group)



EDI Assurance

Institutions need to drive diversity and inclusion in all that they do. Governance has a critical role to play in this, both by modelling diversity and inclusion in the make-up and function of the board, but also through enabling and challenging their institutions to make progress with and for their staff and students. Board members should consider how they seek assurance for this key priority.

Resources and Support

Delivering on EDI: The Critical Governance Role (2020)

Overseeing equality, diversity and inclusion plus questions and resources (2018)

Governance and equality, diversity and inclusion case studies

Student Engagement and Students' Unions

Boards should consider how they engage with students beyond the role of the student governor, how they understand the breadth of students' experiences, and if there are any demographics they do not here from. It may be suitable to consider where working with the students' union can support this. in addition, board members have a responsibility to ensure good governance arrangments in the students' union as part of the requirements of the Education Act 1994.

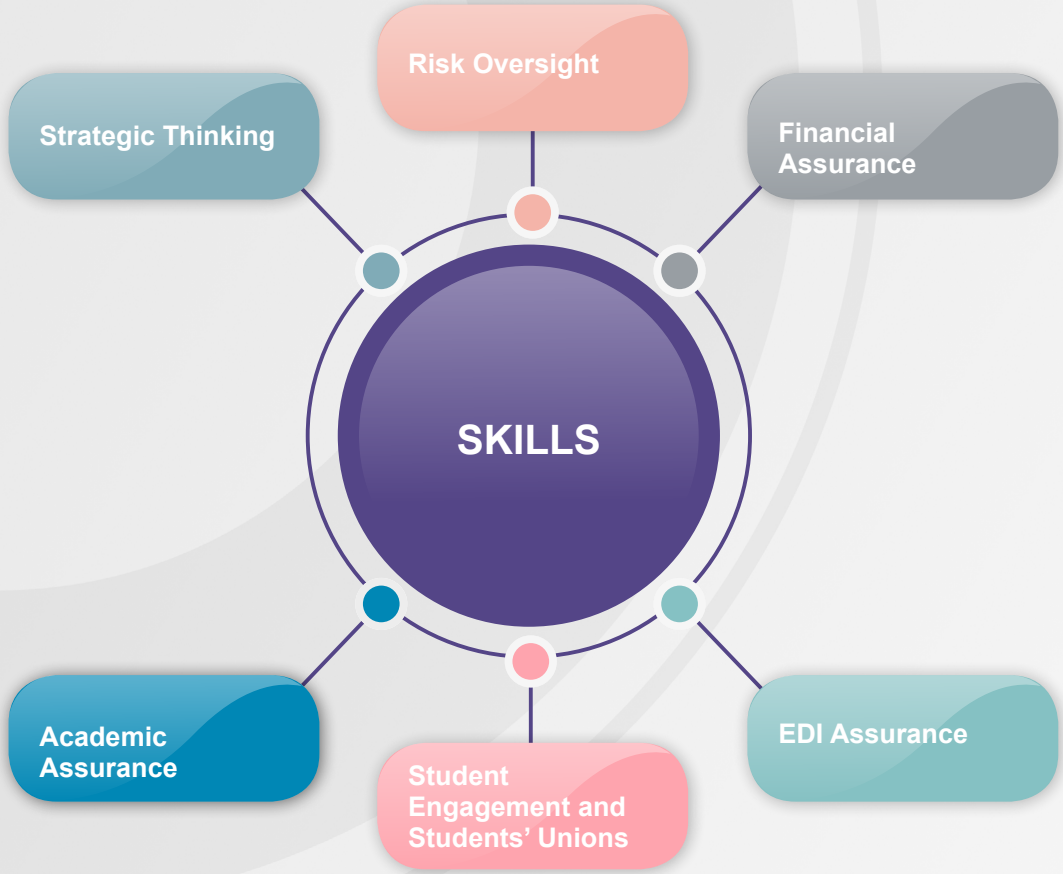
Resources and Support

Education Act 1994 – Part II Students' Unions (Gov.UK)

Governor Dialogues: The Student Experience

A Student Futures Manifesto (UPP Foundation, 2022)

Learning form Students' Union Governance Podcast



Academic Assurance

Board members are required to seek academic assurance for effective academic governance arrangments. As such this requires all members of the board to have a basic understanding of the academic role of the institution as well as ensuring effective engagement with academic matters, this is especially true for governors in English HEIs where there is a regulatory requirement on academic quality and standards.

Training and Development

GDP: Understanding and assuring academic outcomes and the student experience

Resources and Support

Academic Governance Framework (2017)

Student Voices – Covid-19 Pandemic Experiences Video (2020)

Academic Governance fit for the future? (2021)

Quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students – B Conditions (Office for Students, 2018)

UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018)

AdvanceHE