

# THE GOVERNANCE LITE FRAMEWORK

**SPORT AND RECREATION  
ORGANISATIONS**

—  
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# 02

## PEOPLE

# 2.1

## RECRUITING FOR YOUR BOARD

Governance is a team game. How people at the table contribute their skills and perspectives determines the success of your group.

Board recruitment is board led by one or more of your team. It is not delegated to staff.

No matter the size of your organisation, this is an opportunity to put your organisation's best foot forward. Be courteous, respectful and professional – first impressions count.

A thorough and public recruitment process will help to get the best people available.

### Before advertising

- Check your organisation's rules, trust deed or constitution. This will determine how someone can become a member of your board (e.g. elected by the members or appointed by an appointments panel or both).
- Use a skills matrix. Check the balance of skills against your strategy and the challenges you face.
- What gaps do you have and what new skills do you need to recruit in for the future? Consider diversity of gender, culture and ways of thinking.
- Review and update any other documents you want potential new group members to view when considering your organisation, including position descriptions, commitment letter, code of conduct, etc.

### Advertising and selection

- Prepare a plan for the recruitment process that includes the timeframes for advertising, short listing and interviewing and identifies who will be involved at each stage.
- Prepare an advertisement for the role(s) that sells the benefits of joining your organisation. Get someone good with words to look it over.
- Place your advertisement where it will best reach your intended audience. Options include using existing contacts and networks within and outside of your sport, and advertising in local publications and on your national and regional sport's websites.
- Organisations with staff and a board operating primarily in the governance space can use Appoint Better Boards at no cost.
- Develop simple shortlisting criteria, interview questions and reference-checking questions based on the position description for the role(s) and the skills matrix. Use the same simple, consistent rating system (e.g. 1-5) for rating the candidates at all stages of the process.
- Shortlist, then interview, candidates (face-to-face interviews are best practice) and complete reference checks.

### Governance check – be professional

*Remember, be professional and courteous with all candidates, replying promptly and explaining, if asked, why they have not been successful. Some may not be right this time, but you would like them to remain interested. Others you want to ensure feel respectfully treated. A phone call to unsuccessful candidates on the short list is good practice.*

## Appointment

- Ring the successful candidate and offer the role. Once the offer is accepted, communicate with the candidates who were not successful.
- Follow up the verbal offer with a letter of appointment and other key documents (e.g. the board code of conduct).
- Prepare and action an induction programme for the new appointee that includes meetings with your key day-to-day staff and other members of your board (and a session on policies and processes).
- Maybe assign a board buddy until they have got up to speed.
- Communicate the new appointment to your stakeholders and staff before the new appointee starts.

## Key points (in order of priority)

- You should strive to be an expert team, not a team of experts.
- It's important to get the right people around your table.
- Your board's recruitment process should be outlined in your trust deed or constitution.

## More information

Sport NZ has plenty of resources and learning opportunities for directors. Each resource sheet includes links to others in the Governance Lite set and to further readings and resources.

### Related Governance Lite sections

[2.3 Simple skills matrix](#)

[2.4 Induction programme](#)

### Governance Lite Toolbox

[2.1 NZ Pony Clubs Association - Advertisement for board members](#)

[2.1 NZ Recreation Association - Appointed board member advertisement](#)

[2.1 Overview of the recruitment process](#)

[2.1 NZ Pony Clubs Association - Letter of appointment example](#)

### Sport NZ resources

Board service commitment letter

<https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/attachments/managing-sport/strong-organisations/Commitment-letter.doc>

Module 3 of Governance IOI – Sport NZ's free online training course

<https://www.sporttutor.nz/pages/coursedescription.jsf?courseId=112261&catalogId=268432>

## 2.2 ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Role descriptions outline the duties, responsibilities and expectations for directors.

A general outline of roles and responsibilities of the board should be found in your constitution or trust deed. Detailed expectations are best located in a board charter or policy manual. Each position such as director, chair, president, treasurer will have its own position description outlining the expectations associated with the role, including time commitment, duties, behaviour and specific policies such as conflicts of interest.

Position descriptions help potential directors to understand what is expected of them before they apply. They help ensure people are suitable for the role and make expectations clear upfront.

Current directors can usefully review their own position description from time to time as a reminder of what they're being asked to do.

Role descriptions are formally signed by each new member as part of their letter of appointment when they're accepting the role and ideally on reappointment.

Role descriptions should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant to the organisation's purpose and consistent with legal obligations.

### Key points (in order of priority)

- The role description outlines the duties, responsibilities and expectations of your directors, and will include elements such as the term, time commitment, handling of expenses, etc.
- Role descriptions should be aligned with your main governance documents.
- The description should be formally signed off by each board member.

### Governance check – expectations upfront

*Everything should be on the table on appointment. People need to know what they are up for. No one likes the rules changing at half-time.*

### More information

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#### Related Governance Lite section

[1.3 The rules](#)

#### Governance Lite Toolbox

[2.2 Sport NZ - Club secretary job description example](#)

[2.2 Sport NZ - President or chair job description example](#)

[2.2 Sport NZ - Treasurer job description example](#)

*Note: These are largely for fully voluntary organisations.*

#### Sport NZ resource

Director position description

<https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/attachments/managing-sport/strong-organisations/Role-description-for-a-director.doc>

# 2.3

## SIMPLE SKILLS MATRIX

A good balance of skills around the table means you're well placed to deliver on your organisational purpose and strategy.

A simple skills matrix is a good way of helping boards think about what that mix should look like. It considers the right balance of skills, for example, governance, legal, financial, marketing and people leadership, as well as particular areas of sport or recreation.

It's important to balance these skills with diversity in gender, background and ways of thinking.

### **Governance check**

*Reviewing your skills matrix is something that is done at least annually, whenever your strategy changes and when you are needing to change the make-up of the board. The board can assess themselves against the matrix and identify any gaps.*

Often overlooked is the importance of the 'soft' skills of your members, their fit with your organisational culture and how they balance the team. Some attributes worthy of consideration include self-awareness, integrity and high ethical standards. The personalities and behavioural types present will impact meeting dynamics, so attention should also be paid to these qualities.

### **Key points (in order of priority)**

- A skills matrix is a quick way of establishing if there are any gaps in your governing group.
- Consider what experience, competencies and skills your group needs.
- Think about the culture you want to foster.

### **More information**

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#### **Related Governance Lite section**

[2.2 Role descriptions](#)

#### **Governance Lite Toolbox**

[2.3 Sport NZ - Board needs matrix template](#)

## 2.4 INDUCTION PROGRAMME

An induction programme gives new people the best chance to come up to speed with your organisation and become effective contributors in their role.

Induction should cover your organisation's statement of intent (purpose, vision, outcomes and key strategies), the environment the organisation operates in, the board's policies, an outline of key stakeholders, and the staffing and structure of the organisation.

### **Governance check**

*All new members should receive an induction pack which includes the organisation's:*

- *constitution or trust deed*
- *charter or governance policies, rules, deed or constitution*
- *strategic plan, outcomes and measures*
- *operational plan*
- *current and recent meeting papers*
- *significant papers or proposals*
- *most recent financial statements*
- *organisational chart*
- *contact details for fellow directors, key staff or volunteers*
- *glossary of key terms, definitions and acronyms*
- *meeting schedule and annual work plan*
- *list of key events.*

The new member should meet with the chair to learn about board policies, ask questions about how the board works, and discuss any key challenges the organisation is facing. This is also a valuable opportunity for the chair to get to know the new member and what they may contribute to facilitate an easy and comfortable transition to the organisation. If potential conflicts of interest have not been raised in the interview, this is a good time to flag them.

Time should also be set aside for the new member to meet with key staff and volunteers. This is an opportunity to hear about the organisation from their point of view and to learn about expectations of the governance group.

Some organisations provide an induction for prospective new directors (before recruitment).

It can be helpful to assign a 'buddy' director to answer questions during the first few months of the director's term.

### **Key points (in order of priority)**

- An effective induction programme quickly brings your directors up to speed and contributing to the board's work.
- The programme should be well structured and include a comprehensive induction pack.
- The induction should also include an introduction to members of staff and volunteers.

### **More information**

Sport NZ has plenty of resources and learning opportunities for directors. Each resource sheet includes links to others in the Governance Lite set and to further readings and resources.

### **Related Governance Lite section**

[2.1 Recruiting for your board](#)

### **Governance Lite Toolbox**

[2.4 Sport Wellington - Induction process](#)



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