



Scottish Public  
Pensions Agency  
Buidheann Peinnseanan  
Poblach na h-Alba

# Corporate Boards Training Policy

Stuart MacArthur, SPPA Corporate Governance Manager  
June 2022

## 1. Introduction

This Training Policy has been developed to aid the governance of the SPPA and its Advisory Boards as outlined in the Agency's [Framework Document](#):

- Management Advisory Board (MAB)
- Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)
- Scheme Pension Boards

Members of all our Boards must ensure they have appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding to properly and effectively carry out their respective roles. The SPPA has an obligation to ensure that members are offered appropriate levels of training to ensure they have the necessary requisite knowledge.

This Training Policy sets out how Board Members will obtain and maintain the necessary knowledge and understanding to fulfil their role:

## 2. MAB / ARC

The main role of the MAB is to assist SPPA to deliver its functions on behalf of Ministers. This is achieved through the provision of strategic advice and support to the Chief Executive Officer, and through constructive challenge. Advisory Board members are not appointed to hold the Chief Executive Officer and senior management team to account.

The role of ARC is to advise the Chief Executive Officer on matters of risk and controls, finance, corporate governance, audit and assurance.

## 3. Scheme Pension Boards

Each Scheme Pension Board has a responsibility for assisting the scheme manager in relation to the following matters:

- a) securing compliance with the scheme regulations and other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the scheme and any statutory pension scheme that is connected with it;
- b) securing compliance with requirements imposed in relation to the scheme and any connected scheme by the Pensions Regulator;
- c) such other matters as the scheme regulations may specify.

## 4. Objective and Outcomes

The SPPA's objective relating to Training is for individuals on our Boards to have the appropriate level of knowledge and understanding to effectively carry out their role (as described above);

This will help deliver the following outcomes:

- Recommendations made by Boards are robust and based on regulatory requirements or guidance of the Pensions Regulator and the Scottish or UK Government;
- Board members have the knowledge required to participate in meetings and ask questions constructively of the information provided in a fair and open-minded way.

This Training Policy sets out the requirements and practicalities for the training of members of the SPPA Boards. It also provides some further detail in relation to the reimbursement of training expenses. Compliance with this Policy forms part of the Terms of Appointment for all Board members.

## 5. Knowledge and Understanding Assessment

SPPA will undertake an annual Knowledge and Understanding self-assessment with Boards. The results will be maintained by the SPPA.

The SPPA will identify training themes and requirements from the annual Knowledge and Understanding self-assessment. Board members will be asked to indicate their own determination of their knowledge and understanding. The results will be shared with Boards. Where the Board has an Independent Chair, for example Pension Boards, individual self-assessment responses will be shared with them for use during one-to-one meetings with their Board members.

## 6. Approach to Training

Where knowledge gaps are identified, the SPPA will endeavour to arrange training on those topics. In order to effectively utilise resource in respect of arranging training, the SPPA will usually aim to arrange group training sessions. This allows for multiple Board members to receive training at one time.

Where a need is identified for individual training (either by the SPPA, the Board Chair or the Board members), then the SPPA will discuss and agree suitable training options with the Board members.

Consideration will be given to various training resources available in delivering training to Board members. These may include:

- In-house courses/events organised by SPPA, delivered by SPPA staff or others such as Government Actuary's Department, The Pensions Regulator etc.
- Self-improvement and familiarisation with regulations and documents
- The Pension Regulator's e-learning programme
- Attending external courses, seminars and conferences
- Internally developed training days and pre/post meeting sessions
- Informal discussion and one-to-one sessions
- Formal presentations

- Circulated reading material
- E-learning.

The SPPA Corporate Governance Team will highlight self-learning opportunities and resources to Board members as appropriate. These will be linked on this section of the SPPA website where appropriate.

On occasion, Board members may be **required** to attend specific training which will focus on any regulatory, legislative or other technical updates which they should be aware of in the performance of their Board role.

In developing training, consideration will be given as to the level of knowledge and understanding needed. For example, Board Members may require only an awareness or general understanding in some areas while in others they may require more detailed knowledge.

### **Training reporting**

Whilst the SPPA has a responsibility to provide and offer training, members of our Boards **must** equally take ownership of their own learning and development needs. All members of our Boards **must** report at least annually to [SPPAGovernance@gov.scot](mailto:SPPAGovernance@gov.scot) the independent learning and development activities they have undertaken using [this form](#).

The SPPA Corporate Governance Team will maintain a record of training which will be reported by the SPPA and a summary of Board training records will be made available for inclusion in any end of year Board reporting, for example within Pension Board Annual Reports.

## **7. New Board Member Induction**

New members of our Boards must attend an induction arranged by the SPPA after their appointment. SPPA **strongly encourages** new Board members to observe meeting(s) of the Board before they are formally appointed.

Upon appointment, the SPPA will discuss individual training needs with the new member and agree an induction plan with them. The induction will vary depending on which Board the member is joining but it will usually consist of the following, as required:

### **MAB / ARC**

- Induction Pack
- Meeting and introductions with:
  - SPPA Corporate Governance Team (*Board papers, procedures and practice*)
  - SPPA Chief Executive Officer

- Independent Chair of ARC
- Each member of the SPPA Executive Team
- Reading of documented SPPA frameworks and policies.

### **Scheme Pension Boards**

- Induction Pack
- Meeting and introductions with
  - SPPA Corporate Governance Team (*Board papers, procedures and practice*)
  - Independent Chair/Vice-Chair of Board
- Completion of The Pensions Regulator E-learning toolkit
- Reading of documented SPPA frameworks and policies.

### **8. Expense Claims**

Where Board members make a request for individual training, particularly at cost to the SPPA, the SPPA must be satisfied that the training is necessary and will increase the effectiveness of the Board. Where Board members intend to seek reimbursement of expenses for training, prior approval must be sought from the SPPA before incurring any such expenses. Appropriate receipts and expense claim forms must be sent to the SPPA evidencing the training expenses being claimed for. Any training completed by Board members that has not been approved in advance by the SPPA must be paid for by the individual Board member who has undertaken the training.

### **9. Policy Review**

This training policy will be reviewed regularly by the SPPA.

### **10. Document Control**

Document title	Boards Training Policy
Revision number	1.0
Date of publication	July 2022
Date of next review	June 2023