



Trustee Role Description and Role Specifications

British Educational Research Association

Company Limited by Guarantee

Company Number 08284220, Registered Charity Number 1150237

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Trustee Role Description and Person specification

BERA Council, acting as the Board of Trustees for BERA, are jointly and severally responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of BERA, its financial health, the probity of its activities and developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

All trustees should be aware of, and understand, their individual and collective responsibilities; and should not be overly reliant on one or more individual trustees in any particular aspect of the governance of the charity.

BERA Trustees and office holders are expected to adhere to the Nolan principles of public life in relation to their work for BERA. These are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest and act with probity and prudence in the best interest of BERA as a whole.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in performance of their role . They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships and avoid the appearance of any improper behaviour.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Where the trustee does not hold expertise, the appropriate professional advice should be sought.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing and all information should be held with due care.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful. Any potential conflicts of interest must be declared.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

The statutory duties of a trustee are:

- To ensure BERA complies with its articles of association and pursues its strategic objectives

- To ensure BERA applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives
- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and success criteria and evaluating performance against agreed success criteria
- To safeguard the good name and values of BERA
- To ensure the ongoing effective and efficient administration of the organisation
- To ensure the ongoing financial stability of the organisation

In addition, with other trustees to hold the charity “in trust” for current and future beneficiaries by:

- Ensuring that BERA has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these
- Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its “corporate” behaviour; ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements
- Acting as guardians of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application
- Ensuring that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard

As well as the various statutory duties, any trustee should make full use of any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the board make good decisions.

Experience:

Individuals are sought who have a strong empathy with BERA’s mission and strategic objectives. We welcome members standing for election with a diversity of skills, experience, and expertise in educational research. We recognise they may be at different points of their career including early and mid-career researchers. Prior understanding of BERA’s work and ambitions are particularly sought. The following attributes are particularly valued

- Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making
- A history of impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences
- Successful experience of operating within a board in a charitable, public sector or commercial organisation e.g. Journal editorial board.

Knowledge, skills and understanding:

- Commitment to BERA and its objectives alongside a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and the Executive Director
- Willingness to be available to office staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision

Diversity

We are committed to equal opportunities and we want BERA Council to benefit from the advantages that diversity brings, including different skills, life experiences and backgrounds. We would particularly welcome applications from all under-represented groups and backgrounds and we would encourage people who would bring fresh perspectives to the board.

Role Description – BERA President

Objective

The President acts as the Chair of Trustees for BERA. They will hold the Board and Executive Team to account for BERA's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees and ensuring that each trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the charity. He or she will act as an ambassador and the public face of BERA.

Strategic leadership

- Provide leadership to BERA and its Council, ensuring a focus upon its strategic objectives and charitable mission
- Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of BERA
- Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives, and provides a clear strategic direction for BERA
- Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability

Governance

- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for BERA
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead BERA effectively
- Work within agreed BERA policies
- Ensure that the Board is able to regularly review major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks

External Relations

In line with BERA's strategic priorities

- Act as an ambassador for BERA and its interests, acting on the advice of Council
- Maintain appropriate relationships with key influencers and audiences
- Act as a spokesperson for BERA when appropriate and uphold the duty to ensure that contributions are research-informed
- Represent BERA at external functions, meetings and events when asked to do so
- Lead on consultation responses on BERA's behalf as agreed with GPC, in line with BERA's strategic priorities, identified in our Strategic Plan, and BERA's capacity to generate a research-informed response
- Be cognisant of the risks to BERA of failing to uphold the highest research standards in making public contributions

Efficiency and effectiveness

- Chair meetings of BERA Council effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process
- Ensure that Trustees are fully engaged, that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of BERA and that the Board takes collective ownership of any decisions
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist within and between the Trustees

- Work closely with the Executive Director to give direction to Board policy-making and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of trustees
- Monitor that decisions taken at meetings are implemented.

Relationship with the Executive Director and the BERA Office

- Establish and build a strong, effective and constructive working relationship with the Executive Director, ensuring s/he is held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives
- Support the Executive Director, whilst respecting the boundaries which exist between the two roles
- Ensure regular contact with the Executive Director and develop and maintain an open and supportive relationship within which each can speak openly about concerns, worries and challenges
- Liaise with the Executive Director to maintain an overview of the Charity's affairs, providing support as necessary

Additional information

The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The President will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

The Vice President

The incoming Vice-President is expected to liaise with the President during their first year in office

- To develop the organisational knowledge necessary to taking on the Presidential role
- To develop understanding of BERA's current strategic priorities and the longer-term history which has led to their identification
- To establish organisational continuity in conversation with the President and focused on Council's longer term goals

The Vice-President acts for the President when the President is not available and undertakes assignments at the request of the President.

The outgoing Vice-President supports the President in their first year in role as necessary.

Additional information

The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Vice President will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

Role Description – BERA Treasurer

Objective

The Treasurer will oversee the financial matters of BERA in line with good practice and in accordance with the governing document and legal requirements, and report to BERA Council at regular intervals about the financial health of the organisation. The Treasurer will ensure that effective financial measures, controls and procedures are put in place, and are appropriate for BERA.

Principal responsibilities:

- Overseeing, approving and presenting budgets, accounts, financial statements and financial reports to the Board of Trustees after discussion with the Executive Director
- Being assured that the financial resources of the organisation meet its present and future needs and are within the charities objects
- Being instrumental in the development and implementation of appropriate financial, reserves policy and investment policies
- Through their role as Chair of Finance and Operations Committee, ensuring good practice in the oversight and support of BERA's office staff

Main duties:

- Liaising with the Executive Director about financial matters
- Chairing the Finance and Operations Committee and ensuring it provides the appropriate oversight and support for the office day to day operations
- Attending GPC and BERA Council and keeping Council informed about its financial duties and responsibilities
- Ensuring that appropriate accounting procedures and controls are in place
- Advising on the financial implications of the organisation's strategic plans
- Liaising with the charity's auditors where appropriate
- Liaising with the Executive Director to ensure that the charities annual accounts are compliant with the current Charities SORP
- Ensuring equipment and assets are adequately maintained and insured
- Making a formal presentation of the accounts at the annual general meeting and drawing attention to important points in a coherent and easily understandable way
- Keeping GPC abreast of any issues arising in the Finance and Operations Committee which require closer consideration
- Sitting on appraisal, recruitment and disciplinary panels as required
- Ensure that the Executive Director has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support as well conduct an annual appraisal that takes into account progress made towards achieving any strategic and operational objectives

Experience, knowledge, skills and understanding:

- Demonstrable experience of overseeing budgets and accounts
- Sound financial understanding
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making
- Commitment to BERA and its objectives alongside a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship

- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and the Executive Director

Additional information

The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Treasurer will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

Role Description – BERA Publications Chair

Objective

The Publications Chair will oversee the academic publications of BERA in line with good practice and report to BERA Council at regular intervals about these matters. They are responsible for ensuring that rigorous academic standards are adopted across the entirety of BERA's publications portfolio.

Principal responsibilities:

- Ensure that in all of its activities the Committee takes account of BERA's three strategic objectives: to advance research quality, build research capacity and foster research engagement in the education field
- Oversee BERA's academic publishing activity and monitor its effectiveness in terms of quality, impact, reach and finance
- Oversee, approve and monitor the editorial arrangements across BERA's publications, including the appointment of editors of Journals and other publications as appropriate
- Advise Council on issues pertaining to academic publishing in education and related areas and future trends that may impact on our publications portfolio
- Be instrumental in the development and implementation of appropriate activities and plans for BERA's publications including informing Council of the range of issues associated with our journal contracts

Main duties:

- Chairing the Publications Committee
- Attending GPC, Council and other committees and appropriate and keeping them informed of publications matters
- Liaising with BERA's Publications Manager, Journal editors and Editorial Boards
- Monitoring the range of BERA's publications and identifying gaps
- Working with the Executive Director and other appropriate staff in managing contractual relationships with publishers, ensuring that any arrangements uphold the highest academic standards
- In consultation with the Publications Committee, making appropriate appointments to key roles in BERA's publications portfolio – e.g. journals, the BERA Blog
- Sitting on recruitment and appointment panels as required

Experience, knowledge, skills and understanding:

- Demonstrable experience of academic publishing, normally through a previous role as an Editor - however, the Chair should not be a current Editor
- An understanding of the journal operations processes
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making
- Commitment to BERA and its objectives alongside a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and the Executive Director

Additional information

The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Publications Chair will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

Role Description – BERA Conference & Events Chair

Objective

The Conference & Events Chair will oversee the events programme including the Annual Conference of BERA in line with good practice and report to BERA Council at regular intervals about these matters. They are responsible for: ensuring that rigorous academic standards are adopted across all BERA events, primarily focussed on Conference; and monitoring its programme to ensure that it reaches out to different parts of the educational research community, supports ECRs and fosters diversity in our membership.

Principal responsibilities:

- Ensure that in all of its activities the Committee takes account of BERA's three strategic objectives: to advance research quality, build research capacity and foster research engagement in the education field
- Ensure BERA's conference and in-year events have an inclusive reach that helps build the educational research community and sustains it into the future
- Oversee BERA's in year events programme and monitor its effectiveness in terms of quality, impact, reach and finance
- Oversee BERA's Annual Conference, ensuring the highest academic standards and a diverse and engaging programme
- Advise Council and GPC on issues pertaining to events
- Be instrumental in the development and implementation of appropriate activities and plans for BERA's events

Main duties:

- Chairing the Conference & Events Committee
- Attending GPC, Council and other committees and appropriate
- Attending the annual Conference and acting as BERA's representative where appropriate
- Monitoring the range of BERA's events
- Managing reciprocal arrangements with other international conferences and reviewing these in the light of BERA's strategic objectives.
- Keeping under review the processes through which potential keynote speakers are identified by Conference Committee, and ensuring that such processes are transparent, and inclusive of a diversity of voices that speak to the broad range of interests amongst BERA members.
- Keeping BERA Council and GPC informed about Conference and in-year events matters
- Sitting on recruitment and appointment panels as required

Experience, knowledge, skills and understanding:

- Demonstrable experience of organising and leading academic events
- An understanding of and appreciation for the objectives of BERA's Annual Conference
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making
- Commitment to BERA and its objectives alongside a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and the Executive Director

Additional information

The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Conference & Events Chair will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

Role Description – BERA Engagement Chair

Objective

The Engagement Chair will keep under review the range of engagement and networking opportunities available to BERA members, including via our SIGs and Forums, assessing how well these further our strategic objectives. They should advise and report to GPC and BERA Council at regular intervals about these matters. They also oversee and keep under review BERA's programme of awards and fellowships.

Principal responsibilities:

- Ensure that in all of its activities the Committee takes account of BERA's three strategic objectives: to advance research quality, build research capacity and foster research engagement in the education field
- Oversee BERA's Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and Forums monitoring their activities and the level of support provided to them
- Oversee BERA's programme of awards and fellowships, ensuring the highest academic standards in both process, criteria and outcome are upheld
- Maintain ongoing oversight to the composition of BERA's membership how the range of members' interests can be best served by different networking opportunities or awards, and the health of the organisation sustained
- Consider the strategic interests of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in BERA's work and activities

Main duties:

- Chairing the Engagement Committee
- Attending GPC, Council and other committees or SIG Away Day as appropriate
- Encouraging and supporting a diverse range of researchers, including ECRs and other under-represented groups, to engage with BERA via its committees and networks as well as on Council, so that we build the appropriate levels of expertise that can help sustain the breadth, quality, relevance and depth of educational research
- Making links, where appropriate, with other learned societies and bodies who share BERA's aims, and engaging with the wider community, where we have common interests in improving education through the application of high-quality research
- Regularly monitoring the criteria and processes for BERA's awards and fellowships, upholding the clear and transparent judging standards

Experience, knowledge, skills and understanding:

- An understanding of and appreciation for the objectives of BERA
- A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making
- Commitment to BERA and its objectives alongside a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis
- Good, independent judgement and strategic vision
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and the Executive Director

Additional information

The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Engagement Chair will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.