



## **Finance Policy**

*Revised September 2022*

## The Education Futures Collaboration

The policy below sets out the finance policies for the Education Futures Collaboration (registered charity number 1157511). The EFC is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with the charity commission and was first registered in June 2014. The charity is governed by its trustees who are supported by the EFC board. The EFC sets and reviews the short-term and long-term strategy. Decisions are normally made on the basis of consensus at board meetings, but the trustees have the ultimate legal responsibility.

### Aims

The Education Futures Collaboration is an education sector developed and managed initiative, providing an e-infrastructure to support education as it transforms into a 'knowledge industry' and supporting knowledge transfer, collaborative knowledge building and sharing within education sectors in individual countries as well as worldwide.

We aim to professionalise teaching and to support professional judgement with evidence through the creation of a sustainable model for knowledge mobilisation and collaboration using digital tools in the education sector.

### Objectives

We define success as increasing numbers of educators, worldwide, using the MESHGuides to support decision making. For a number of subject areas, we have been inundated with expressions of interest.

- Transform the quality of learning and teaching in education by providing accessible relevant research informed professional knowledge.
- Create a joined-up education profession linking pockets of excellence in teaching, research, and evidence-based practice.
- Provide diagnosis and intervention strategies to help educators and students overcome misconceptions and break through barriers to learning threshold concepts.
- Develop models of transformational and translational research in education, using scalable and cost-effective technologies.

## Finance Policy

### Finance & Administration Team

The finance and administration shall consist of one trustee, the secretary and up to 4 other board members. The finance and administration team currently consist of:

- Sarah Younie | EFC Co-Chair
- Marilyn Leask | EFC Co -Chair
- Matt Scase | Secretary
- Richard Procter | Tech Coordinator

This team meets monthly (except in the month of August) and follows a set agenda consisting of standing items such as bank reconciliation, charity compliance, and budgeting, as well as any other items that may arise.

The finance team report back to the EFC board at the weekly board meetings.

#### ***EFC Co-Chair***

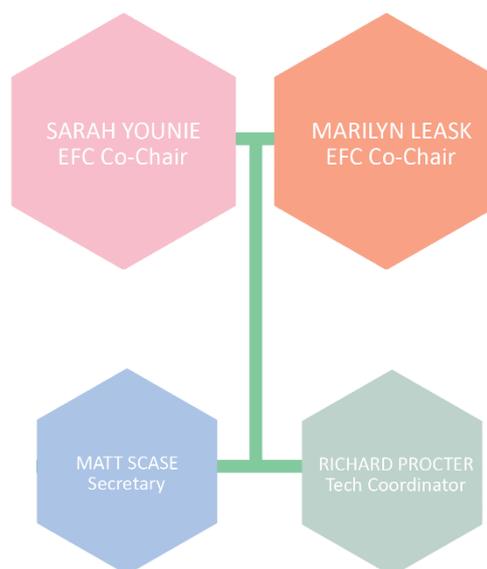
The job description for the role of co-chair is as follows, but not limited to:

- Chair weekly board meetings
- Coordinate with the trustees and board members
- Head up the operations of the charity
- Help check and approve invoices received
- Line manage the secretary and conduct yearly appraisal of the role
- Consider annual budgets
- Be a bank account administrator
- Attend monthly finance & administration meeting

#### ***Secretary***

The job description for the role of secretary is as follows, but not limited to:

- Complete monthly bank reconciliation
- Prepare a monthly finance report for the finance & administration team
- Take minutes at the AGM
- Prepare the annual report ready for the AGM
- Complete the Charity Commission annual returns
- Keep the Charity Commission records up to date
- Prepare annual budgets
- Set up payment of approved invoices and expenses
- Be a bank account signatory
- Attend weekly board meetings



- Attend monthly finance & administration meeting

### ***Tech Coordinator***

The job description for the role of tech coordinator is as follows, but not limited to:

- Manage the website including adding new MESHGuides
- Analyse the website statistics and present these to the board
- Prepare a website report for the AGM
- Help check and approve invoices received
- Consider annual budgets
- Attend weekly board meetings
- Attend monthly finance & administration meeting

At each finance & administration meeting the secretary will present the latest bank reconciliation document and petty cash statement, alongside a verbal report of activities. The secretary will also present the latest fund breakdown showing the current projects and funds with the balance in each including a cash flow forecast for the next six months.

The finance & administration are responsible for preparing the annual budget and communicating this with the full board. The budget will run alongside the fund sheet showing what will be expected in each fund by the end of the financial year. This budget will be presented to the board at a weekly meeting before the start of the new financial year. Throughout the year it is the role of the secretary to maintain the budget and compare it to actual accounts, this will be reported to the full finance & administration team. On request and by arrangement, the charity will provide donor reports and these will be created by the finance & administration, with input from the board where necessary.

## **Expenses Policy**

The majority of work carried out for the EFC is done on a voluntary basis, however some roles or projects will incur costs that will be reimbursed. All trustees and board members are entitled to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses which they legitimately incur while promoting and supporting the delivery of the EFC's objectives. Any expense that is not for the use, or benefit, of the EFC will not be considered for reimbursement.

Expense claims for anticipated expenditure can be approved in principle by the trustees and the board. If the expense has been pre-approved, then the claim need only be submitted to the finance & administration team for reimbursement. Expenses for expenditure that has not been pre-approved can still be reimbursed but approval from the board is required before the payment can be made. If the board deem the non-pre-approved expense to not meet the criteria for reimbursement, then the EFC reserves the right to decline it.

Claims for the reimbursement of expenses must be accompanied by documentary evidence of the expense e.g. receipt, travel ticket, etc. Where such evidence is not available the claimant must provide a written explanation to the secretary (or Chair) for approval. The EFC reserves the right to decline to reimburse expenses for which reasonable documentary evidence has not been provided.

If the expense being reimbursed is for a person's time, they must keep full timesheets of the work they have done and submit this alongside the invoice for their expense. Only pre-approved time

expense reimbursement will be considered. When submitting an initial request for approval, the hourly rate will be discussed and agreed.

## **Banking**

The EFC has one bank account registered in its name and can only be accessed by the account administrators and the account signatories. All banking transactions have to be approved by any 2 of the account operators. All transactions are to be approved by the finance & administration team before being set up on the bank.

The main, and preferred way, to make any payment is online via BACS. The EFC has a cheque book, and this is kept by the chair in a secure location. Two signatures are required on any cheque and the signing blank cheques is prohibited.

For any new project for which funds exceed £100,000, a new bank account will be opened to manage that project.

## **Petty Cash**

A maximum of £100 may be held in petty cash and this will be held securely by the secretary. The petty cash has a payment limit of £20 and, like other payments, authorisation by the finance & administration is required for every amount. Each payment must be signed authorisation by two members of the finance & administration team with the authorisation filed with the finance records. Petty cash payments must follow the same procedures set out in the expenses policy. The schedule for replenishing the petty cash amount account is once the balance falls below £10. Reporting and reconciliation of the petty cash is done monthly in line with the finance policy.

## **Documentation and Filing**

All relevant documentation will be kept in a secure location with necessary documents kept for 7 years. Documents stored offline will be kept in secure drawers, and documents stored either in the cloud or on a computer will be kept password protected with only the relevant people able to access them. All documentation no longer required will be disposed with all documents being shredded to destroy sensitive information.

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The following principles and policies set out the position of the EFC in relation to dealing with external parties, whether that be entering a supply contract, accepting money, or purchasing goods or services. All policies listed below will be reviewed at least annually by the finance and administration team, who in turn will consult the trustees and board.

## **Principles for acceptance of sponsorship**

The following sets out the principles the EFC holds when considering accepting sponsorship from another party. These are used to determine whether or not the EFC would want to enter a relationship with this party. On request and by arrangement, the charity will provide donor reports. These principles go alongside our conflict of interest and procurement policies:

1. Does the organisation support appropriate relationships with organisations, individuals, business, and government agencies in relation to sponsorship arrangements. These

arrangements must be consistent with the principles, vision and goals of the organisation and derive benefits for the education of students and support of teachers

2. Will the sponsorship be used to enhance educational programs and must not require restrictive practices on the part of the organisation
3. Sponsorship programmes and/or activities should contribute, either directly or indirectly, to the quality of student learning
4. The sponsorship must not compromise the professional standards and ethics of trustees and board members, nor limit academic debate
5. All sponsorships must be formalised through written agreements that clearly outline the benefits for all parties, the duration of the sponsorship and termination conditions.
6. Sponsorships must not infer or involve the endorsement of products or services by the charity
7. Sponsorships may only be negotiated with reputable organisations whose public image, products and services are consistent with the principles, vision and goals of the charity.
8. Sponsorships should generally be sought by striving to maintain an open approach that provides equality of opportunity to would-be sponsors to maximise awareness of sponsorship opportunities
9. Sponsor benefits should be commensurate with the level of sponsorship
10. Trustees approving sponsorship agreements must ensure that the capacity exists to deliver the agreed sponsor benefits
11. Any goods and/or services which are provided as part of a sponsorship agreement are to be valued at the retail cost of purchase
12. No employee of the charity is to receive a personal benefit from a sponsorship
13. Sponsorships should align with charity's policies
14. Sponsorship agreements must include a provision for those trustees or board members who do not wish to participate
15. Sponsorship agreements must not expose the charity to any financial, legal or other risks that are disproportionate to the nature and extent of the sponsorship
16. Final control over the conduct of participating trustees and board members in sponsorship activities must rest with the charity

## **Procurement Policy**

Procurement is the purchase of works, assets, goods, and services for the charity according to a process that is open and transparent. Good procurement is essential for the EFC to deliver its strategic aims and day to day operations efficiently conserving charity funds. All trustees and board members involved in procurement have a responsibility to conduct the procurement legally and ethically and to secure value for money.

### ***Objectives of this procurement policy***

The key elements of the EFC Procurement Policy are:

1. To maintain the highest ethical standards in procurement matters i.e. to minimise the risk of fraud.
2. To ensure the correct goods or services are purchased, in terms of the correct quality and specification:
  - To achieve best value for money
  - To reduce the paperwork so that the process is fast enough to meet programme needs

- To ensure that any grant conditions are complied with
- To act fairly towards suppliers
- To promote equality, diversity and sustainability throughout procurement matters

### **Key principles**

The key principles of this policy are to safeguard the EFC against the actions of any one, or several, trustees or board members who might not be acting in the best interests of the charity. These key principles are as follows:

- **To Maintain the Highest Ethical Standards** - The EFC values its reputation for ethical behaviour, for financial probity and reliability and considers bribery to be completely unacceptable. The EFC is strongly opposed to slavery and human trafficking. We strive to act ethically and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place within our organisation or our supply chains. In the event of a conflict of interest, which occurs if an employee has an interest in an organisation providing goods or services to the charity, that interest must be declared in writing at the earliest possible opportunity and maintained in a Register of Interests held by the EFC secretary (see the conflict of interest policy for more details)
- **To Achieve Value for Money** - When judging value for money, the EFC considers economy, effectiveness, and efficiency. Achieving value for money does not always mean accepting the lowest price but, making decisions based on a number of principles including, but not limited to; price, quality of product or service, reputation of provider, reliability, delivery times, environmental impact
- **To promote Equality, Diversity and Sustainability** - The EFC has a statutory duty to outlaw disability, race and gender discrimination in all of its functions. We will ensure that the purchase of goods, services and facilities is undertaken in line with our equality and diversity commitments. The EFC will strive to not use suppliers who do not share our values on equality of opportunity and diversity

### **Purchasing**

The finance & administration team are authorised to make purchases in line with the agreed annual budget. Trustees and board members are able to make purchases in line with the EFC expenses policy. For exceptional costs i.e. not identified with the EFC budget:

- The finance & administration team are authorised to purchase goods/services up to the value of £2,000
- For any value over £2,000 the finance & administration team must seek approval from the board. Authorisation may be provided at a meeting or by email and a simple majority is required for approval

For all purchase transactions, the following thresholds are applicable:

- **Up to £2,000** - to facilitate efficient administration, the finance & administration team may purchase goods and services adhering to the principles outlined in this policy statement
- **Between £2,000 - £10,000** - Where an established supplier relationship exists, the finance & administration team may purchase additional goods/services adhering to the principles outlined in this policy statement. For new goods/services, at least two written quotes should be obtained.
- **Over £10,000** - At least 2 written quotes should be obtained

*It is recognised that in some instances the number of quotes may not be able to be received despite best endeavours. This will be recorded.*

## **Conflict of Interest Policy**

This policy applies to all persons – trustees, board members, and volunteers – involved with the Education Futures Collaboration.

It's very common, even at the mere mention of a "Conflict of Interest", for people to start thinking suspiciously of the individuals concerned having covert agendas and disreputable schemes for greedy selfish gains. So, we need to be clear that there's nothing immoral or illegal in Conflicts of Interest *per se*. On the contrary, they are normal and inevitable in individuals and groups who are enthusiastic, active and dynamic in their interests – exactly the kind of people who make good charity trustees and volunteers. Impropriety and illegality only come in when what would otherwise be entirely legitimate Conflicts of Interest are not properly declared, acknowledged, and managed.

### ***Policy brief & purpose***

The trustees and board members have a legal obligation to act in the best interests of the charity, in accordance with it the documentation set out in our policies, and not for their own private interest or gain.

Conflicts of interests may arise where an individual's personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of the charity. Conflicts may also arise where an individual has a responsibility to another organisation, for example as a member of staff with related activities. Whilst the integrity of the trustees and board members concerned may not be affected, such conflicts may create problems as they can:

- inhibit free discussion
- result in decisions or actions that may not be in the interests of the charity
- risk giving the impression that the charity has not acted properly.

The aim of this policy is to protect both the organisation and its trustees and board members in situations where a conflict of interest arises and to ensure that such situations are dealt with openly.

### ***The Declaration of Interests***

Trustees and board members are asked to declare their interests, and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role in the charity, where such interests would, or might, conflict with, or otherwise influence their decision-making in respect of the charity's activities.

The declaration of interests needs to be updated at least annually, and also when any changes occur.

If you are not sure what to declare or, whether/when your declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution. If you would like to discuss this issue, please contact the chair or secretary for guidance.

Interests will be recorded on the charity's register of interests, which will be maintained by the secretary. The register will be accessible to the trustees, secretary, and chair.

When a new trustee or board member is appointed, they must sign a declaration form in which they must notify the secretary of any conflicts of interest that may arise, such as information on the charity's financial and other interests, interests through family connections, personal friendships, business associations and involvement with other organisations. If in doubt about what to declare, trustee or board members should err on the side of caution. These details will be entered in the register.

### **Data Protection**

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the current Data Protection legislation. Data will be processed only to ensure that trustees, board members, and volunteers act in the best interests of the EFC. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

### **What to do if you face a Conflict of Interest**

If you have, or think you might have, a Conflict of Interest, as described in the section above you MUST either write to the Board and declare your Conflict of Interest or involvement at the earliest opportunity. This can either be in writing or at the beginning of the meeting for an agenda item. If you are not sure what to declare, or whether/when an earlier declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution. If you would like to discuss this issue, please contact the Chair or Secretary of the EFC for confidential guidance.

*Remember: declaring a Conflict of Interest is NOT a declaration any impropriety on your part or by anyone else. It's only FAILING TO DECLARE a Conflict of Interest which carries with it a significant risk of impropriety, particularly if the Conflict of Interest were to result in a failure to comply properly with charity law. If a Trustee or Member of the charity becomes aware that you have, or might have, a Conflict of Interest they are obliged to report it to the Board even if you do not.*

### **Decisions taken where a trustee or board member has an Interest**

In the event of the board having to decide upon a question in which a trustee or board member has an interest, all decisions will be made by vote, with a simple majority required. A quorum must be present for the discussion and decision. Any person with a declaration of interest on an item will not be counted when deciding whether the meeting is quorate and may not vote on matters affecting their own interests. All decisions where there is a Conflict of Interest will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The report will record:

- the persons involved
- the nature and extent of the Conflict(s) of Interest
- an outline of the discussion
- the actions taken to manage the Conflict(s) of Interest

Where it is determined that a trustee or board member with a Conflict of Interest may nevertheless legitimately benefit from the decision, this will be reported where necessary.

### **Register of Conflicts of Interest**

The Charity will maintain a Register of all reported Conflicts of Interest which will contain, as a minimum, the following information:

- a) The date on which the Conflict of Interest was first reported, supplemented where appropriate by the dates on which any changes to the Conflict of Interest were reported, including the date on which the Conflict of Interest ceased to be an issue.

*Note: once reported, a Conflict of Interest will remain “on the record” for a minimum of 3 complete reporting years after the Conflict of Interest ceases to exist (e.g.: if the individual concerned, or any connected persons, ceases to be involved with the charity)*

- b) The name of the individual involved and, in the case of a Conflict of Interest involving one or more connected persons, the names of those connected persons and their relationships
- c) The position/role/responsibilities within the charity of the individual involved
- d) The type of Conflict of Interest (e.g.: personal benefits, family involvement, business involvement, other)
- e) Details of the Conflict of Interest, including its potential impact on the Charity
- f) Mitigation of the Conflict of Interest – i.e.: the steps taken by the Trustees to ensure that the Conflict of Interest does not adversely influence the charitable activities of the Charity.

This register of interests shall also be used to record all gifts of a value over £100 received by the trustees, board members, and volunteers. The register will be accessible to all the EFC.

## **Anti-Fraud Policy**

This document sets out the policy and procedures of the Education Futures Collaboration against fraud and other forms of dishonesty. It applies to all trustees, board members, and volunteers. Anybody associated with the EFC who commits fraud, theft or any other dishonesty, or who becomes aware of it and does not report it, will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### ***Statement of intent***

The EFC will continually strive to ensure that all its financial and administrative processes are carried out and reported honestly, accurately, transparently and accountably and that all decisions are taken objectively and free of personal interest. We will not condone any behaviour that falls short of these principles. All members of the EFC have a responsibility for putting these principles into practice and for reporting any breaches they discover.

### ***Definitions***

- ***Fraud*** - A deliberate intent to acquire money or goods dishonestly through the falsification of records or documents. The deliberate changing of financial statements or other records by either; a member of the public, someone who works or is a volunteer for the EFC. The criminal act is the attempt to deceive and attempted fraud is therefore treated as seriously as accomplished fraud
- ***Theft*** - Dishonestly acquiring, using or disposing of physical or intellectual property belonging to the EFC or to individual members of the organisation
- ***Misuse of equipment*** - Deliberately misusing materials or equipment belonging to the EFC for financial or material benefit
- ***Abuse of position*** - Exploiting a position of trust within the organisation for financial or material benefit

### ***Culture***

The EFC fosters honesty and integrity in its entire team. Trustees, board members, and volunteers are expected to lead by example in adhering to policies, procedures, and practices. Equally, members of the public, service users and external organisations (such as suppliers and contractors) are expected to act with integrity and without intent to commit fraud against the charity.

## **Responsibilities**

In relation to the prevention of fraud, theft, misuse of equipment and abuse of position, specific responsibilities are as follows:

- **Chair** - Overall responsibility for managing the risk of fraud has been delegated to the EFC chair. Their responsibilities include:
  - Undertaking a regular review of the fraud risks associated with each of the key organisational objectives
  - Establishing an effective anti-fraud response plan, in proportion to the level of fraud risk identified
  - The design of an effective control environment to prevent fraud
  - Establishing appropriate mechanisms for:
    - reporting fraud risk issues
    - reporting significant incidents of fraud or attempted fraud to the board
  - Making sure that all trustees and board members are aware of the charity's Anti-Fraud Policy and know what their responsibilities are in relation to combating fraud
  - Ensuring that appropriate action is taken to minimise the risk of previous frauds occurring in future
- **Trustees and board members** - The trustees are responsible for establishing and maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the charity's policies, aims and objectives. The system of internal control is designed to respond to and manage the whole range of risks which the charity faces. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify the principal risks, to evaluate the nature and extent of those risks and to manage them effectively. Managing fraud risk is seen in the context of the management of this wider range of risks. All trustees and board members are responsible for:
  - Conducting themselves with selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership
  - Being alert to the possibility that unusual events or transactions could be indicators of fraud
  - Acting with propriety in the use of charity's resources and the handling and use of funds whether they are involved with cash, receipts, payments or dealing with suppliers
  - Ensuring that controls are being complied with
  - Preventing and detecting fraud as far as possible
  - Alerting the chair when they believe the opportunity for fraud exists e.g. because of poor procedures or lack of effective oversight
  - Reporting details immediately if they suspect that a fraud has been committed or see any suspicious acts or events
  - Cooperating fully with whoever is conducting internal checks or reviews or fraud investigations