

# GREATBOARDS.ORG

## SAMPLE BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

How much do you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with these statements?  
(circle one)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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### **Governance Accountability, Roles and Responsibilities**

Effective governance begins with a sound understanding of what the board does. These questions concern the accountability, authority, roles and responsibilities of your board.

<b>1. Stakeholders.</b> This board has identified the organization's primary "stakeholders" ( <i>i.e.</i> , the equivalent of shareholders in a publicly owned corporation) and understands its accountability to see that the organization serves their needs.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
<b>2. Roles and responsibilities.</b> This board's roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in writing and understood by board members.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
<b>3. Board authority.</b> This board's authority is clearly defined in writing and is sufficient to allow it to add value to the organization and its mission.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
<b>4. Board and management roles and responsibilities.</b> This Board understands and respects the different roles and responsibilities of the board and management.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

### **Governance Structure**

Governance structure refers to the organizational entities through which governance work is subdivided, coordinated and performed. These questions pertain to board and committee structures.

<b>5. Appropriate size.</b> This board is the right size: Small enough to deliberate and make decisions efficiently, but large enough to include a range of needed skills and backgrounds.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
<b>6. Streamlined structure.</b> The board and committee structure are as simple and straightforward as possible in order to facilitate communication, avoid redundancy and make timely decisions.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
<b>7. Committee structure.</b> This board has the right number of committees of an appropriate size and composition to perform their work effectively and efficiently.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
<b>8. Structural review.</b> The board reviews its structure, including the committee structure, at least every two years.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

This brief questionnaire was developed by Barry S. Bader and James E. Small.  
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E-mail: [bsbader@att.net](mailto:bsbader@att.net) • Phone: 301-340-0903.

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### **Governance Composition**

Effective governance requires a board of strong character and skills. These questions ask about how the board chooses its members and its leaders.

9. <b>Criteria-based selection process.</b> When electing its members, this board is guided by appropriate, written criteria that describe the personal qualities, skills and professional backgrounds needed for effective governance.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
10. <b>Diversity.</b> This board's composition includes an appropriate diversity of individuals by gender, ethnicity and age.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
11. <b>Performance-based re-election.</b> Trustees eligible for another term on this board are formally evaluated and recommended for re-election only if they are performing effectively.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
12. <b>Term limits.</b> This board has and applies an appropriate limit on board terms to ensure a flow of new members who bring fresh thinking and needed competencies to the board.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

### **Governance Resources: Education and Information**

Effective governance requires that boards be well prepared to carry out their roles and responsibilities. These questions ask about the education and information your board receives.

13. <b>Trustee orientation.</b> New trustees receive a thorough orientation on their roles and responsibilities, the organization and the healthcare environment.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
14. <b>Board education.</b> This board stays current by participating in a range of educational activities including an annual retreat, outside conferences and presentations at board and committee meetings.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
15. <b>Decision support.</b> The information provided to the board before it considers major policies and decisions is timely, concise and makes it easy to identify the key issues.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
16. <b>Monitoring performance.</b> This board receives good information for monitoring the organization's performance. Reports are timely, concise and clearly compare current performance with board-approved objectives/targets, long-term trends and industry benchmarks.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

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### **G**overnance Processes: Board Meetings and Relationships

Effective governance requires effective meetings. These questions ask about how the board goes about its work.

17. <b>Substantive meetings.</b> More than half of this board's time in meetings is spent in substantive discussions about issues of critical importance to the organization and its future.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
18. <b>Routine business.</b> Board and committee meetings handle routine business efficiently, including use of a consent agenda.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
19. <b>Planning board work.</b> This board establishes annual board goals and a work plan specifying how it will concentrate its work on significant issues and important board responsibilities.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
20. <b>Meeting participation.</b> Board members participate actively at meetings, raising constructive questions and offering pertinent guidance on matters of policy and strategy.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
21. <b>Relationships and teamwork.</b> Board members have a good working relationship marked by open communications, mutual respect and teamwork amongst themselves and with the CEO.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

### **G**overnance Effectiveness: The Board's Performance

Written role statements, composition, structures, resources and meetings prepare a board to govern but don't ensure effectiveness. These questions ask about how well the board is performing.

22. <b>Strategic direction.</b> This board has approved a current and appropriate mission, vision and strategic plan.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
23. <b>Goal setting.</b> This board is effective in establishing measurable objectives/targets for monitoring mission effectiveness, implementation of strategic initiatives, financial performance and organizational quality.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
24. <b>Policy- and decision-making.</b> This board establishes sound policies and makes effective decisions on a timely basis to further the organization's mission, vision and values.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
25. <b>Executive evaluation and compensation.</b> The board has an effective process to establish clear and measurable goals for the CEO, evaluate performance and set/review compensation.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
26. <b>External influence.</b> This board uses its external influence effectively in such activities as political advocacy and stakeholder relations.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
27. <b>Board self-assessment.</b> This board evaluates its performance and implements an improvement plan at least every two years.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

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