



## CRITERIA for Advanced Systems of Governance

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### DRAFT 4.1 (For Selected Review and Consideration)

IPGA believes that Policy Governance<sup>®1</sup> is an advanced system of governance. We developed the following list of criteria that delineates our definition of an advanced system of governance. The criteria provide a basis for comparing and learning about systems of governance and assessing the degree to which a presented system, model, theory of governance or set of guidelines matches our idea of an advanced system of governance. Advanced is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as *“far on or ahead in development or progress”*

Although we believe in the criteria we have developed and believe they can provide a context in which Policy Governance and other advanced systems of governance can evolve, IPGA is open to amending any of the following criterion if it is not “fit for purpose”.

1. There is an underlying theory of governance in which the principles are explicated and logically defensible.
2. All parts of the governance system work together in a coherent manner.
3. The source of the board<sup>2</sup>'s authority is explicit and calls for the board to intentionally and faithfully engage with those on whose behalf it governs.
4. The board as a whole provides direction to and is accountable for the entire organization.
5. The board has a justifiable methodology for clarifying and setting the balance between over and under control of operational matters.
6. The governance role of the board is distinct from management roles even if board members assume some or all of the management roles. In delegating management functions, the board holds accountable those to whom it delegates authority but remains ultimately accountable for all organizational acts and omissions.
7. Governance requires the development of strategic foresight necessary to ensure the ongoing relevance of the organization.
8. The whole of the board's intentions for the organization are recorded in an ongoing reference which directs the operational organization about what the organization is to achieve and the risks it is to manage.
9. The board is self-organizing; its processes are explicit and formalized.
10. The board regularly assesses organizational performance only against its recorded intentions and intervenes only to require performance discrepancies be addressed or to reset organizational direction.
11. Maintenance of the governance system is intentional and continuous.
12. An advanced system of governance is applicable to different forms of organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> Policy Governance<sup>®</sup> is an internationally registered service mark of John Carver. Registration is only to ensure accurate description of the model rather than for financial gain. The model is available free to all with no royalties or license fees for its use. The authoritative website for Policy Governance is [www.policygovernance.com](http://www.policygovernance.com).

<sup>2</sup> “Board” is the commonly used term for the governing entity in an organization. However, it is not the only term in use, nor is it necessary to use the term. The criteria are applicable regardless of the name of the governing body, e.g., council, panel, bench, etc.