



## Paper 13 – Conversion process

### Legal basis

1. Academies are publicly funded independent schools that are not managed by a local authority.
2. Maintained primary and secondary schools, special schools, alternative provision schools and 16 to 19 providers can all apply to become an academy. A school can convert on its own if it is performing well (though increasingly the DfE is unlikely to give permission to “small” schools, i.e. under 200 pupils), or with the support of a sponsor, or as part of a group of schools (an academy chain). Faiths schools require the support of their diocese to do this. It is now diocesan policy that all new church academies will become part of The Good Shepherd Multi Academy Trust.
3. Schools can't acquire or remove their faith character, expand, become mixed or single sex, or introduce selection as part of the conversion process. Schools would need to become VA prior to the conversion process, for example.
4. Conversion usually takes around 4 months, with schools converting on the first day of the month.
5. The conversion process has four distinct phases:
  - Registration – this includes the consultation with interested parties including permission from the Diocese that is required by legislation,

- Application to convert – Governors pass a resolution to convert and the school submits an application to the DfE. The Secretary of State (SoS) issues an Academy Order to approve the change. The school can now access a start-up grant to help with conversion costs. A due diligence exercise is undertaken (see point 7). The TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) process will be undertaken during conversion.
  - Achievement of Funding Agreement – Governance arrangements are finalised including Scheme of Delegation. Leasing arrangements for land and buildings are agreed (community schools only). The Supplemental Funding Agreement is submitted to the Secretary of State for approval,
  - Pre-Opening/Opening – the Education Funding Agency provides indicative budget and the DfE sign and agree the Supplemental Funding Agreement. The new academy opens on the first of the month.
6. Grants are currently available for each school wishing to convert to cover conversion and set up costs
  7. Due diligence is a process required by the Charity Commission and includes a number of steps that the Trust and the individual schools will take to ensure that all relevant risks have been assessed.

### Key principles

1. The Trust will endeavour to group schools together to make the conversion process more effective and efficient.
2. Each individual school is responsible for applying for academy status as per the DfE requirement, but the Trust will support the process.
3. The consultation process will be supported centrally to ensure a consistent and robust approach.
4. See Paper 1 – Structure and governance for detail of

the Trust governance structure and membership of Board.

5. Each school will have a local governing body, the size of which will be agreed with the directors, but will reflect the make up of the school prior to conversion except in the case of sponsored schools where the directors will determine the governance make-up.
6. The Trust has a process of due diligence that it will undertake with every school at an appropriate time in the process.