

Differences between types Federations (NFER)

Characteristics	Informal Loose Collaboration	Soft Federations	Soft Governance Federation	Hard Governance Federation
Statutory/non-statutory	Non-statutory - schools can form informal collaborations without having to follow regulations.	Non-statutory - schools can set up soft Federations without having to follow regulations.	Statutory - soft governance Federations are established using Collaboration Regulations made under Section 26 of the Education Act 2002.	Statutory - hard governance Federations are established using Federation Regulations made under Section 24 of the Education Act 2002.
Governing body	Each school has its own governing body, with representatives on a joint committee that meets informally on an ad hoc basis.	Each school has its own governing body, with representatives on a joint committee that meets.	Each school has its own governing body, with representation and delegated powers on a joint governance/ strategic committee.	Single governing body, shared by all schools in the Federation.
Common goals and plans?	All schools share common goals and work together on an ad hoc basis and through informal agreements.	All schools share common goals; joint committee recommendations, but it is up to the individual governing bodies to authorise decisions/ plans.	All schools share common goals through the Service Level Agreement (SLA) and protocol; Joint committee can make joint decisions/ recommendations in specified agreed areas, but not all.	All schools share common goals through SLA and protocol; having a single governing body allows for efficient, streamlined decision-making in all areas.
Common budget?	No, but if the schools want to commit to a budgetary decision affecting all schools, each individual school's governing body would need to approve this.	No, but it could make budgetary recommendations for the group which in turn would have to be approved by each individual school's governing body.	No, but if the joint/strategic committee has budgetary powers delegated to it, it can make prompt budgetary decisions on behalf of schools in the Federation.	No (technically), but whilst each school receives and must account for its own separate budget, there is considerable scope, through the single governing body, to use the pooled budgets across the schools in the Federation.
Shared Staff	Unlikely to have common management positions, but if they do exist, they would have to be agreed in a protocol or contract.	Common management positions and appointments but need to have a protocol or contract to underpin commitment to shared posts.	Common management positions and appointments but need to have a protocol or contract to underpin commitment to shared posts.	Common management positions and appointments agreed by single governing body in a simple and effective manner. Schools can agree to have a single executive head teacher responsible to the schools in the hard Federation.