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Volume 005

The VADR Creative Workforce

Constitutional and Operating Principles

Version 1.0
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Preface

This volume establishes the constitutional and operating principles under which VADR's human Creative Workforce is governed — the separation of Capital Governance from Creative Governance, the standing and responsibilities of the Conceptual Stewardship Council, how authority and compensation are earned through demonstrated merit rather than tenure, how advancement claims are verified through non-conflicted peer review, and how disputes are resolved.

It extends, rather than restates, VADR Blueprint Chapter 4 (The VADR Operating Model), which establishes these bodies and principles briefly, as organizational context. Where this volume and the Blueprint address the same subject, the Blueprint remains authoritative on what a body or principle is; this volume governs how it operates in practice for the Creative Workforce specifically.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This volume establishes the constitutional and operating principles under which VADR's human Creative Workforce is governed. It is provisional: it extends VADR Blueprint Chapter 4, which establishes Capital Governance, Creative Governance, the Conceptual Stewardship Council, and Constitutional Reserve Authority briefly, as organizational context, into the full operating principles those bodies require to function in practice.

It is organized in six parts. Part I establishes this volume's scope and its relationship to the Blueprint and to Ascent. Part II formalizes the governance separation between ownership and organizational stewardship — Capital Governance, Creative Governance, and the Conceptual Stewardship Council through which Creative Governance is exercised. Part III governs self-organization — how work is chosen, how leadership is earned through followership, and how workforce utilization is monitored. Part IV governs how standing and reward are earned — advancement through demonstrated merit rather than tenure, and the compensation mechanisms that follow from it. Part V governs verification and resolution — the non-conflicted peer review that confirms an advancement claim was genuinely earned, and the escalation path when a dispute arises. Part VI operationalizes Capital Governance's narrowly bounded Constitutional Reserve Authority and establishes how this volume itself may be amended.

A single principle runs through every part: authority, standing, and compensation are earned through demonstrated merit, verified through non-conflicted review, and decided by the body this volume names for that decision — never by an automatic formula operating outside anyone's real, accountable judgment.

Ascent, once formally published, defines the discipline of Conceptual Synthesis itself and the earned-responsibility levels through which the Creative Workforce advances. This volume states, provisionally, the constitutional and operating principles that govern the Creative Workforce around that discipline — governance, compensation, review, and resolution — without prescribing Ascent's own content. Where this volume anticipates a mechanism Ascent has not yet formally defined, it says so directly rather than inventing a placeholder.

PART I — FOUNDATIONS

Chapter 1 — Introduction

This chapter states why this volume exists, what it governs, and how it relates to the Blueprint and to Ascent.

Purpose

This volume exists to give real operating substance to a governance structure the Blueprint establishes only briefly. Chapter 4 of the Blueprint states that Capital Governance represents the interests of VADR's owners, that Creative Governance stewards the discipline of Conceptual Synthesis and the Creative Workforce, and that the Conceptual Stewardship Council exercises Creative Governance collectively — but it does not state how these bodies reach a decision, who is entitled to bring a matter before them, how compensation is earned, or how a disagreement is resolved. This volume answers those questions.

Principles

- This volume extends the Blueprint; it does not restate or supersede it. Where the Blueprint defines what a body or principle is, this volume governs how it operates for the Creative Workforce specifically.
- This volume is provisional pending Ascent. Ascent is the Conceptual System that will formally define the discipline of Conceptual Synthesis and the earned-responsibility levels through which the Creative Workforce advances. Where this volume states a mechanism Ascent has not yet formally published, that mechanism is a real, binding interim principle — not a placeholder — subject to reconciliation once Ascent exists, per the Amendment chapter (Amendment).
- No mechanism in this volume commits Capital Governance's own resources or decisions automatically. Every real financial or standing-altering consequence in this volume names, explicitly, the body that decides it.
- Compensation, advancement, and standing are earned through demonstrated merit, never through tenure or organizational position alone — the same principle the Blueprint states for the Creative Workforce generally.

Mechanisms

This volume is organized in six parts, each grouping chapters that govern a related concern: Foundations (this Part); Governance (Capital Governance, Creative Governance, and the Conceptual Stewardship Council); Self-Organization (how work is chosen and leadership is earned); Earned Responsibility and Reward (advancement and compensation); Verification and Resolution (peer review and conflict resolution); and

Reserve Authority and Change (Constitutional Reserve Authority and amendment). Each chapter follows the same internal structure: Purpose, Principles, Mechanisms, Roles and Decision Rights, and its Relationship to Other Volumes.

Roles and Decision Rights

This chapter creates no decision rights of its own. the Capital Governance chapter and onward name, for every real decision this volume governs, exactly one body responsible for making it.

Relationship to Other Volumes

- VADR Blueprint, Chapter 4 (The VADR Operating Model) — this volume extends Chapter 4's treatment of Capital Governance, Creative Governance, the Conceptual Stewardship Council, and Constitutional Reserve Authority.
- Ascent — this volume's provisional treatment of earned-responsibility levels (the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter) is superseded by Ascent's own formal definition once published, per the Amendment chapter.
- Volume 001 — The Autonomous Company — governs the Autonomous Workforce under a structurally parallel but distinct logic (Delegated Authority rather than earned human responsibility). The two are deliberately not merged; the Blueprint's own the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter treats them as parallel, not identical, systems.

PART II — GOVERNANCE

Chapter 2 — Capital Governance

This chapter states what Capital Governance decides for the Creative Workforce, and states plainly what it does not decide.

Purpose

Capital Governance represents the interests of VADR's owners. For the Creative Workforce specifically, its purpose is to hold the real, ownership-level decisions that compensation and standing ultimately depend on — capital allocation, pay-band structure, and equity — without directing the practice of Conceptual Synthesis itself.

Principles

- Capital Governance does not supervise the practice of Conceptual Synthesis, direct the Creative Workforce, or participate in operational execution — stated directly in the Blueprint and restated here because every decision right in this chapter depends on the boundary holding.
- Every decision named in this chapter is a real, deliberate act by Capital Governance — never a standing formula that commits capital automatically, triggered by an operational event with no ownership-level decision point.
- Capital Governance decides amounts, thresholds, and structures. It does not decide whether any individual Conceptual Synthesist's work was genuinely excellent — that determination belongs to Creative Governance and the non-conflicted peer review process (the Non-Conflicted Peer Review chapter), informing Capital Governance's own decision rather than substituting for it.

Mechanisms

Capital Governance exercises the following real, recurring decisions for the Creative Workforce:

- Sets the pay-band structure once, with bands tied to Ascent's own earned-responsibility levels once those are formally published (the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter).
- Sets the equity pool size and the vesting-milestone schedule for earned ownership (the Compensation chapter).
- Approves individual equity grants and their valuation.

- Sets, annually, the percentage of net profit attributable to commercialized Conceptual Systems allocated to the company-wide profit-sharing pool (the Compensation chapter).
- Approves that a Conceptual System has been "successfully commercialized" for purposes of triggering profit-share and equity consequences — informed by Creative Governance's own certification that it reached the Commercialize stage of its lifecycle with real, realized revenue.
- Sets base salary bands and benefits policy.
- **Reviews hiring authority** previously delegated under this chapter, on confirmed, sustained underutilization evidence — informed by, not automatically triggered by, Auditor's escalation, per the Self-Organization and Workforce Utilization chapter. A confirmed, sustained pattern of underutilization is evidence the hiring authority granted was not exercised well, and Capital Governance may narrow, suspend, or decline to renew it accordingly.
- **Establishes and may amend foundational operating-model policy** binding on the Creative Workforce — including, as a first named instance, that Conceptual Synthesists do not directly write code or directly configure infrastructure. Operational execution, including the code and infrastructure that realize a Conceptual System, is the Autonomous Workforce's own responsibility, not a Conceptual Synthesist's to perform directly regardless of individual technical capability. The authoritative definition, request, and approval mechanism for such policy — including any exception to it — is Ascent, per the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter; this volume states that Capital Governance holds the authority to establish it, not the policy's own operative text.

Roles and Decision Rights

Capital Governance is the sole decision-maker for every item listed above. It decides informed by Creative Governance's own certification and by the Participation Record (the Compensation chapter, §7); it does not decide unilaterally against a genuine, documented Creative Governance certification without exercising Constitutional Reserve Authority through the process the Constitutional Reserve Authority chapter defines.

Capital Governance's authority under this section is establishment and amendment of the policy itself. Day-to-day requests against an established policy — including exceptions to it — are decided through the mechanism the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter and Ascent define, without Capital Governance's own participation in any single instance.

Hiring-authority review is Capital Governance's own act, grounded in real evidence the Self-Organization and Workforce Utilization chapter's own monitoring produces — never exercised on suspicion alone.

Relationship to Other Volumes

VADR Blueprint ¶167–¶170 establish Capital Governance's purpose and its boundary against directing the Creative Workforce. This chapter operationalizes that boundary into the specific, named decisions above.

Chapter 3 — Creative Governance

This chapter states what Creative Governance stewards, and how its stewardship differs from managerial supervision.

Purpose

Creative Governance stewards the discipline of Conceptual Synthesis, the Creative Workforce, the VADR Operating Model, and VADR's portfolio of Conceptual Systems. It provides organizational stewardship, not managerial supervision — the distinction the Blueprint draws and this volume preserves throughout.

Principles

- Creative Governance is exercised collectively, through the Conceptual Stewardship Council, per the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter, never by a single individual acting alone on Creative Governance's behalf.
- Stewardship is earned through demonstrated merit, never assigned by organizational position or tenure.
- Creative Governance informs Capital Governance's own decisions through real, documented certification — it does not itself allocate capital, set compensation amounts, or approve equity grants.

Mechanisms

Creative Governance is exercised through the Conceptual Stewardship Council's own real responsibilities, defined in full in the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter. This chapter states Creative Governance's scope; the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter states how the Council that exercises it is composed and how it acts.

Roles and Decision Rights

Creative Governance certifies; it does not allocate capital. Where this volume requires a certification — that a Conceptual System reached the Commercialize stage with real revenue, that a Participation Record accurately reflects who contributed what — Creative Governance, through the Council, provides it. Capital Governance decides what follows from it.

Relationship to Other Volumes

VADR Blueprint ¶177–¶184 establish Creative Governance's purpose and its exercise through the Council. Ascent, once published, will define the discipline of Conceptual Synthesis that Creative Governance stewards; this volume governs Creative Governance's operating role around that discipline, not the discipline itself.

Chapter 4 — The Conceptual Stewardship Council

This chapter states how the Council is composed, how membership is earned, and what it is responsible for deciding and certifying.

Purpose

The Conceptual Stewardship Council is the body through which Creative Governance is exercised collectively. It exists so that stewardship of the Creative Workforce and VADR's portfolio rests with senior Conceptual Synthesists who have earned that responsibility through demonstrated merit, rather than with any single individual or with organizational position.

Principles

- Membership is earned through demonstrated merit, verified through the same non-conflicted review this volume applies to advancement generally (the Non-Conflicted Peer Review chapter) — never assigned by tenure or organizational position.
- Terms are intentionally limited so that stewardship remains continually earned rather than permanently held. This volume does not fix a specific term length; that is a real, open parameter for the Council's and Capital Governance's own first exercise of this chapter, named here rather than invented.
- The Council provides stewardship, not managerial supervision — it evaluates, certifies, and prioritizes; it does not direct day-to-day work.
- **Constitutional stewardship carries exceptional weight for Council eligibility specifically** — demonstrated adherence to VADR's constitutional principles, particularly where violating them would have been easier or advantageous. Council membership requires real strength here at a level no other category reaches: someone may be extraordinarily productive and still be a poor candidate for stewarding the Operating Model and its constitutional principles, and this chapter treats that as disqualifying for Council membership specifically, whatever else that person has earned.

Mechanisms

The Council's real, recurring responsibilities:

- Stewards the discipline of Conceptual Synthesis.
- Evaluates opportunities and approves Conceptual Syntheses.
- Prioritizes and stewards VADR's portfolio of Conceptual Systems.

- Certifies, for Capital Governance, that a Conceptual System has reached the Commercialize stage of its lifecycle with real, realized revenue — the trigger condition for the Compensation chapter's compensation consequences.
- Maintains and certifies the accuracy of each Conceptual System's Participation Record (the Compensation chapter, §7).
- Receives non-conflicted peer review findings on advancement claims (the Non-Conflicted Peer Review chapter) and resolves any finding that a claim was gamed rather than genuinely earned.
- Serves as the first real escalation point for disputes under the Conflict Resolution and Escalation chapter, short of Constitutional Reserve Authority.
- **Grants exceptions to foundational operating-model policy** established under the Capital Governance chapter — for example, a declared emergency in which the Autonomous Workforce is genuinely unavailable — through Ascent's own request and approval mechanism, on the Council's own authority, without Capital Governance's participation in any single grant.
- **Maintains a real, continuous exception log**, recording every exception granted, the real basis for it, and which specific Council member or members approved it — not merely that the Council as a body approved it. Per-approver attribution is required because the escalation ladder in the Constitutional Reserve Authority chapter may need to act on specific responsible members, not the Council undifferentiated.

Roles and Decision Rights

The Council decides, by its own collective process, every item listed above under Mechanisms. It does not decide Capital Governance's own reserved decisions (the Capital Governance chapter), and its own decisions remain subject to Capital Governance's narrowly bounded Constitutional Reserve Authority under the real, exceptional conditions the Constitutional Reserve Authority chapter states.

The Council's authority to grant exceptions is a standing grant, not renewed or reviewed per instance by Capital Governance. It remains standing unless and until Capital Governance narrows or suspends it under the Constitutional Reserve Authority chapter's escalation ladder, on confirmed evidence that the exception mechanism has become routine practice rather than genuine exception.

Relationship to Other Volumes

VADR Blueprint ¶178–¶184 establish the Council's composition and general responsibilities. This chapter operationalizes those responsibilities into the specific certifications and decisions this volume depends on.

PART III — SELF-ORGANIZATION

Chapter 5 — Self-Organization and Workforce Utilization

This chapter states how the Creative Workforce organizes itself without positional authority — how work finds people and people find work — and how Ascent monitors whether that self-organization is genuinely working.

Purpose

The Creative Workforce has no bosses, no supervisors, and no one who assigns work by directive. Stated as an absence, that principle describes nothing. This chapter states it as a real mechanism: work is chosen, not assigned, and self-organization is a designed system with its own real structure, visible to everyone in it, monitored for whether it is actually functioning.

Principles

- No positional authority exists anywhere in the Creative Workforce. Work is never assigned by directive; it is chosen, by the person doing it, or offered and voluntarily accepted.
- Leadership is earned through voluntary followership, gated by demonstrated Ascent standing — never by organizational position, tenure, or unilateral declaration. A person becomes a Leader because others, capable of judging standing for themselves, choose to follow them; not because anyone appointed them.
- All ongoing work, at every stage, is visible to the whole Creative Workforce. This is a structural precondition for self-organization to function at all, not a transparency preference — people cannot choose work they cannot see.
- Hiring authority is a real, delegated grant from Capital Governance, per the Capital Governance chapter — never an inherent right of any individual. Hiring commits real compensation, which is already Capital Governance's own decision right.
- Team membership and leadership are never permanent appointments. People may leave; teams may dissolve; leadership persists only as long as it continues to be followed.

Mechanisms

Two channels.

- Directed: Capital Governance sets a strategic objective and allocates Fid to it, per the Capital Governance chapter. A team self-assembles around it; who leads is whoever draws real, voluntary followership, not whoever proposed pursuing it.
- Undirected: an individual's own Fid allocation for self-directed exploration, per the Compensation chapter. Here the dynamic is cleanest: nothing was assigned, so a person becomes a Leader purely because others choose to join their pursuit of an idea. Standing accrues entirely from the idea and the person's own credibility.

Onboarding and mentorship.

- A newly established Worker is onboarded through Ascent, with access to real training on how the organization actually works, and becomes a visible, available resource able to see all ongoing work at every stage.
- A mentor may be assigned for a defined onboarding period. Mentorship is a real, creditable contribution, recorded through the same Participation Record mechanism the Compensation chapter defines — not a parallel reward system.
- Where a mentor relationship exists, the mentor may bring the person they are mentoring onto their own team to shadow for the mentoring period — the preferred path when it applies, giving a new resource a real team and a real person rather than a cold placement.

Visibility and its one real exception.

- Visibility is full by default. The one real exception is work that is classified or otherwise subject to a genuine external legal or contractual restriction — government classification, a security clearance requirement, a counterparty confidentiality obligation of comparable force — where disclosure to the general Creative Workforce would be unlawful or a genuine breach. This exception is bounded by real, external law, not by anyone inside VADR's own judgment of ordinary strategic sensitivity, competitive concern, or reputational preference — none of which qualify.
- Work genuinely requiring this exception is organized as a separate track, with real, hard eligibility requirements — a genuine clearance or briefing-in process — distinct from ordinary Ascent standing. Participation requires meeting those requirements; ordinary earned responsibility under the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter does not, by itself, grant access.

Workforce Utilization

Self-organization can fail quietly — a capable resource nobody invites, a resource overloaded because no one can see their real capacity, a resource who understates capacity to avoid work. Ascent monitors for all three, as a real, standing responsibility, and each carries a real, distinct consequence.

Underutilization.

- Where a resource goes without real team engagement for a sustained period, Ascent escalates to the Conceptual Stewardship Council — never auto-assigns. Placement remains a real, human, accountable decision, not an algorithmic dispatch.
- Sustained underutilization is a real, negative performance signal on every Leader who had real, active capacity needs during the underutilized resource's real dry spell, where that resource's real, visible availability and qualifications matched what those Leaders were genuinely seeking — a comparative, evidentiary standard, not a hindsight judgment that a Leader theoretically could have engaged someone. This is a diffuse signal by design where the comparison finds no genuine match, and a real, attributable one where it does.
- A confirmed, sustained pattern of underutilization is evidence bearing directly on whether hiring authority under the Capital Governance chapter was exercised well, and may trigger Capital Governance's own review of that authority — informed by, not automatically triggered by, Auditor's escalation.

Overutilization.

- Ascent gives both a Leader and a resource real, clear visibility into that resource's existing workload. A Leader should not invite an already fully burdened resource onto new work; a resource carries a real responsibility to actively manage and disclose their own capacity.
- Sustained overutilization is a negative performance signal on both the resource and the Leader or Leaders of every team that resource is engaged on — not one party alone, since both had real visibility and both had a real role in preventing it.

Workload understatement.

- A resource may not manufacture underutilization by deliberately understating real capacity to avoid work. Ascent detects this comparatively, against the real, observable productivity of the whole workforce — a claimed light load alongside genuinely low output, measured against comparable roles carrying real work, is a distinguishable pattern, the same comparative logic the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter already applies to advancement gaming generally.

Roles and Decision Rights

No one assigns work under ordinary conditions; work is chosen. The Conceptual Stewardship Council decides real placement only on Ascent's escalation, when self-organization has genuinely failed to place someone. Capital Governance reviews hiring authority on confirmed, sustained underutilization evidence — a real decision right added to the Capital Governance chapter, exercised on this chapter's own evidence.

Relationship to Other Volumes

VADR Blueprint ¶186–¶193 (Organizational Principles) and ¶202–¶209 (the Creative Workforce) state the absence of managerial hierarchy this chapter gives real mechanism to. Ascent, once formally published, is the authoritative implementation of everything this chapter states as principle — team formation, onboarding, mentor matching, and utilization monitoring are real Ascent mechanics, not specified here.

PART IV — EARNED RESPONSIBILITY AND REWARD

Chapter 6 — Earned Responsibility and Advancement

This chapter states the properties any real advancement mechanism for the Creative Workforce must have, provisionally, pending Ascent's own formal definition of its earned-responsibility levels.

Purpose

The Creative Workforce is organized around earned responsibility rather than managerial hierarchy. This chapter states what that means in practice: advancement must be real, demonstrated, and verifiable — never a function of time served.

Principles

- Authority and standing are earned progressively, through demonstrated practice of Conceptual Synthesis, never accrued by tenure alone.
- Advancement is verifiable. A claim that a Conceptual Synthesist has reached a new level of earned responsibility must be checkable against real, documented evidence — not asserted on reputation alone.
- Vigilance against gaming is continuous, not confined to a scheduled review period. A system that only checks for gaming at a fixed checkpoint invites exactly the behavior it exists to prevent.

Mechanisms

Ascent will formally define how progression within each of the six real performance categories is tracked and represented. Pending that publication, this volume states the required properties any such mechanism must satisfy, and the real consequences that already attach to it:

- Advancement reflects real, ordered progress within Ascent's own six performance categories, on the basis of real, demonstrated performance in the practice of Conceptual Synthesis. How that progress is represented — points, tiers, a continuous measure, or another real mechanism — is Ascent's own implementation choice; this volume states only the required property: progression must be real, ordered, and verifiable, never asserted or self-reported.
- Reaching a new level makes a Conceptual Synthesist eligible for the corresponding pay band and the standing associated with it. Eligibility is not automatic advancement — it is confirmed through the non-conflicted peer review the Non-Conflicted Peer Review chapter defines before it takes effect.

- Ascent monitors for gaming signals as an ongoing, standing responsibility — not something checked only when a Conceptual Synthesist presents a claim for review. If gaming behavior is detected at any point, including short of any graduation event, it is escalated for human review immediately, on the same terms as a graduation-triggered finding.
- A gaming finding, however detected, is decided by the Conceptual Stewardship Council, per the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter, never resolved silently, and never resolved by the peer reviewers themselves.
- **Ascent maintains a real, multidimensional evidence profile**, never a single collapsed score. The full catalog of signals, organized into six real categories, is stated in the Performance Signals appendix.
- **Every real advancement decision this volume names — pay-band graduation, Council eligibility, expanded Earned Authority — has its own stated profile requirement**: a real minimum level in some or all of the six categories, never a blended or weighted average. There is no cross-category offsetting — real strength in one category never substitutes for a genuine deficiency in another, deliberately, so that someone cannot advance by specializing in their own strengths while declining to address a real weakness.
- **Deliberate non-development is itself a real, distinguishable signal**, separate from simply scoring low in a category. Ascent surfaces a sustained refusal to grow in a required category as its own finding.
- **A confirmed, sustained deficiency triggers a real, complete improvement process, not a bare negative score.** Ascent assigns a coach — required to hold real, demonstrated strength in the specific deficient category, never general standing alone — and, together with the coach, crafts a tailored, actionable, trackable improvement plan with automatically scheduled check-ins. Coach and Ascent jointly evaluate the real outcome at the end.
- **Ascent may recommend; it may not decide.** A poor outcome is escalated to the Conceptual Stewardship Council with a termination recommendation, which the Council alone adjudicates — the same separation already governing this volume throughout: Ascent and Auditor detect and recommend, a real, accountable body decides.
- **Coaching is a real, creditable contribution, weighted above ordinary mentorship** given the genuine stakes involved, recorded through the same Participation Record mechanism the Compensation chapter defines. A resource who successfully clears a confirmed deficiency earns its own distinct positive signal for the turnaround, not merely the resolution of the negative finding.

Roles and Decision Rights

Ascent's own mechanism determines level advancement in the first instance. Non-conflicted peer review (the Non-Conflicted Peer Review chapter) confirms a band-graduation claim before it takes effect. The Conceptual Stewardship Council decides any gaming finding. Capital Governance sets the pay-band structure those levels map to (the Capital Governance chapter).

Relationship to Other Volumes

This chapter is explicitly provisional. Ascent, once formally published, defines the actual mechanism for tracking and representing progression; this chapter's required properties and the vigilance mechanism remain binding, and Ascent's own content is reconciled against them per the Amendment chapter (Amendment) rather than silently assumed to already comply.

Chapter 7 — Compensation

This chapter states how the Creative Workforce is compensated: salary, benefits, profit share, earned ownership, and individual exploration — and, for each, which body decides.

Purpose

Compensation for the Creative Workforce follows the same principle as standing itself: earned through demonstrated merit, decided by a real, accountable body, never running on an automatic formula outside anyone's judgment.

Principles

- No compensation mechanism in this chapter commits Capital Governance's own resources automatically. Every real financial consequence names the body that decides it, per the Capital Governance chapter.
- Compensation increases are earned, not scheduled. There is no calendar-based salary review or automatic raise.
- Ownership tracks earned responsibility, not tenure — the same principle the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter applies to standing generally.

Mechanisms

Base Salary.

- No scheduled review and no calendar-based raise. Compensation increases only through earned merit, assessed within Ascent (the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter).
- Capital Governance sets, once, a real pay-band structure tied to Ascent's own earned-responsibility levels, with defined steps within each band.
- Reaching a new level makes a Conceptual Synthesist eligible for the corresponding pay band; eligibility opens the door, it does not itself advance pay.
- Step increases within a band are administered directly once eligibility and level are confirmed — no independent peer review of each step, since a step increase re-affirms standing a peer review already confirmed, without a new claim being made.
- Band graduation is subject to non-conflicted peer review before it takes effect (the Non-Conflicted Peer Review chapter) — a real elevation in standing, not merely in pay, and the event gaming would actually target.
- A peer-review finding that a climb was gamed rather than earned is escalated to the Conceptual Stewardship Council for resolution (the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter).

Benefits.

- Standard package (health, retirement contribution, and equivalent), set once by Capital Governance, administered operationally thereafter.

Commercialization Profit Share.

- A company-wide profit-sharing pool, not an individual contractual entitlement — distinct from Individual Exploration below, which is a specific self-directed path with its own reward mechanism.
- Capital Governance sets, annually, a fixed percentage of net profit attributable to commercialized Conceptual Systems to allocate to the pool — a real, deliberate decision each year, not a standing formula.
- The pool is distributed across contributors to commercialized systems according to the documented Participation Record (§7 below), not discretionary judgment.

Earned Ownership.

- Primary instrument: real equity or profits interests, vesting against earned-responsibility milestones — never tenure alone.
- If VADR incorporates as an LLC: profits interests, the standard instrument for exactly this — an interest in future appreciation only, no tax at grant, vesting tied to Ascent's own earned-responsibility levels once formally published.
- If VADR incorporates as a C-corporation: restricted stock units or options, the same milestone-vesting logic, the standard instrument for that entity type.
- Warrants are retained as a narrow, supplemental grant recognizing a specific individual or team contribution to a specific commercialized system — a bonus-shaped instrument, not the vehicle for ongoing earned ownership.
- Capital Governance approves the equity pool size and the vesting-milestone schedule once; individual grants and their valuation are its own recurring decision.

Individual Exploration.

- An annual Fid allocation per Conceptual Synthesist to pursue self-directed opportunities, individually or pooled with others, assessed through the same Discover→Synthesize→Validate→Evolve→Commercialize lifecycle any Conceptual System goes through.
- No standing revenue-share contract. A successful outcome does not carry a fixed, automatic split of the resulting Conceptual System's profit — that would be a capital-allocation decision embedded permanently in a compensation contract,

outside Capital Governance's own real, recurring decision, and it would fractionally alienate ownership of the compounding portfolio value VADR's own thesis depends on.

- Instead, a successful outcome routes through the mechanisms already stated above: accelerated equity or profits-interest vesting sized to the contribution; that system's commercial success flowing into the same company-wide profit pool, with the Participation Record correctly crediting the originator; a cash bonus sized to the realized commercial value; and renewed or expanded Fid for the next round of exploration.

Roles and Decision Rights

Capital Governance decides: the annual profit-pool percentage; the equity pool size and vesting-milestone schedule; individual equity grants and their valuation; base salary bands and benefits policy; and whether a Conceptual System is "successfully commercialized" for purposes of triggering these consequences, informed by Creative Governance's own certification.

Creative Governance, through the Conceptual Stewardship Council, certifies: that a Conceptual System reached the Commercialize stage with real, realized revenue; and the content of each Participation Record.

Non-conflicted peer review confirms band-graduation claims before they take effect (the Non-Conflicted Peer Review chapter).

The Participation Record

A real, documented mechanism this chapter depends on for the profit-share distribution formula and for crediting individual exploration correctly. Its minimum real content, per Conceptual System: who worked on it, at what stage or stages of its lifecycle, and Creative Governance's own account of the relative weight of each contribution. It is maintained continuously as work happens, not assembled retroactively at the moment of payout.

Open Dependencies

Named here rather than silently assumed, consistent with this volume's own standing discipline:

- Incorporation and entity type. Profits interests require an LLC; this chapter's earned-ownership instrument is conditional on that decision, which has not yet been made.
- Ascent's own earned-responsibility levels, which this chapter's vesting and pay-band milestones reference but do not themselves define.

- A real valuation mechanism for equity grants prior to any external financing round — needed before any grant is issued, not assumed.
- Whether the annual profit-pool percentage and the equity pool draw from the same or separate capital allocations — a real Capital Governance decision, first exercised when this chapter is actually applied.

This chapter does not set the actual numbers — profit-pool percentage, equity pool size, vesting schedule length, pay-band boundaries. Those are deliberately left to Capital Governance's own first real exercise of the decision rights above, not pre-decided here.

Relationship to Other Volumes

VADR Blueprint ¶167–¶170 (Capital Governance's boundary) and ¶207 (earned, progressive responsibility) ground this chapter directly. the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter of this volume states the advancement mechanism this chapter's eligibility and vesting depend on. This chapter is not legal, tax, or securities advice; equity, profits-interest, and warrant instruments carry real tax and securities-law consequences and require review by qualified counsel and a qualified accountant before any instrument is issued.

PART V — VERIFICATION AND RESOLUTION

Chapter 8 — Non-Conflicted Peer Review

This chapter defines who qualifies as non-conflicted, what non-conflicted peer review actually reviews, and what happens when it finds a problem.

Purpose

Non-conflicted peer review exists to verify that a band-graduation claim reflects genuinely earned advancement, not a climb achieved by gaming Ascent's own progression mechanism. It is a check on the claim, not a second decision-making body — it confirms or contests; it does not itself grant standing.

Principles

- A reviewer is non-conflicted only if all of the following hold: the reviewer does not currently hold, and did not hold within a real, defined recent period, a standing-dependency relationship with the Conceptual Synthesist under review — including having been that person's mentor, coach, or the Leader of a Team they followed; the reviewer's own compensation, standing, or advancement does not depend on the outcome of this determination; the reviewer was not a direct, credited contributor to the same Conceptual System whose Participation Record is under review for this claim; and the reviewer's real, comparative collaboration frequency with the reviewed party, weighted toward recent activity over a real rolling window, does not exceed what Ascent's own workforce-wide baseline treats as a normal working relationship.
- Where no reviewer within the Creative Workforce satisfies these conditions for a given claim, the review is escalated directly to the Conceptual Stewardship Council rather than conducted by a conflicted reviewer under a weaker standard.
- **Reviewer independence holds over time, not only per instance.** A reviewer who repeatedly reviews the same Conceptual Synthesist, or whose own Ascent outcomes materially depend on people they review, is not genuinely non-conflicted even where no single-instance conflict exists — Ascent tracks real reviewer-reviewee pairing over time and surfaces this pattern the same way it surfaces any other.
- Review is scoped to band graduation specifically — the real elevation in standing the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter and the Compensation chapter both key their consequences to — not to routine work product, which Creative Governance's own ordinary certification processes already cover.

Mechanisms

- A band-graduation claim is reviewed against the Conceptual Synthesist's own Participation Record (the Compensation chapter, §7) and Ascent's own recorded basis for the level advancement — real, documented evidence, not the reviewer's own impression.
- Review concludes in one of two findings: the claim is confirmed, and the graduation takes effect; or the claim is contested, in which case it is escalated to the Conceptual Stewardship Council for resolution, per the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter, rather than resolved by the reviewer alone.
- A contested finding names the specific, real basis for the contest — never a general or unsubstantiated objection.

Roles and Decision Rights

Non-conflicted peer review confirms or contests a band-graduation claim. It does not decide a contested claim — that decision belongs to the Conceptual Stewardship Council, per the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter. Ascent's own continuous vigilance mechanism (the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter) operates independently of scheduled peer review and may itself trigger a Council-level finding without waiting for a graduation event.

Relationship to Other Volumes

This chapter operationalizes the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter's and the Compensation chapter's own requirement that band graduation be verified before it takes effect. Ascent, once published, may define additional review criteria specific to the practice of Conceptual Synthesis; this chapter's definition of non-conflicted status and its review scope remain binding regardless.

Chapter 9 — Conflict Resolution and Escalation

This chapter defines the real path a dispute follows, and states plainly where that path ends.

Purpose

Disputes will arise — over a contested advancement claim, over credit recorded in a Participation Record, over a Council decision, or between members of the Creative Workforce directly. This chapter gives every such dispute a real, named path to resolution.

Principles

- No dispute is resolved by a conflicted party — the same non-conflicted standard the Non-Conflicted Peer Review chapter defines applies wherever this chapter requires a real decision.
- Escalation is tiered. Most disputes resolve at the Council; Constitutional Reserve Authority is not a general appeals court, and is not exercised simply because a party disagrees with a Council decision made within its own delegated authority.
- Every real escalation and its resolution is documented — an undocumented resolution is not a real resolution under this volume.

Mechanisms

- First tier: direct resolution between the parties, where genuinely possible.
- Second tier: escalation to the Conceptual Stewardship Council, which hears the matter and decides — the same body the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter and the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter already name for gaming findings and contested advancement claims.
- Third tier, reserved for the narrow, exceptional circumstances the Constitutional Reserve Authority chapter defines: escalation to Capital Governance's own Constitutional Reserve Authority — available only where the Council itself has exceeded its delegated authority, violated VADR's constitutional principles, or created material legal or regulatory exposure, never merely because a party disagrees with a decision the Council was entitled to make.

Roles and Decision Rights

The Conceptual Stewardship Council decides most disputes under this chapter. Capital Governance decides only the narrow class of dispute the Constitutional Reserve Authority chapter defines, and only through the documented process that chapter states.

Relationship to Other Volumes

This chapter depends directly on the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter (the Council's standing as first escalation point) and the Constitutional Reserve Authority chapter (the real, narrow conditions under which Constitutional Reserve Authority may be exercised).

PART VI — RESERVE AUTHORITY AND CHANGE

Chapter 10 — Constitutional Reserve Authority

This chapter operationalizes Capital Governance's narrowly bounded reserve power for matters concerning the Creative Workforce.

Purpose

Capital Governance retains a narrowly bounded Constitutional Reserve Authority to protect VADR's constitutional integrity. This chapter states, for the Creative Workforce specifically, when that authority may actually be exercised and what happens when it is.

Principles

- Constitutional Reserve Authority is not an operational veto. It may not be exercised simply because Capital Governance disagrees with a Council decision made within the Council's own delegated authority.
- It exists to address exceptional circumstances: the Council exceeding its delegated authority; a violation of VADR's constitutional principles; material legal or regulatory exposure; or a confirmed pattern, surfaced by Auditor and confirmed by Capital Governance, in which a standing exception authority granted under this volume — most directly, the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter's policy-exception authority — has become routine practice rather than genuine exception. These are the real, exhaustive trigger conditions for the Creative Workforce specifically.

Mechanisms

- When exercised, the constitutional basis for the intervention is documented in writing, stating specifically which of the four trigger conditions above applies and why.
- The documented basis is disclosed to the Conceptual Stewardship Council.
- The matter is returned to Creative Governance for reconsideration consistent with the principles this documented basis states — Constitutional Reserve Authority intervenes and returns the matter; it does not itself substitute a final decision for the Council's own.
- **The pattern-based trigger follows a distinct, two-tier path.** Auditor — the same autonomous Role that reviews Deliverables under Telo, not a separate human-governance-specific function — monitors exception-granting activity as one part of its standing review responsibility and escalates a suspected pattern to Capital Governance. Capital Governance alone determines whether the escalation reflects

real abuse; Auditor's escalation is evidence for that determination, never itself the determination.

- **First tier, on confirmation: probationary reset.** Capital Governance narrows or suspends the Council's standing exception-granting authority under the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter for a real, stated reset period, after which the authority returns to its full, standing grant. This tier acts on the authority itself, not on specific Council members.
- **Second tier, on a persisting or recurring pattern: forced rotation.** Where the pattern persists through or recurs after a probationary reset, Capital Governance may force the early rotation of the specific Council member or members the exception log identifies as responsible, ahead of their own term's normal expiration under the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter. This tier depends directly on the exception log's per-approver attribution, and targets those members specifically rather than the Council undifferentiated.
- **How many confirmed instances constitute a pattern, and how long a probationary reset period runs, are real, open parameters** — named here as a genuine open dependency for Capital Governance's own first exercise of this escalation ladder, not invented or assumed.

Roles and Decision Rights

Capital Governance alone may exercise Constitutional Reserve Authority, and only through the documented process above. No other body in this volume may invoke it on Capital Governance's behalf.

Relationship to Other Volumes

VADR Blueprint ¶171–¶176 establish Constitutional Reserve Authority's real scope and its non-veto character. This chapter states the documentation and disclosure process for its exercise specifically where it concerns the Creative Workforce.

Chapter 11 — Amendment

This chapter states how this volume itself changes — including how its own provisional status resolves once Ascent is formally published.

Purpose

This volume is provisional by design in several places — the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter's advancement mechanism most directly. This chapter states how those provisional statements resolve, and how this volume changes more generally over time.

Principles

- A provisional statement in this volume remains binding until the authoritative source it anticipates is formally published — it is never treated as merely aspirational in the interim.
- Reconciliation against a newly published authoritative source (most directly, Ascent) is a real, documented act, not a silent, automatic supersession.
- Amendment of this volume's own binding principles — as distinct from reconciliation against Ascent — follows Capital Governance's and Creative Governance's own real, joint process, consistent with the separation the Capital Governance chapter and the Creative Governance chapter establish.

Mechanisms

- When Ascent is formally published, every provisional statement in this volume — named explicitly in each chapter's own Relationship to Other Volumes section — is reconciled against Ascent's own text. Where they agree, the provisional statement is confirmed and its provisional marking removed. Where they differ, the difference is documented and resolved by the Conceptual Stewardship Council and Capital Governance jointly, consistent with the decision rights each holds under this volume.
- Any other amendment to this volume's own principles requires agreement between Capital Governance and Creative Governance, documented, with the specific provision changed and the reasoning stated — the same discipline of naming and correcting a change explicitly rather than silently that VADR's other governing documents already practice.

Roles and Decision Rights

Capital Governance and Creative Governance jointly decide any amendment to this volume's own binding principles. Reconciliation against Ascent follows the process above rather than requiring a separate amendment for each provisional statement it resolves.

Relationship to Other Volumes

This chapter governs this volume's own relationship to every other volume it references — the Blueprint, Ascent, and Volume 001 — as those relationships evolve.

APPENDICES

Glossary

- **Band Graduation** — Advancement from one pay band to the next, triggered by reaching a new Ascent earned-responsibility level, confirmed by non-conflicted peer review before it takes effect.
- **Capital Governance** — The body representing VADR's owners; holds capital allocation and ownership-level decisions for the Creative Workforce. Does not direct the Creative Workforce or the practice of Conceptual Synthesis.
- **Conceptual Stewardship Council** — The body through which Creative Governance is exercised collectively; composed of senior Conceptual Synthesists who have earned membership through demonstrated merit.
- **Constitutional Reserve Authority** — Capital Governance's narrowly bounded authority to intervene in exceptional circumstances — exceeded delegated authority, a violation of constitutional principles, or material legal or regulatory exposure. Not an operational veto.
- **Creative Governance** — Stewardship of the discipline of Conceptual Synthesis, the Creative Workforce, and VADR's portfolio of Conceptual Systems, exercised through the Conceptual Stewardship Council.
- **Individual Exploration** — An annual Fid allocation per Conceptual Synthesist for self-directed opportunities; a successful outcome routes through earned ownership, profit share, and bonus, never a standing revenue-share contract.
- **Non-Conflicted Peer Review** — Verification of a band-graduation claim by a reviewer holding no reporting, compensation, or direct-contribution relationship to the matter under review.
- **Participation Record** — The documented record, maintained continuously per Conceptual System, of who contributed what, at what stage, and Creative Governance's own account of relative weight — the basis for profit-share distribution and individual-exploration crediting.
- **Successfully Commercialized** — A Conceptual System that has reached the Commercialize stage of its lifecycle with real, realized revenue, certified by Creative Governance and approved by Capital Governance as the trigger for compensation consequences under the Compensation chapter.
- **Exception Log** — The Conceptual Stewardship Council's continuous record of every exception it grants against foundational operating-model policy, including the real basis for each and which specific Council member or members approved it.

- **Foundational Operating-Model Policy** — Policy established by Capital Governance and binding on the Creative Workforce, defined and administered through Ascent — for example, that Conceptual Synthesists do not directly write code or configure infrastructure.

Decision Rights — Consolidated

Every real decision this volume names, and the body responsible for making it, consolidated from each chapter's own Roles and Decision Rights section:

- **Pay-band structure** — *Capital Governance*
- **Equity pool size, vesting milestones** — *Capital Governance*
- **Individual equity grants, valuation** — *Capital Governance*
- **Annual profit-pool percentage** — *Capital Governance*
- **"Successfully commercialized" approval** — *Capital Governance, informed by Creative Governance certification*
- **Base salary bands, benefits policy** — *Capital Governance*
- **Band-graduation level advancement** — *Ascent's own mechanism*
- **Band-graduation confirmation** — *Non-Conflicted Peer Review*
- **Contested advancement claim** — *Conceptual Stewardship Council*
- **Gaming finding, however detected** — *Conceptual Stewardship Council*
- **Participation Record content** — *Creative Governance / Conceptual Stewardship Council*
- **First-tier dispute escalation** — *Conceptual Stewardship Council*
- **Constitutional Reserve Authority exercise** — *Capital Governance, sole authority*
- **Reconciliation against Ascent on publication** — *Conceptual Stewardship Council and Capital Governance jointly*
- **Amendment of this volume's own principles** — *Capital Governance and Creative Governance jointly*
- **Foundational operating-model policy establishment/amendment** — *Capital Governance*
- **Exception grant against foundational policy** — *Conceptual Stewardship Council*
- **Pattern-of-abuse confirmation (foundational policy exceptions)** — *Capital Governance, informed by Auditor*
- **Probationary reset of Council exception authority** — *Capital Governance*
- **Forced early rotation of specific Council members** — *Capital Governance*

This volume does not resolve: the actual numeric values Capital Governance sets under the Capital Governance chapter and the Compensation chapter; Ascent's own earned-responsibility level definitions; and whether this volume, once Ascent exists, is absorbed into Ascent's own governing text or remains a standing, separate volume — all deliberately left to real, future exercise of the decision rights this volume establishes, not pre-decided here.

Performance Signals — Provisional

The real signal catalog underlying the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter's profile-requirement principle. Six independent categories, each with a real, stated gaming risk and counter for every signal, plus a cross-category integrity layer. This is a provisional first publication, at full depth — not deferred, and not a placeholder — with the actual threshold values for each profile requirement left to Capital Governance's and the Conceptual Stewardship Council's own first exercise, per the Earned Responsibility and Advancement chapter.

Ascent computes real category-level measures from this catalog. It never collapses them into one blended score, and no real strength in one category ever offsets a real deficiency in another.

A. Synthesis Contribution

- **Concept origination** — Originating an opportunity or conceptual insight that materially becomes part of a Conceptual System — real creative contribution, credited before lifecycle progression. **Gaming risk:** *Claiming origination credit for an idea substantially developed by someone else.* **Counter:** *Weighted by the Participation Record's own required attribution, per the Compensation chapter, not by self-declaration.*

- **Synthesis quality** — Whether a contribution genuinely integrates disparate ideas into a coherent operational capability, rather than producing analysis alone. **Gaming risk:** *Producing high-volume analysis without real integration, to appear productive.* **Counter:** *Judged by the Conceptual Stewardship Council's own certification of genuine stage progression, not activity volume.*

- **Validation contribution** — Meaningful contribution to real validation, including rigorously demonstrating that something does not work. A real, rigorous negative result that prevents VADR from pursuing a flawed path is genuine demonstrated merit, not a failure. **Gaming risk:** *Manufacturing trivial validation activity, or avoiding validation work that might produce an unwelcome result.* **Counter:** *Weighted by real rigor and real consequence, evaluated by Ascent or Auditor in the first instance, not by whether the result was positive — escalated to the Council only where the evaluation is genuinely contested.*

- **Evolution contribution** — Real improvement to an existing Conceptual System resulting from evidence or operational experience — preventing this category from rewarding only originators while undervaluing people who make systems better. **Gaming risk:** *Claiming evolution credit for cosmetic or trivial changes.* **Counter:** *Weighted by real, demonstrated operational impact, not change volume.*

B. Judgment Quality

- **Decision quality** — The real outcome of consequential decisions made within someone's Earned Authority, judged by whether the reasoning was sound given what was genuinely knowable at the time — never judged by hindsight alone. **Gaming risk:** *Only ever making trivially safe, low-consequence decisions to guarantee a clean record.* **Counter:** *Weighted by the real, comparative consequence of the decision — a pattern of only ever deciding safe matters is itself a distinguishable, visible pattern.*

- **Escalation judgment** — Escalating when genuinely warranted, and deciding independently when holding sufficient authority and information — in both directions, since excessive escalation can masquerade as prudence. Judged against what was knowable at the time, the same standard applied to decision quality. **Gaming risk:** *Escalating routinely to avoid ever being wrong, or never escalating to appear maximally decisive.* **Counter:** *Ascent tracks the real, comparative escalation rate against comparable authority and comparable stakes; either extreme is a visible pattern.*

- **Uncertainty recognition** — Identifying material unknowns, weak assumptions, missing evidence, or unresolved questions before they become real problems. **Gaming risk:** *Manufacturing minor, low-stakes uncertainties to appear thorough.* **Counter:** *Weighted by real materiality, evaluated by Ascent or Auditor in the first instance — trivial flags do not count, and only a contested evaluation reaches the Council.*

- **Evidence responsiveness** — Whether a stated position changes appropriately when credible contrary evidence appears. **Gaming risk:** *Never updating a position regardless of evidence, to appear consistent; or reversing positions performatively without real cause.* **Counter:** *Ascent tracks the real correspondence between new evidence and position change over time — both non-responsiveness and performative reversal are distinguishable patterns.*

C. Stewardship

The category most directly tied to Leadership as the Blueprint defines it — stewardship, not supervision. Ascent needs real evidence someone becomes a good steward before granting them more stewardship.

- **Authority judgment** — The real quality of Earned Authority decisions: appropriate scope, appropriate recipient, appropriate timing. **Gaming risk:** *Granting only narrow, low-risk authority to avoid ever being blamed for a bad grant.* **Counter:** *Weighted against real, comparable authority-granting patterns — excessive caution is itself a visible, comparable pattern.*

- **Resource stewardship** — Real outcomes achieved relative to resources consumed or committed — using resources intelligently, not merely spending less. **Gaming risk:** *Underspending to appear efficient while starving real necessary work.* **Counter:** *Judged against real outcomes achieved, not spend alone; starved necessary work is independently visible through other signals.*
- **Portfolio judgment** — The real quality of prioritization decisions across competing opportunities. **Gaming risk:** *Prioritizing only safe, already-likely-to-succeed opportunities.* **Counter:** *Weighted by the real difficulty and consequence of the prioritization call, evaluated by Ascent or Auditor in the first instance, with the Council reserved for contested or high-consequence cases.*
- **Talent development** — Whether people working with a Leader demonstrably increase their real capability and subsequently earn greater responsibility. **Gaming risk:** *Cherry-picking people already likely to succeed and claiming credit for their trajectory, rather than genuinely developing anyone.* **Counter:** *Weighted by real, demonstrated capability growth attributable to the relationship, not by the raw success rate of people a Leader has worked with.*
- **Responsibility handoff** — Successful delegation of meaningful responsibility, rather than accumulating it personally. **Gaming risk:** *Delegating only trivial responsibility while retaining everything consequential.* **Counter:** *Weighted by the real significance of what was actually handed off, evaluated by Ascent or Auditor in the first instance, with the Council reserved for contested or high-consequence cases.*
- **Constitutional stewardship** — Demonstrated adherence to VADR's constitutional principles, particularly where violating them would have been easier or advantageous. Carries exceptional weight for Council eligibility specifically, per the Conceptual Stewardship Council chapter. **Gaming risk:** *No meaningful way to fake this affirmatively; the real risk is a false negative — someone genuinely principled being penalized for a single, defensible judgment call.* **Counter:** *The Council distinguishes a real constitutional violation from a genuine, defensible judgment call, per the same standard the Compensation chapter already applies to distinguishing error from judgment.*

D. Collaboration and Organizational Health

- **Peer-demand signal** — Repeated, voluntary selection by different qualified people to work together again — anchored to real, verified outcome, not raw popularity: people who worked with someone and had a real, good result choosing to work with them again. **Gaming risk:** *Cultivating personal popularity disconnected from real outcomes.* **Counter:** *Anchored specifically to verified outcome, not bare repeat selection — popularity without real outcome does not qualify.*

- **Contribution diversity** — Real, useful contribution across different Teams, Conceptual Systems, stages, or roles — establishing breadth, not asserting that more is inherently better. **Gaming risk:** *Superficial "drive-by" involvement across many systems to inflate breadth.* **Counter:** *Weighted by the Participation Record's own real contribution weighting — a trivial contribution does not carry trivial weight, it carries none.*
- **Team outcome contribution** — Contribution to successful Team outcomes independently of formal leadership — crediting real contribution regardless of who led. **Gaming risk:** *Free-riding on a successful team's outcome without real contribution.* **Counter:** *Weighted by the Participation Record's real, attributed weighting per person, not by team membership alone.*
- **Knowledge contribution** — Reusable knowledge that measurably improves other people's synthesis or judgment. **Gaming risk:** *Producing high-volume, low-value documentation to appear knowledge-rich.* **Counter:** *Weighted by real, demonstrated reuse and impact, not volume produced.*
- **Constructive challenge** — Materially useful dissent that genuinely improves a decision, Conceptual System, or validation effort. **Gaming risk:** *Manufacturing routine, low-cost objections to appear engaged.* **Counter:** *Weighted by real, demonstrated impact on the outcome, evaluated by Ascent or Auditor in the first instance — objection alone earns nothing, and only a contested evaluation reaches the Council.*
- **Independent judgment** — Demonstrated willingness and ability to reach a reasoned position independently of prevailing organizational consensus, including where that position is ultimately not adopted. This does not require being right — the merit is in bringing a genuinely reasoned independent perspective into the synthesis, distinct from Constructive Challenge's own measure of dissent's effect: this measures the demonstrated exercise of independent thought itself. **Gaming risk:** Manufacturing performative disagreement — dissenting only when confident of winning, or as a routine posture, rather than reasoning to a genuinely independent position. **Counter:** Weighted by the real, demonstrated reasoning behind the position, not by whether it was adopted or by disagreement alone, evaluated by Ascent or Auditor in the first instance — escalated to the Council only where genuinely contested.
- **Collaboration drag** — A real, negative signal for recurring behavior that imposes a measurable cost on Teams despite acceptable individual output — catching the brilliant-but-destructive performer output metrics alone routinely reward. **Gaming risk:** *None meaningful — this signal exists specifically because output-based measures are otherwise gameable by this exact behavior.* **Counter:** *Corroborated*

across multiple, independent Team relationships before counting, per the cross-signal corroboration principle below — a single complaint does not establish a pattern.

E. Reliability and Responsibility

- **Commitment reliability** — Completing what was actually committed to, weighted by the real difficulty of the commitment — not raw completion count. **Gaming risk:** *Only ever committing to trivially safe work to guarantee a perfect completion record.* **Counter:** *Weighted against real, comparable commitment difficulty — a pattern of only safe commitments is itself visible.*
- **Responsibility reliability** — Real, observed performance after greater responsibility has actually been granted — the direct feedback loop closing demonstrated merit back into the next real decision, so a single past contribution never permanently over-credits someone. **Gaming risk:** *Coasting on a strong initial reputation without genuine performance under the new, greater responsibility.* **Counter:** *Measured specifically post-grant, against the real scope of the new responsibility — prior reputation does not substitute for observed performance under it.*
- **Recovery quality** — What someone does after a real miss: disclose it, contain the real consequences, correct it, demonstrably learn from it. **Gaming risk:** *Performative disclosure with no real correction or contained consequence.* **Counter:** *Weighted by real, verified containment and correction, not disclosure alone.*
- **Predictability** — Whether others can genuinely rely on stated commitments, estimates, availability, and decisions. **Gaming risk:** *Deliberately understating estimates to reliably "beat" them.* **Counter:** *Ascent compares real, historical estimate accuracy against actual outcome — systematic sandbagging is itself a distinguishable pattern.*
- **Ownership behavior —** Remaining genuinely engaged through resolution, rather than treating one's own contribution as the endpoint. **Gaming risk:** *Disengaging immediately after one's own narrow contribution, leaving real resolution to others.* **Counter:** *Weighted by real, verified engagement through the actual resolution, not the initial contribution alone.*

F. Organizational Value

- **Economic contribution** — Realized revenue, cost reduction, avoided expenditure, or other real, objectively measurable economic value attributable to a contribution. **Gaming risk:** *Claiming outsized attribution for a shared economic result.* **Counter:**

Weighted by the Participation Record's own real attribution, per the Compensation chapter, not self-declared.

- **Capacity creation** — Real contribution that makes VADR genuinely capable of something it previously could not do. **Gaming risk:** *Overstating the real novelty of an incremental improvement.* **Counter:** *Evaluated by Ascent or Auditor against the real, prior state of VADR's own capability, not asserted novelty — escalated to the Council only where genuinely contested.*

- **Reusable leverage** — Creation of knowledge, methods, Conceptual Systems, or other assets that materially improve subsequent, real work — the direct measure of whether a contribution strengthens future synthesis, consistent with the Blueprint's own stated intent that each Conceptual System strengthen the next. **Gaming risk:** *Producing generically-labeled "reusable" assets never actually reused.* **Counter:** *Weighted by real, demonstrated subsequent reuse, not by the asset's existence alone.*

- **Risk prevention** — Identifying or resolving a real, material problem before it produces organizational harm. **Gaming risk:** *Manufacturing minor risks to "discover" and resolve them for credit.* **Counter:** *Weighted by the real, independently-assessed materiality of the prevented harm, evaluated by Ascent or Auditor in the first instance — not self-assessed, and escalated to the Council only where genuinely contested.*

Integrity and Gaming Detection — Cross-Category

These run horizontally across all six categories. The governing principle: signals are made expensive to fake because most require corroborating evidence from independent organizational events, rather than relying primarily on detecting suspicious behavior after the fact.

- **No self-authored performance evidence.** Ascent derives every signal from real, independent organizational events — lifecycle events, Participation Records, real commitments, Team formation, governance decisions, validation results, economic outcomes, escalations, authority grants. A person may provide context; they do not create the underlying evidence.

- **Cross-signal corroboration.** No important conclusion depends on one signal alone. Extraordinary progression in one category alongside weak, contradictory signals elsewhere is itself a pattern worth real examination, not an average to be smoothed over.

- **Outcome lag.** Signals for judgment, stewardship, commercialization, and mentorship remain genuinely provisional until enough real time has passed to observe the actual outcome.

- **Counterfactual comparison.** Where feasible, Ascent asks not only what happened, but what genuinely changed because of a specific contribution — distinguishing participation from real contribution. Stated plainly as aspirational and Ascent-implementation-dependent: genuine counterfactual attribution is a real, hard problem, and this volume does not claim it is solved, only that Ascent should pursue it.
- **Contribution graph analysis.** Participation Records form a real network Ascent can analyze for reciprocal-credit rings, closed groups repeatedly inflating one another, or anomalously uniform weighting — the same fraud-detection logic applicable to detecting coordinated reputation gaming among Autonomous Participants in the Economy of Trust.
- **Reviewer independence over time.** Per the Non-Conflicted Peer Review chapter's own amended definition — not merely per-instance.
- **Negative evidence persists.** A volume of trivial positive signals never mathematically erases one real, material governance failure. Different classes of evidence stay visible in the profile rather than collapsing into an averaged score.
- **Confirmed gaming is itself evidence about judgment.** A confirmed attempt to manipulate any Ascent signal is not merely a deduction against the gamed signal — it is real, direct evidence relevant to whether that person should be entrusted with greater responsibility, authority, or stewardship at all, weighed under Stewardship specifically.
- **Signal divergence.** Material divergence between someone's apparent Ascent trajectory and independently observable organizational outcomes — broader than an optimization anomaly, since it does not presume misconduct. The measurement itself may simply be wrong, and Ascent should treat that possibility as seriously as the possibility of gaming.

This appendix does not resolve: the actual threshold values for any profile requirement; the specific comparative statistics Ascent computes for workforce-wide baselines; and the real weighting, where any exists, within a category between its own signals. All deliberately left to Capital Governance's and the Conceptual Stewardship Council's own first exercise, consistent with how this volume treats every other undecided parameter.