



University Court
Videoconference
Monday, 14 June 2021

AGENDA

OPENING ITEMS

- | | | |
|----------|--|---|
| 1 | Minute
To <u>approve</u> the minute of the meeting held on 26 April 2021 | A1 |
| 2 | Matters Arising & Review of Action Log
To <u>raise</u> any matters arising and <u>review</u> the Action Log | A2 |
| 3 | Principal's Report
To <u>note</u> a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal | B |
| 4 | Committee Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Lay Member's Overview• Policy & Resources Committee• Audit & Risk Committee• Court USS Sub-Group• Nominations Committee• Knowledge Strategy Committee• Senate | Verbal
C1
C2
C3
C4
C5
C6 |

KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

- | | | |
|-----------|--|------------------------|
| 5 | Curriculum Transformation Update
To <u>consider</u> a paper presented by Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students | D |
| 6 | Students' Association and Sports Union Reports
To <u>note</u> the reports presented by Ellen MacRae, EUSA President <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students' Association Report• Sports Union Report | E1
E2 |
| 7 | Academic Year 2021/22 Planning Group Report
To <u>note</u> a report from Barry Neilson, Director of Strategic Change | F |
| 8 | Director of Finance's Report
To <u>note</u> a report by Lee Hamill, Director of Finance | G |
| 9 | Planning Round 2021/22 Proposals
To <u>approve</u> the paper presented by Pauline Manchester, Interim Director of Strategic Planning | H |
| 10 | China Collaborations
To <u>consider</u> the papers presented by James Smith, Vice-Principal International: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on current and pipeline partnerships in China• Low Carbon College Joint Institute | I1
I2 |

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| 11 | Usher Institute for Population Health Sciences
To <u>approve</u> the paper presented by Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal (Interim) Corporate Services | J |
| 12 | University Pharmacy
To <u>approve</u> the paper presented by Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience | K |
| 13 | Institutional Position on Scottish Independence
To <u>approve</u> the paper presented by Sarah Smith, Vice-Principal Strategic Change & Governance; and University Secretary | L |

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

- | | | |
|-----------|--|--------------|
| 14 | Court Internal Effectiveness Review
To <u>approve</u> | M |
| 15 | Prevent Duty Implementation Update
To <u>note</u> | N |
| 16 | Education Act 1994 Compliance/EUSA Democracy Regulations
To <u>approve</u> | O1,O2 |
| 17 | Awards of University Benefactor
To <u>approve</u> | P |
| 18 | Annual Recognition of Alumni Clubs
To <u>approve</u> | Q |
| 19 | Donations and Legacies; Alumni Events
To <u>note</u> | R |
| 20 | Resolutions
To <u>approve</u> | S |
| 21 | Any Other Business
To <u>consider</u> any other matters | |
| 22 | Date of Next Meeting
Wednesday, 6 October 2021, Seminar & Meeting | |



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 April 2021 (Videoconference)

[DRAFT] Minute

- Members Present:** Debora Kayembe, Rector (in Chair)
Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member
Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor
Alastair Dunlop, Chancellor's Assessor
Doreen Davidson, General Council Assessor
Jock Millican, General Council Assessor
Sarah Wolffe, General Council Assessor
Sarah Cooper, Senatus Assessor
Fiona Mackay, Senatus Assessor & Academic Staff Member
Kathryn Nash, Trade Union Academic Staff Member
Sarah McAllister, Professional Services Staff Member
Joyce Anderson, Trade Union Professional Services Staff Member
Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member
Perdita Fraser, Co-opted Member
Caroline Gardner, Co-opted Member
Alan Johnston, Co-opted Member
David Law, Co-opted Member
Hugh Mitchell, Co-opted Member
Clare Reid, Co-opted Member
Frank Ross, City of Edinburgh Council Assessor
Ellen MacRae, Students' Association President
Rachel Irwin, Students' Association Vice-President Activities & Services
- Apologies:** Claire Phillips, Senatus Assessor
- In attendance:** Sophia Lycouris, Rector's Assessor
Sarah Smith, Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance; and
University Secretary
- Presenters & Observers:** Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services
Leigh Chalmers, Deputy Secretary Governance & Legal
Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience
Lee Hamill, Director of Finance
Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students
Gary Jebb, Director of Estates
Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal (Interim) Corporate Services
Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to
the University
Theresa Merrick, Director of Communications & Marketing
James Saville, Director of Human Resources
Jonathan Seckl, Senior Vice-Principal
Moira Whyte, Vice-Principal & Head of College
Barry Neilson, Director of Strategic Change (for Item 4)
Sarah Cunningham-Burley, University Lead for Equality, Diversity &
Inclusion (for Item 8)

1 Minute

Papers A1, A2

Debora Kayembe, the University's new Rector, welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and introduced Sophia Lycouris, an academic staff member at the Edinburgh College of Art and the new Rector's Assessor. Sophia Lycouris thanked the Rector for her introduction and spoke to Debora Kayembe's career as a human rights lawyer and campaigner and her interest in anti-racism work at the University.

Ellen MacRae, Students' Association President, was congratulated on her re-election to a second term of office and Rachel Irwin, Students' Association Vice-President Activities & Services, was thanked for her service to the Students' Association and the Court on the occasion of her last meeting and wished well for the future.

The Minute of the meeting and note of the seminar held on 22 February 2021 were approved.

2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log

Paper A3

Sarah Smith, Vice-Principal Strategic Change & Governance and University Secretary, provided an update on two matters raised at the previous meeting: the University's directors and officers insurance policy which provides coverage for Court members and complaints handling with respect to Court members – with a follow-up note on both points to be circulated after the meeting.

3 Principal's Report

Paper B

Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, welcomed the Rector and Rector's Assessor to their first meeting, and supplemented the written report with the following points:

- As the University moves into a new phase of recovery from the pandemic, the temporary Adaptation & Renewal Team structure has been incorporated back within pre-existing management structures. Court will continue to be updated on the pandemic response, anticipated to be via the Principal's Report in future;
- An all-staff virtual Town Hall meeting was held last week with over 1,400 staff attending and over 200 questions raised. A degree of caution and uncertainty over the expected return of many staff to the campus was raised given the experience of the last year, as was a perception that contributions from professional services staff during the pandemic had received less focus than that of academic staff, which had not been intended. A sense of more positivity towards the future as the University emerges from the pandemic was also evident; and,
- Preparations for the forthcoming COP26 UN Climate Change Conference. Around 60 UK universities are involved in the civil society element of the conference with Professor Dave Reay leading for the University of Edinburgh and chairing a group covering the education and skills agenda.

Members raised the following points:

- The University's response to UK Government Official Development Assistance research funding cuts – the University as a member of the Russell Group is active in making the case that the unprecedented reductions in funding for on-going research projects will not only damage UK universities but will damage partners in developing countries and relationships with them;
- The speed of offer making to prospective undergraduates in comparison with peer institutions – this is recognised as a long-standing issue and there is an intention to address both the speed of offer making and communications around this;
- The financial effects of the recent increase in Scottish domiciled undergraduate student numbers – public funding is not sufficient to cover all costs for Scottish domiciled students so cross-subsidy from other sources is required. The aggregate level of cross-subsidy needed will increase if student numbers grow as they have done in the past year owing to the changes to school and college assessments given the pandemic; and,
- Whether public health restrictions will lead to some students repeating a year of study if their learning has been significantly impacted – the main example of this in Scotland is that all final year dentistry students will be required to repeat their final year but the University does not offer an undergraduate dental course so is unaffected by this decision. If there were to be a further year of significant public health restrictions this may begin to impact on more courses with practical accreditation requirements.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4 Adaptation & Renewal Team Report

Paper C

A final update on the work of the Adaptation and Renewal Team from February to March 2021 was reviewed. An Academic Year 2021/22 Planning Group has been established to plan for the new academic year in anticipation of new public health rules and guidelines for universities. The progress of the vaccination programme gives cause for some optimism for the next year, with a planning assumption that students will be present in Edinburgh to receive smaller group teaching in-person with 1 metre physical distancing, subject to guidance awaited from the Scottish Government. The Principal thanked Barry Neilson, Director of Strategic Change, for his work as co-ordinating director for the Adaptation & Renewal Team over the past 12 months in challenging circumstances.

A recent increase in cases at the University was discussed, noting that a group of cases have emerged connected to one event that was not a campus activity. Health protection measures have been implemented in response and cases have not subsequently increased over the past week. The assumptions behind planning for 1 metre physical distancing for the next academic year were discussed and whether this is linked to the vaccine roll-out, noting that not all staff and students will be vaccinated by the start of the new academic year. Colleagues are working with Universities Scotland on a consistent set of assumptions for the sector for planning purposes while Scottish Government guidance is awaited. The assumptions include a range of public health measures including physical distancing. The UK vaccine

target is to offer all adults a first vaccine by 31 July and the University will work with public health authorities to support the vaccination of students.

5 Support for Students at Risk of Self-Harm

Paper D

A briefing note on the support provided to students who are at risk of self-harm was reviewed. Demand for counselling services has grown significantly in recent years and waiting times have increased, although they remain favourable in comparison to equivalent NHS provision and a further 5 full-time equivalent staff are being recruited to join the 17 in post at the Student Counselling Service. The use of a third party provider to add additional capacity at peak times for less urgent cases is also being piloted. The following points were raised in discussion:

- It was requested that Court be updated on work to address the points of learning identified from the major internal review into the support provided to a student who died of suicide in 2020. It was noted that the coroner had decided not to issue a prevention of future death notice for this case given the University's response;
- What factors have been identified as leading to the increase in demand in counselling services – this appears to be part of a wider change witnessed in western countries in recent years and while many factors have been posited, a consensus on the key factors has not yet emerged. What the University can do in response is to understand better where particular pressures on students exist and what can be done to assist with these;
- Whether the planned changes to the personal tutor system can be prioritised for implementation – the pandemic has meant that capacity is not available to start what was planned as a major 18 month project across the University. However, some areas within the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences have felt ready to proceed on a faster timescale and will do so. Future student experience reports to Court will update on this;
- The position relative to peer institutions – the increased level of demand is similar at peer institutions and in terms of skilled staff, the University's Student Counselling Service is highly regarded and is fully accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy;
- Training and support offered to non-specialist staff dealing with cases – around 500 staff take in-house training each year for supporting those with mental health difficulties. One area of training that will be reviewed to help staff is guidance on escalation of cases;
- Addressing staff pressure given increased demands and workloads more generally – the review of student support and the personal tutor system recognised this as an issue and has the intention to reduce demands on academic staff in this area. Regarding provision of mental health services for staff, there is a staff counselling service, which has moved to online provision during the pandemic in addition to the Chaplaincy listening service. In recognition of the additional pressures during the pandemic respite days have been offered and advice and guidance on remote working, including encouraging breaks and using annual leave where possible, made available;
- Whether the planned recruitment of new counselling staff will be affected by the general pause in staff recruitment. The staff recruitment exceptions committee authorised the five new positions and four are now in post; and,

- The importance of careful selection and vetting for any third party provider used, including agreeing information sharing protocols.

6 Students' Association and Sports Union Reports

Papers E1,E2

Ellen MacRae, Students' Association President, introduced reports from the Students' Association and the Sports Union and updated on recent events, including the positive response to the opening of the Teviot Garden outdoor café/bar, the Match-Up Catch-Up buddy scheme and the Student Awards and Teaching Awards. Recent issues raised by students have included: difficulties amongst first year students in forming groups to seek private sector accommodation for the next academic year; requests for tuition fee refunds; concerns from international students regarding Covid-related impediments in applying for graduate visas; the delay in implementing the recommendations of the personal tutor and student support review; and, student safety on campus and gender-based violence. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The financial challenges of the pandemic for the Students' Association and the wish to see a strong and sustainable Association emerge from this period – internal reshaping work and digital transformation work is underway and discussions are continuing with the University on ongoing financial planning;
- The impact of redundancies on service provision – redundancies have been in areas where service provision has not been possible during the pandemic (e.g. events), with student support services protected as much as possible;
- The level of student involvement in University planning for the next academic year – this has been raised as a concern and where student representatives have been involved in discussions on topics such as online examinations this has been well received and should be broadened to more topics; and,
- Effects of more Wednesday afternoon teaching on student sport – the Vice-Principal Students noted that this is a temporary measure resulting from timetabling difficulties given physical distancing restrictions and will be returned the pre-pandemic situation as soon as practicable.

7 Director of Finance's Report

Paper F

Lee Hamill, Director of Finance, reported on progress in producing a draft budget for 2021/22 for submission to the next meeting, the latest medium-term financial forecasts to 2024-25 and an ongoing Universities UK consultation on the response to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) 2020 valuation. Regarding the USS consultation, it was noted that all scenarios put forward by the USS Trustees for consultation include significant increases in both employer and employee contributions. A draft consultation response will be developed and reviewed by the Court USS Sub-Group before submission. It was queried how the University accounts for the risks of the USS scheme – this features on the finance risk register and the liability for the share of the recovery plan is accounted for on the University's balance sheet but not the share of liability for the scheme as a whole, in common with the rest of the sector.

Members discussed the longer-term financial challenges of managing a growing cost base while improving the estate and investing in other priorities, all within the context of highly uncertain funding environment. The need to consider these challenges in a

holistic and consultative way in addition to the regular annual planning cycle was expressed. It was noted the intention is to return to a three year planning cycle from next year and work has begun on longer-term capital project prioritisation and the curriculum transformation programme and reshaping more generally – proposals for which will be brought to Court at the appropriate points. For the next year, while the income levels forecast for accommodation, catering and events could be adversely affected should there be new public health restrictions, there is confidence that these have been set at a realistic level and will be monitored closely. Research income and expenditure was also discussed, with expenditure reduced at present given the impact of Covid restrictions but productivity levels have increased, shown by the high levels of grant applications witnessed over the past year, which is leading to higher levels of research awards.

8 Equality Reporting

- **EDMARC Staff and Student Reports 2020**
- **Equality Outcomes 2021-25, and Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Progress Report 2017-21**

Paper G1
Paper G2

Sarah Cunningham-Burley, University Lead for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, introduced the annual Equality, Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) staff and student data reports, the Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Progress Report 2017-21, the proposed Equality Outcomes for 2021-25 and updated Court on work to understand equality-related impacts of the pandemic on students and staff to date.

On the pandemic impacts, consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion issues has been integrated within each Adaptation & Renewal Team area. This has included equality impacts assessments for each building re-opening, creating accessible hybrid learning for students (e.g. lecture subtitling), the use of additional support from the Scottish Funding Council to help attract more early career researchers through the Chancellor's Fellowships scheme with a particular focus on the recruitment of ethnic minority and female staff and data gathering through home working surveys. Areas of particular concern that have emerged are the interlinked issues of morale, workload and wellbeing.

Regarding the EDMARC reports it was acknowledged that while the term 'BME' is used within the reports for Black and Minority Ethnic students and staff, this has inadequacies and is not intended to homogenise the experiences of those included. The reports show an increase in the diversity of the student and staff population in recent years, linked to an increase in the diversity of nationalities represented. Improving the 'declaration deficit' of staff who are unwilling to declare ethnicity and disability data and improving data collected more generally would help the development of meaningful actions and is a priority for future work. The reports show a continuing student attainment gap by ethnicity and disability and a staff pay gap by gender, ethnicity and disability owing to lower representation in higher grades.

For the Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Progress Report 2017-21 and the Equality Outcomes for 2021-25, it was noted that the four proposed outcomes and accompanying actions will have more detailed local actions to accompany them, with

Outcome 1 'Our staff and students feel confident and are supported to report harassment, hate crime and gender-based violence' intended as a high priority.

Members welcomed the reports and thanked staff involved in their production. The 'both/and' approach of using specialised staff and structures while working to mainstream activity was supported. It was queried whether sufficient resources are in place to recruit more specialised staff, embed the Report & Support platform and to aggregate and evaluate findings. It was agreed that the dual approach of mainstreaming and specialist support and structures is necessary at this point, the latter being particularly needed for evaluation and monitoring. Capability is in place for evaluation and monitoring if not sufficient capacity at present. For the Report & Support platform, there is optimism that resourcing will be made available to extend its use to all forms of discrimination and harassment and this will be considered by the Student Experience Committee shortly.

The EDMARC staff and student reports, the Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Progress Report 2017-21 and the Equality Outcomes for 2021-25 were all approved for publication.

9 Gujarat Biotechnology University – Final Agreement

Paper H

David Gray, Head of the School of Biological Sciences, presented an update on the finalisation of plans for a strategic partnership between the University and the Government of Gujarat for the development of the Gujarat Biotechnology University (GBU). Work has continued throughout the pandemic, including advising on the recruitment of locally employed academic staff for GBU. University of Edinburgh staff will not be based permanently on site but will visit to provide specialist advice when appropriate. Court agreed to indicate continued support for the partnership and granted approval for the University to sign a full Stage 2 binding Collaboration Agreement to govern the 10-year partnership.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

10 Estates Small Works Programme

Paper I

The Estates Small Works Programme Budget allocation for 2021/22 was approved as set out in the paper.

11 Governance Apprenticeship Programme

Paper J

Court approved the University's participation as a launch partner in the Perrett Laver Governance Apprenticeship Programme.

12 General Council Prince Philip Fund

Paper K

Approval was granted for the merger of two existing Funds into a single entity, The General Council Prince Philip Fund, to be aligned with arrangements under the Access Edinburgh student support programme.

13 Committee Reports

- **Exception Committee**

Paper L1

The report was noted.

- **Policy & Resources Committee**

Paper L2

The report was noted.

- **Audit & Risk Committee**

Paper L3

The report was noted and the Annual Strategic Risk Report and Risk Policy and Risk Appetite Statement were approved.

- **Knowledge Strategy Committee**

Paper L4

The report was noted.

- **Senate**

Paper L5

The report was noted.

14 Donations and Legacies; Alumni Events

Paper M

Court noted legacies and donations received since the last meeting and an update on current alumni relations activities.

15 Draft Resolutions

Paper N

The following draft Resolutions were referred to Senate and the General Council for observations:

- Draft Resolution No. 2/2021: Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations
- Draft Resolution No. 3/2021: Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations

16 Any Other Business

The Rector invited members to raise any other items of business. A discussion on cyber security was requested given the increasing importance of the topic and high level encouragement for organisations to discuss cyber security at board level. The Principal noted that he has recently been appointed as the lead on Universities UK's interaction with the UK Government on security matters, including cyber security, and there is recognition within the sector as a whole that cyber defences need improvement. The University of Edinburgh is a leading centre for cyber security but as with many other institutions faces regular cyber attacks of varying types and levels of sophistication. The Principal invited Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University, to give a brief update on the current position. It was noted that the rapid growth of large scale organised cybercrime has been a key development in recent years. Cyber criminals increasingly seek to target staff log-on credentials in organisations to access and encrypt sensitive data for ransom, known as 'ransomware' attacks. The new University network currently being

installed includes new firewalls and additional protections above this have been added, some with the assistance of JISC, the network provider for many UK higher education institutions. In terms of governance oversight, IT Committee, Knowledge Strategy and Audit & Risk Committee receive regular updates and the Information Security Update to Knowledge Strategy Committee, which is currently summarised within the Committee's report to each Court meeting, could be appended to the next report to Court.

17 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 14 June 2021



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Principal's Report

Description of paper

1. The paper provides a summary of the Principal's main activities since the last meeting of the University Court.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is asked to note the information presented. No specific action is required of Court, although members' observations, or comment, on any of the items would be welcome.

Background and context

3. The report summarises key issues for the University and the Principal's engagement with regard to local, national, international and sector-wide developments and activity.

Discussion

4. As we approach the summer break, vaccinations rising and (hopefully) restrictions continuing to ease, I wish to make a few observations for Court reflecting on the previous fourteen months. The pandemic has brought challenge, both personal and professional, to us all. I have seen colleagues rise to those challenges in remarkable ways, there are too many to mention individually but I wish to give Court a flavour.

5. First, a particular mention for those staff who have been working on campus throughout – a huge range of over 1000 people including: those at Pollock Halls who have had to deal with often very tough working circumstances; those cleaning Halls and other open buildings at increased levels; servitorial staff; security staff; those keeping our library services going in person and adjusting to changing guidelines with special services, to name but a few. Of course many of our medical and nursing staff and students have been contributing to the pandemic effort as well as undertaking their usual duties; our research staff have remained active (see more on that below) and our teaching and other academic staff have worked tirelessly to overcome the many obstacles they have encountered.

6. For those thousands working from home the situation has offered positives but also significant issues including: balancing competing demands; isolation; caring responsibilities; cramped circumstances and adjusting to virtual working. Those on furlough will have faced their own stresses. Yet despite the demands and difficulties we must remember that our University has kept running (and running well) throughout this time. Our students have been taught, supported and examined; our researchers have been active and continued to make excellent contributions; and key projects have been delivered. As we emerge, I believe we do so in as good a position as any university, better than many, and I wish to offer my personal thanks to everyone who has contributed to that. I am sure that you will all join me in looking forward to next Semester and our campus regaining its vibrancy and bringing a better experience for students, staff and everyone else.

7. Since the last meeting of Court, parliamentary elections have been held in Scotland confirming another term for the SNP Government. The resulting reshuffle led to confirmation of Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP as Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, and Jamie Hepburn MSP as Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training. I have recently spoken to Mr Hepburn and look forward to meeting the Cabinet Secretary again in due course. I met her in one of my very first appointments as Principal in early 2018 when she was then serving as the Education Minister and went to Brussels with her and Anton Muscatelli my counterpart in Glasgow as part of the Brexit preparations. We are currently also involved, jointly with Glasgow, in a Russell Group initiative to emphasise how our two universities can contribute to the post Covid recovery of Scotland. We look forward to working with the new Government across all aspects of our shared strategic priorities.

8. With regard to University admissions we have received over 72,000 undergraduate applications, an increase of c.10,000 applications on last year, meaning that we have experienced very high levels of competition for places. At the same time we have seen an increase in the level of attainment relating to both achieved and predicted grades. This has resulted in a complex and challenging selection process which has meant, as is the case every year, that we have not been able to offer places to some very well-qualified students in some subject areas. We have however been able to increase our offers to SIMD20 (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation least advantaged 20% of postcodes) applicants by 10 per cent and to care-experienced applicants by 50 per cent. Undergraduate offer holders have until 10 June to respond to our offers through UCAS, the University and College Admissions Service. At this date we will have a clearer indication of our expected intake for September 2021 and the balance required between flexibility and use of Clearing to increase our intake where necessary, or strict confirmation and limited Clearing engagement to contain it. At postgraduate level, our offer-making is continuing as expected.

9. Court will remember that I have previously spoken about research funding concerns including the UK Government's decision to drastically cut (by 60%) funding for the Official Development Assistance (ODA) research at UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). This has led to a very challenging few months for academics engaged in international development research. Several grants that had recently been awarded were cancelled outright. UKRI then proposed cuts of between 60 and 70% to 2021 budgets for existing award holders. In all over 30 projects were affected, some led by Edinburgh (21) and others where we were partners (10). This has impacted on dozens of partnerships and hundreds of researchers in low and middle income countries.

10. After a complex negotiation process we have been successful in securing funding for 50% of existing budgets and the University has agreed in these exceptional circumstances to support some projects with part of our Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Covid Recovery funding. This will protect jobs both here and in our overseas partners and help projects maintain some excellent research this year in the hope of funding returning to expected levels in 2022.

11. There remains considerable opportunity for ODA-like research from funders including Horizon Europe and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, so our International Development Research Hub is already beginning to work closely with the academic community to diversify funding routes to enable this important research on

global challenges to continue and for Edinburgh to maintain its world-leading reputation in this area.

12. Research performance has been remarkably strong over 2020/21 to date. Applications for research funding are up 10% on last year (which itself was a very successful year) to £1.04bn. Our research awards are also up almost £50m on this point last year – £315m to date. Research income will be down on last year to around £290m (the original 2020/21 forecast was £310m): this reflects the limited time that researchers have been able to spend in labs or some other regular activities. We anticipate this income will increase (assuming no further lockdowns) during 2021/22. The success has come despite a difficult funding environment – with uncertainty around EU association only resolving in December and cuts of 60% to the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) hitting the University particularly hard (we had been top in the UK for GCRF funding so had one of the biggest portfolios to be cut). The University also won over £30m of Covid related research funding.

13. In terms of our final settlement from the SFC, research grants have seen small uplifts, with Research Excellence Grant increasing by 1.1% across the sector, 1.6% for the University, to £242.9M and £81.6M respectively; and the Universities Innovation Fund increasing by 10.2% for the sector and the University of Edinburgh, to £15.1M and £1.72M respectively. Research Postgraduate Grant share has decreased for the University – this is a small grant of £36.3M, but we saw a decrease of £0.2M to £7.8M while the overall grant increased by £0.4M.

14. I am aware that Sarah Smith recently updated you, in her most recent note to Court, on Freedom of Expression issues in the sector, including the Bill being brought forward in England. This remains a key topic for all universities including this one and will be the subject for the next Leaders' Forum discussion with over 100 university managers participating.

15. Finally, Court will be pleased to hear that the University's position in the QS World Rankings has risen this year from 20 to 16. While we are all aware that rankings can be very unpredictable this is undoubtedly good news and again is down to the efforts and achievements of our excellent and committed staff.

Selected meetings and events from end April to mid-June

16. *University*

- Academic Strategy Group (core membership the Heads of School) continues to meet monthly and continues to be a very useful forum for consultation and discussion on a wide range of matters including delivering hybrid teaching for semester one; kick-starting research; staff support; communications; safe campus issues; the financial situation; and scenario planning.
- Leaders' Forum, comprising around 150 of the University's senior staff continues to meet every 6-8 weeks; recent items discussed include leadership challenges and Freedom of Expression.
- Senior Leadership Team weekly meetings continue. In addition we recently held a virtual away day at which we discussed high level strategic change proposals and plans for the rest of 2021 and the years ahead.
- I have been on campus recently meeting staff at Pollock Halls, King's Buildings, our animal facilities and the Wellbeing Centre.

- Met with representatives from the University & College Union and UNISON in a regular Partnership Forum meeting alongside others from the Senior Team and Human Resources.
- Participated in an Edinburgh Futures Institute launch event for the Centre for Technomoral Futures entitled, 'A Conversation on Technomoral Futures: Building Wisdom from Crisis'.
- Participated in a meeting between the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) Chief Executive and other representatives and the University to discuss the 2020 USS valuation.
- Member of selection panels for interviews for a General Council Assessor to Court and Co-opted members of Court.
- Welcomed attendees of the Montague Burton "in conversation" with speaker Herman Van Rompuy, Chair of the Strategic Council of the European Policy Centre, and discussant Sir John Grant, member of the Scottish Government's Standing Council on Europe and of the Advisory Board of the Centre for European Reform, in association with the Europa Institute.
- Gave the vote of thanks at the Edinburgh Futures Institute event entitled, 'Galvanised: connecting science, engineering and the arts at EFI', the key speakers were Dr Gavin Francis, GP and author and Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer for England.
- Welcomed participants in the Corporate Services Group meeting and gave a brief update of the University's position.
- Welcomed participants to the Chevening Conference run by Edinburgh Global.
- Welcomed participants and introduced the main speaker Sir Ronald Cohen, Chairman of the Global Steering Group for Impact Investment and The Portland Trust, at a EiE2021 virtual Conference and International Market Square organised by the Bayes Centre.
- Chaired the panel discussion for the General Council half-yearly meeting, the theme of which was 'Opportunities and challenges for the University of Edinburgh in partnership working with China'.

17. *Edinburgh and Scotland*

- Held regular Partnership meetings with Andrew Kerr, Chief Executive of the City of Edinburgh Council, often together with leaders of Police Scotland, NHS Lothian, EVOC and regional Councils.
- Participated in Edinburgh Festivals Forum meetings.
- Chaired the quarterly meeting of the Higher Education / Further Education Strategy Group (feeds into the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal meetings).
- Participated in the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Leaders Group meeting and Joint Committee meeting.

18. *Sector and Public Affairs*

- The Principals of Edinburgh's four universities and Edinburgh College continue to meet monthly to share progress on various activities.
- Participated in various Russell Group meetings: Board meetings; a discussion with Tom Tugendhat MBE VR MP, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, on national security and the steps and measures universities take to protect research and to mitigate new and emerging risk posed by hostile actors; a discussion with

Tony Danker, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI); and one with Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP on Hostile State Actors.

- Participated in the Scottish Funding Council Board workshop and as a member of the SFC Board at various meetings.
- Participated in various Universities UK Members' meetings: several discussions on the USS valuation for Vice-Chancellors; Members meeting; International Policy network meeting;
- Participated in a Universities Scotland and their Scottish Funding Council Liaison meeting.
- Participated in a Reform Scotland-organised discussion with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP in the lead up to the May elections.
- Participated in a UCAS roundtable on the overarching operation of a post-qualification model.
- Attended a CBI event, 'In Discussion with Rain Newton-Smith, CBI Chief Economist'.
- Spoke at a Bank of England event on 'Managing the Impact of Climate Change' about what the University is doing in regard to sustainability and the climate; Sarah Breeden, Executive Director for UK Deposit Takers Supervision at the Prudential Regulation Authority was the main speaker.
- Participated in the Ditchley-run discussion on, "Preparing for an uncertain future. How can regional and local initiatives help enable continuous learning and democratic agency?"

19. *International (all online from Edinburgh!)*

- Represented Una Europa at a meeting with European Commissioner for Promoting the European Way of Life – Vice-President Margaritis Schinas – and the Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth – Mariya Gabriel. The meeting was part of the consultation with stakeholders on the shape and design of the roll-out funding instrument for the European Universities Initiative.
- Joined a Universitas 21 Executive Committee meeting, their AGM and Annual Network meeting; Peer to Peer meeting.
- Participated in an introductory meeting between the University, Mastercard Foundation and the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, to explore the Wits-Edinburgh partnership and the Foundation's potential role in support of the programme.
- Keynote speaker at a Global Digital Meet on "Technology 4.0 for Education 4.0- Choices, Challenges & Opportunities" hosted in Bangalore by IBM India.
- Participated in an Education Panel event organised by Global Philanthropic, entitled 'Talking Philanthropy'. Also on the panel were: Kathleen Chew - Programme Director of the YTL Foundation, Patrick Hurworth – Head of International School of Beijing, Daisy Liu – Philanthropist, Harold Kim – CEO, Neo Risk Investment Advisors, and Board Chair, Hong Kong International School, and Nick Jaffer – President & CEO Global Philanthropic Asia-Pacific.
- Participated in the League of European Research Universities two day Rectors' Assembly.
- Participated in the Association of Commonwealth Universities Europe Regional Committee meeting.
- Participated in a meeting with the Hainan Government to discuss developments and possible future collaboration. The meeting was chaired by Hainan Province Governor

FENG Fei and attended by various officials and representatives of Hainan Province, Shanghai Jiaotong University School of Medicine and the University of Edinburgh.

- Participated in the King Abdulaziz University International Advisory Board weekend of meetings, the theme of which was, 'The current and expected effects of the corona pandemic, locally and globally, and their impact on the education sector.'

Resource implications

20. There are no specific resource implications associated with the paper.

Risk Management

21. There are no specific risk implications associated with the paper although some reputational risk may be relevant to certain items.

Equality & Diversity

22. No specific Equality and Diversity issues are identified.

Next steps/implications

23. Any action required on the items noted will be taken forward by the appropriate member(s) of University staff.

Consultation

24. As the paper represents a summary of recent news, no consultation has taken place.

Further information

25. Peter will take questions on any item at Court or further information can be obtained from Ms Fiona Boyd, Principal's Office.

26. Author and Presenter

Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Mathieson
June 2021

Freedom of Information

27. Open Paper



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Policy & Resources Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Policy & Resources Committee

Date of Meeting

2. 31 May 2021 (by videoconference).

Action Required

3. To note the key points from the meeting.

Key points

Paragraphs 4-16: Closed section

Further information

17. Author

Lewis Allan
Head of Court Services

Presenter

Alan Johnston
Convener, Policy & Resources Committee

Freedom of Information

18. Closed paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Audit & Risk Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Audit & Risk Committee.

Date of Meeting

2. 27 May 2021

Action Required

3. Court is invited to note the key points from the meetings and approve:
- External Audit Annual Plan 2020/21 (Appendix 1);
 - External Audit Fee for the 2020/21 audit;
 - Internal Audit Plan 2021/22 (Appendix 2);
 - Updated Terms of Reference for the Committee.

Key points

Paragraphs 4-8: Closed section

Committee Self-Review and Review of Terms of Reference

9. The Committee had agreed to conduct a self-review using a set of statements aligned to Appendix 3 of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Audit Committees Code of Practice circulated to members as an online questionnaire for individual completion and then collation. The Committee considered the responses. In discussion, whilst there were no immediate areas requiring action, members agreed it would be helpful to have more opportunity for member only sessions and consideration would be given on how best to incorporate this into the committee cycle.

10. There was also a review of the Committee's Terms of Reference to ensure that these covered the major areas identified in the CUC Higher Education Audit Committees Code of Practice and its model Terms of Reference. The Committee was content with the areas covered but agreed it was good practice to undertake a self-review annually and its Terms of Reference should be updated to reflect this. The Committee therefore agreed to recommend to Court that Section 5.1 of the Terms of Reference be amended as follows: 'The Committee will ~~from time to time~~ undertake an **annual** review of its own performance and effectiveness ~~as part of the overall review of the effectiveness of Court and its Committees~~ and report thereon to Court.

Other Issues

Paragraph 11: Closed section

Full minute

12. All the papers considered at the meeting and in due course the Minute can be accessed on the committee [site](#).

Equality & Diversity

13. There are no specific equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

Further information

14. Author

Kirstie Graham
Court Services

Presenter

Caroline Gardner
Convener, Audit and Risk Committee

Freedom of Information

15. Closed paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Court USS Sub-Group Report

Committee Name

1. Court Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) Sub-Group

Date of Meeting

2. 6 May 2021 (by videoconference)

Action Required

3. To note the key points below and the full consultation response in Appendix 1.

Key points

Universities UK consultation on the indicative outcome of the 2020 USS Valuation

4. The Sub-Group met to consider a draft response to a consultation on the indicative outcome for the 2020 USS valuation. Draft responses to the fifteen consultation questions put forward by Universities UK were reviewed, with a revised draft then circulated to the Sub-Group prior to submission of a finalised response on 24 May 2021 (included in Appendix 1).

Further information

5. Author

Lewis Allan
Head of Court Services
7 June 2021

Presenter

Alan Johnston
Sub-Group Convener

Freedom of Information

6. Open paper.

USSEmployers

RESPONSE FORM

A consultation by Universities UK with employers on the indicative outcomes of the valuation

CLOSING DATE: 24 MAY 2021

REPLY TO: PENSIONS@UNIVERSITIESUK.AC.UK

MAKING YOUR RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

We welcome responses to this consultation from each and every one of the scheme's participating employers.

We are keen to have the widest possible range of views and perspectives ahead of the next steps of the 2020 valuation.

Through this consultation we are formally seeking views and direction from employers on some key questions, particularly on:

- Covenant support measures
- Contributions
- Future benefit structures
- Addressing the high opt-out rate and flexibilities
- Governance
- UUK's Alternative Approach

This template form is optional and can be used for the response from your institution, you may also want to feedback this information another way.

With these views, UUK can then progress the negotiations with the University and College Union (UCU) within the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC).

Please send the response from your institution to pensions@universitiesuk.ac.uk by 5pm Monday 24 May 2021.

COVENANT SUPPORT MEASURES

1. Would you be willing to support the alternative covenant support package which UUK has outlined in section 4, as the means to achieve a solution which might be acceptable in the round (see also question 15)?

Scenario	Effective debt monitoring	Effective <i>pari passu</i>	Length of rolling moratorium	Initial moratorium to support Recovery Plan length*
1: No additional covenant support	No	No	Zero	None
2: UUK package of covenant support	Yes	No	6 years	9 years
3: Adequate to fund on a strong basis	Yes	Yes	12 years	15 years

The above table refers to the additional measures suggested in the three scenarios by USS.

The UUK suggestion:

Alternative Approach (UUK proposal, March 2021)	
Debt monitoring	De minimis to limit metric testing to material employers.
Pari-Passu (equal) security on new secured debt	Metric E threshold for Gross Secured Debt: c15% of Net Assets and c15% of Gross Assets, (all subject to an appropriate de minimis provision)
Rule change on employer exits	20 year rolling moratorium on employer exits without USS Trustee consent (applying to all employers)

Response:

The University of Edinburgh considers the strengthening of covenant support as a component of the overall solution to the current challenges facing the Scheme. We currently perform regular debt monitoring in support of our own debt arrangements and consider this good practice in diligent financial management. The University of Edinburgh is content to share debt-testing metrics with the Trustee in support of future arrangements. We would support collaborative agreement on form to ensure that existing protocols are employed (as appropriate) to avoid unnecessary duplication.

We consider that the University of Edinburgh is unlikely to pursue new secured debt so the proposal here will not affect us directly. We do acknowledge that this measure could potentially impact other employers in the scheme disproportionately, and may result in an increase in the cost of debt and a change in behaviour and expectations amongst lenders to the sector. Sufficient care and consideration is required to ensure the consequences of this measure are equitable across the employers within the Scheme.

We recognise that a rolling 20-year moratorium is effectively a semi-permanent commitment to the Scheme. In reality, a crystallised Section 75 debt would be unaffordable to almost all employers in any event. The University of Edinburgh would support this commitment as an element of the overall package of measures to be agreed, with consideration of benefits, flexibility and optionality as further aspects requiring consideration, provided that the agreed outcome remains affordable to members and employers. Further, this support would only be agreed were it to form part of a longer-term financially sustainable outcome which does not require revision at each subsequent valuation.

COVENANT SUPPORT MEASURES

2. If the USS Trustee is not willing to accept UUK's alternative proposal (should there be employer support for it), would you be willing to support the USS Trustee's scenario 3 covenant support package to obtain a 'strong' covenant rating? If not, why is this and what level of covenant support would you be willing to provide?

Scenario	Effective debt monitoring	Effective <i>pari passu</i>	Length of rolling moratorium	Initial moratorium to support Recovery Plan length*
1: No additional covenant support	No	No	Zero	None
2: UUK package of covenant support	Yes	No	6 years	9 years
3: Adequate to fund on a strong basis	Yes	Yes	12 years	15 years

Response:

The University of Edinburgh would support scenario three, but only as part of an overall agreement which considers all aspects of the scheme and the choices members have. We would not agree to enhanced covenant support measures to maintain the status quo (in terms of scheme characteristics).

COVENANT SUPPORT MEASURES

3. Are there areas of the covenant support measures which cause you particular concern, or which you would wish to see modified? Please provide details.

Response:

It is important that any proposed measures to strengthen covenant support do not result in unintended consequences. To this end it is crucial that the extent and implications of Pari Passu are considered alongside the sector's existing debt arrangements. Equally, debt monitoring should not be more cumbersome or restrictive than market-standard (in the HE sector) measures for existing arrangements. An appreciation of the existing lender and financial covenant landscape is important so that Institutions are not encumbered further with existing lenders (for example through 'Most Favoured Lender' clauses).

COVENANT SUPPORT MEASURES

4. Are there other areas of covenant support you would wish to consider such as contingent contributions or asset pledges?

Response:

The University of Edinburgh would not consider other areas of covenant support unless such concessions formed part of a more fundamental reform of the Scheme, contributing to a long-term, stable and affordable design which provides the benefits in retirement sought by members at rates consistent with the employers'

and members' ability and willingness to pay.

Asset pledges may be problematic with regard to existing debt arrangements (where, for example permitted securities form part of finance contracts). Further, there will be significant variability between Institutions in terms of their balance sheet capacity (and value) to make meaningful pledges. In many cases the 'market value' of assets may be hard to realise (due to their location or proximity to other University facilities) and may therefore be less attractive to the Trustee.

Contingent contributions should not be triggered by short-term or immaterial events and any decision to introduce them subject to agreement between the employer and USS. That said, they must be sufficiently responsive when necessary but must also reverse when conditions improve. Defining these parameters and triggers is fraught and the uncertainties which result from this approach further complicate Institutions' planning for financial sustainability. It is important to remember that in line with the Scheme's mutual characteristics, such contingent contributions would need to apply uniformly to all employers (and members) and the issue of affordability vs equity resurfaces.

We believe the scheme would have to be managed and presented quite differently (on an employer by employer basis) should asset pledges and contingent contributions feature as part of the overall solution.

CONTRIBUTIONS

5. Do you agree that the current levels of employer contribution (21.1% of salary) and member contribution (9.6%) are the maximum sustainable – and should be the foundation for any solution?

- a. If not, please state the level of employer contribution you would be willing to pay to USS following the 2020 valuation.
- b. We would welcome any commentary on the reasons for your views.
- c. We would also welcome employer views on the level of member contribution.

Response:

The University of Edinburgh has responded in previous consultations that it felt that the earlier employer contribution rate of 18% was at the top end of affordability. Both employers and members have since been stretched further by increased contribution rates which for employers have impacted operating plans and for members has affected take-home pay considerably. When the 2018 valuation was agreed it was not anticipated that the increases to contribution rates (those already implemented and the increases we expect to see implemented in October 2021) would persist. This level has significant consequences on other areas of expenditure. We recognise that for many employers in the scheme the current levels are not affordable and the impact of sustained contributions at this rate may materially impact the longer-term sustainability of some. We firmly consider that further increases to contribution rates are not financially sustainable.

It is worth noting that 12% of eligible respondents answered our survey, of those responding, some 68% (12% of members responded to the survey) find the current contribution rates either 'readily' or 'somewhat' affordable, however, 85% indicated that they would be either 'very' or 'somewhat' concerned were contribution rates to increase. This suggests that recent increases appear bearable to the majority but that further increases beyond the 9.6% level may be problematic. The University of Edinburgh received very few responses to our survey from eligible staff who are not currently members of USS as such we may not have a robust response regarding affordability and the potential impact on other areas of the University from increased funding of the USS from those who have elected not to be members.

BENEFITS

6. Do you support the broad principle of seeking to retain the hybrid benefit structure?

Response:

The University of Edinburgh wishes to see greater flexibility and choice for members, the hybrid benefit structure could be one of the options available, provided it can be designed in an affordable, sustainable and stable way. We consider that the proposal put forward by UUK may provide the basis for a discussion on the core scheme offering, provided that it addresses the key concerns of members and employers, but we also believe that members should be able to choose a more affordable option should their circumstances and needs require that.

Our member survey responses show that 46% of responders would support a more flexible pension option which would allow lower contributions to be paid for reduced benefit (for a period of time). As a reminder we received a response rate of just 12% to our survey.

63% of our members also indicated that the promises provided by the DB part of the scheme are worth retaining, 'regardless of cost'. This response demonstrates the value members attach to the DB element of the scheme, but responses around increases to contribution rates do indicate that cost of contributions is an important factor (see response 5).

BENEFITS

7. Looking at the illustrative hybrid benefits which UUK has put forward, would you consider this an acceptable outcome in terms of benefits at this valuation – based on the positions on covenant support and contributions laid out?

Scenario	DC contribution rate above threshold	Salary Threshold	Accrual rate for indexation:		Estimated DIS / Ill-health element % pay
			Current	Capped at 2.5% p.a.	
2	12%	£40k	1/170	1/155	1.6%
		£30k	1/165	1/145	1.7%
3	16%	£40k	1/115	1/100	2.1%
		£30k	1/110	1/95	2.2%



Comment

The USS Trustee knows that the contributions for Scenario 1 are unaffordable, so it has reached the conclusion that without covenant support the scheme must close.

Response:

The University of Edinburgh does not consider the illustrative benefits presented as viable, the benefits defined do not represent value for money for the considerable contribution rates required. There would be greater benefit in exploring alternative structures and options available with varying degrees of choice and flexibility for members. Choice around benefits, contribution rates and flexibilities around use of pension should feature in the consideration.

BENEFITS

8. If the illustrated hybrid would not be acceptable, what alternative benefit arrangements would you wish to provide (and please indicate alternative positions on covenant and contributions as appropriate)?

(For example, if the USS Trustee does not ultimately amend its assumptions, would you wish to offer a hybrid solution as set out in the USS Trustee's illustrations (p18 of the Update Report) or would you prefer to move to a different offering, such as DC provision?)

Response:

We believe a suite of options is the best way forward, with a range of benefits and correlated contribution rates. These may cover, at one end of the spectrum, a DB/DC hybrid – along the lines of the UUK suggestion – attracting a relatively higher contribution rate, with a full DC option at the other end of the scale. The DC option may be designed in such a way to allow lower contribution rates depending on member choice. We would expect that in such a model the employer contribution could be developed to encourage greater level of member saving without penalising those who felt unable to save at higher levels. Tiered contributions for members should be considered and absolute clarity is required regarding the deployment of contributions for deficit repair and future accrual.

Providing members with choice and being clear on the relative value of each option is key to finding a sustainable way forward. This approach can deal with inter-generational fairness, but employers and the Scheme would have a continuing role to play in advocating for increased saving for retirement and the value and benefits this can bring.

BENEFITS

9. Would you wish to explore conditional indexation or other conditional benefit models as a possible solution (likely longer-term, beyond the 2020 valuation)?

Response:

The University of Edinburgh believes that every option should be considered in designing the most appropriate long-term scheme for both employers and members. Worked examples of how conditional indexation should be provided for an illustrative cross-section of the membership. Any agreed solution must be financially sustainable in the long-term and must have at its core the principles of mutuality and equity to all members.

FLEXIBILITIES AND OPTIONS

10. Would you like to see flexibilities implemented for members to move away from the current uniformity of the USS structure, and if so which flexibilities do you think are particularly important?

Response:

The University of Edinburgh believes the scheme should offer greater choice for members as their circumstances and requirements change throughout their careers. The current binary approach (in or out) is unhelpful when contribution rates rise and an alternative cannot be offered. If employers are unable to offer staff alternative vehicles to help save for retirement, reflecting their status and needs, we consider our opt-out rates would rise and we would be failing in one of our primary roles as a responsible employer.

FLEXIBILITIES AND OPTIONS

11. Would you support the creation of a lower cost saving option for members and which of the parameters described in this paper are most important / or would need modification?

(If yes, we would welcome employer views on the options to achieve this (potentially informed via engagement with eligible USS employees).

Civil Service Partnership Scheme

- The Civil Service offers a DC alternative. It is fully separate from the main scheme (contract based)
- It is non-contributory with an automatic age related employer contribution
- Employee contributions are matched up to an additional 3%
- Low uptake (<2%) but opt out also very low (<2%)

Civil Service Partnership Scheme Contributions

Age at the last 6 April	Percentage of pensionable earnings
Under 31	8%
31 to 35	9%
36 to 40	11%
41 to 45	13.5%
46 or over	14.75%

NB the column on the right is employee contribution rates

LGBS 50-50 option

- The LGPS has reduced cost DB pension.
- Employee contributions are half (2.75% - 6.25%) as are benefits. Ancillary benefits provided in full.
- Free movement in and out - and reenrolment into the main scheme
- Low uptake and used as tax management by some

Network Rail

- Offers a DC arrangement (trust-based) in addition to DB through RPS
- Open to all but some employees may have this as their only option
- Employee contributions 0-5%; employer contributions 3-7%
- Includes death in service cover (insured but equivalent), and incapacity cover (insured)

Response:

The University of Edinburgh believes that every option should be explored so that Employers and Members are fully aware of the implications of revising (or retaining) the Scheme. We believe changes experienced in other Pension Schemes (public and Private sector) should be considered and modelled including tiered Member contribution rates (based on earnings or age). It is particularly important that inter-generational fairness be at the heart of any solution to be agreed for the Scheme.

FLEXIBILITIES AND OPTIONS

12. Would you support the creation of an option for members to switch (from the hybrid structure) to wholly DC pension saving?

(We invite employer views on whether the same deficit recovery contribution should be made for members choosing any new flexible DC alternative option, and what levels of member and employer contributions devoted to DC pensions saving should apply).

Response:

Consistent with our earlier responses – the University of Edinburgh would support the creation of a wholly DC vehicle as an option available to all members.

We believe that deficit recovery contributions should be made in accordance with liabilities associated with relevant past-service. Decisions around employer contribution levels to any flexible DC alternative should be agreed at an appropriate level without reference to the deficit in the DB section of the scheme.

We believe the combination of employer and member contributions to a DC alternative should be at a level to fulfil the objectives to create a scheme which is highly valued and provides a compelling and attractive option for saving for retirement (where a member feels unable to commit to the DB/DC hybrid).

FLEXIBILITIES AND OPTIONS

13. Would you wish to explore options for employers so that they can offer some variations to the USS standard benefits in the future – and if so, what would those variations be?

Response:

The University of Edinburgh believes there should be an array of options open to our staff which offer a range of choices around benefits and contribution rates – this would be the best way of ensuring the highest level of engagement from staff with regards to saving for retirement. The circumstances of our staff vary enormously, from early career academics to relatively short-term appointment of foreign nationals. Greater flexibilities around pension vehicles and how contributions can be invested, transferred or liquidated would be welcome to minimise opt-outs amongst our staff. We think it would be beneficial to consider all options and in particular look at options that have been developed by other (former) large DB schemes.

GOVERNANCE

14. We would welcome views from employers in relation to the governance of the scheme and the valuation process (including views on the Joint Negotiating Committee). Specifically, would you support a post valuation governance review, and what areas what you like to see covered in such a review?

Response:

The University of Edinburgh recognises the challenge the USS Trustee is facing given underlying economic conditions and the design of the scheme, we also note that fundamental difficulties and an enormous scheme deficit mean that agreement on next steps will be very difficult to achieve within prescribed timelines. However, scheme design is not the responsibility of the USS Trustee and it is our view that the Employers and the Members need to address this issue through the JNC now. A post valuation review should not only consider how the Trustee might expedite certain elements of the valuation process, it should also focus on the roles of the Employers' representative (UUK) and the Member's representative (UCU) on the JNC. Each of the representative bodies on the JNC should work towards greater engagement and seeking consensus on next steps and longer-term objectives. It is imperative that the JNC is not faced with these challenges after each subsequent valuation, as such we advocate long-term solutions being found during this process, which will inevitably require more fundamental change (such as the introduction of a DC alternative to sit alongside the UUK proposal).

In terms of governance review, we would encourage a fundamental review of the Investment strategy and performance of the fund. We would also be extremely keen to ensure that members' views are comprehensively represented both through employers (and UUK) and UCU. Whilst it remains the mandate of UCU to represent members in this forum we feel that UCU and the employers should actively encourage USS members who may not be members of the UCU to participate in surveys and consultations.

UUK ALTERNATIVE

15. As part of a solution to the 2020 USS valuation would you support the alternative covenant support package illustrated by UUK (*headlines – moratorium of a minimum of 20-years with debt-monitoring and a pari-passu arrangement for secured borrowing above c15% of gross/net assets*), to provide a hybrid benefits package at current contribution rates in the order of (*pension accrual of 1/85 of salary [plus 3 times lump sum] up to a salary threshold of £40,000 with the CPI indexation of benefits [for active, deferred and pensioner members] capped at 2.5% per annum, and with DC above the salary threshold at an overall contribution of 20% of salary*), together with a lower cost alternative to address the high opt-out rate, as well as a governance review of the scheme and valuation process?

Response:

The University of Edinburgh supports the proposal that UUK are making, we are aware, though, that this proposal remains a challenge for the Trustee (who calculate the cost of the proposed benefits to be higher than UUK do). This is nevertheless a step in the right direction, but as reflected above, we believe it is part of the solution. It may be necessary to adjust some of the parameters in the proposal further to render the contribution rates more affordable to members (for example a further downward adjustment of the DB/DC threshold).

The provision of a lower cost alternative, possibly a DC only model should form part of the overall offering to members. The University of Edinburgh considers that choice and flexibility should be inherent in the new design with an affordable hybrid offering at one end of the scale and full DC options at the other. The options developed should be sufficiently robust and future-proof so as not to be 'tweaked' at each valuation and thus rebuild the confidence both of members and employers.

We firmly support an approach which will endure, rather than agreeing a short-term resolution designed to satisfy this valuation alone. The agreed design should therefore be financially sustainable, predictable, reliable and understandable in order to rebuild trust and value in the scheme.

Please send your completed form to: pensions@universitiesuk.ac.uk by Monday 24 May 2021

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation.

USSEmployers

W www.ussemployers.org.uk

E pensions@universitiesuk.ac.uk

@USSEmployers



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Nominations Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Nominations Committee

Date of Meetings

2. 31 May 2021 (by videoconference) and 7-9 June 2021 (by correspondence)

Action Required

3. To note the key points from the meeting and to:
- i) approve the recommended appointments to Court;
 - ii) approve the recommended appointments to Court's Standing Committees and to other bodies/positions;
 - iii) approve a review of the terms of reference for Knowledge Strategy Committee to include consideration of lifting the current restriction that only lay members of Court can serve as the Convener to enable Senate appointees to serve as Convener, as well opening up the category of potential Conveners to include any category of Court member;
 - iv) approve a minor amendment to Exception's Committee Terms of Reference; and,
 - v) note the appointments to Court's Thematic Committees approved by Nominations Committee.

Key points

Paragraphs 4-7: Closed section

Equality & Diversity

8. The equality and diversity of Court and its Committees is considered when making recommendations or approvals.

Further information

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 9. <u>Author</u> | <u>Presenter</u> |
| Lewis Allan | Alan Johnston |
| Head of Court Services | Convener, Nominations Committee |

Freedom of Information

10. Closed paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Knowledge Strategy Committee

Date of Meeting

2. 25 May 2021 (by videoconference).

Action Required

3. To note the key points from the meeting, to approve the minor updates to the University Computing Regulations in Appendix 1 and to note the Information Security Update included in Appendix 2.

Key points

Paragraphs 4-19: Closed section

Further information

20. Author

Lewis Allan
Head of Court Services

Presenter

Doreen Davidson
Convener of Knowledge Strategy Committee

Freedom of Information

21. Closed paper.

Revision to University Computing Regulations

The list below highlights the changes to the Regulations.

- **Introduction and Definitions (Page 1)**
 - Inserted bullet point 9 to 'other policies and/or codes as relevant, including internal UoE codes': the Social Media Policy
 - Small addition to bullet point 3 under 'external codes': any terms of use of similar codes imposed by any third party website or services accessed using UoE computing facilities[, *to the extent these do not conflict with any applicable internal UoE codes.*]
- **In these Regulations (Page 2)**
 - Revised 'constructed' to 'construed'.
- **Regulation 2 - Private and inappropriate use of computing facilities (Page 2)**
 - Small amendment to paragraph 1: Private use is allowed, as a privilege and not a right, but if abused [*or otherwise used in a way that interferes, either by timing or extent, with the availability of UoE computing facilities,*] will be treated as a breach of these Regulations.
- **Regulation 4 - Compliance with law (Page 3/4)**
 - Minor change to wording of bullet point d, from 'GDPR' to 'UK GDPR'.
 - Minor change to wording of paragraph 5: Users must also comply with the terms of any licence agreement or terms and conditions between the UoE and a third party which governs the use of hardware, software or access to data when such use or access is facilitated by the computing facilities[, *to the extent those terms do not conflict with these Regulations.*]
- **Regulation 6 – Investigation of breaches (Page 5)**
 - Small amendment, to include: 'Similarly, you should not use personal email accounts for University business'.

The full regulations with the amendments marked up are included overleaf.

University Computing Regulations

The University of Edinburgh has adopted a set of Regulations to cover the use of all its computing and network facilities by staff, students and any other persons authorised to use them.

Regulations covering the use of Computing Facilities

2425th Edition August 2021⁰

Introduction and Definitions

These Regulations cover the use of all computing facilities administered on behalf of the University of Edinburgh (hereafter UoE). They will be reviewed periodically and amended as required. Amended Regulations will be published as a new edition; where no amendments are required, the current edition will be republished. The Regulations will be (re)published in August of each year.

As well as these Regulations, users must abide by other policies and/or codes as relevant, including internal UoE codes such as:

- the [Code of Student Conduct](#);
- the [relevant staff disciplinary policy](#);
- the [University Data Protection Policy](#);
- the [Dignity and Respect Policy](#), [Trans Equality Policy](#) and any related documents;
- the [policy on taking sensitive information and personal data outside the secure computing environment](#);
- the [Information Security Policy](#);
- the [Bring your own device policy: Use of Personally Owned Devices for University Work](#); ~~and~~
- [the Protocol for Access to Data from the Corporate Student Record System](#);
- [and](#)
- [the Social Media Policy](#)

And external codes such as:

- the Acceptable Use Policy of the Joint Academic Network (JANET) available on the Web at <https://community.ja.net/printpdf/120> (PDF);
- any terms of use or similar codes imposed by remote sites, where their computing facilities are accessed or used by UoE users; and
- any terms of use of similar codes imposed by any third party website or services accessed using UoE computing facilities, [to the extent these do not conflict with any applicable internal UoE codes](#).

It is not the intention of UoE that these Regulations should be used to unreasonably limit recognised academic freedoms.

In these Regulations

"computing facilities" includes central [computing] services as provided by UoE Information Services Group and any [computing] service operated by or on behalf of UoE; UoE School or College or Professional Services; computers, IT hardware and services; personally owned computers and peripherals, and remote networks and services, when accessed from or via UoE computing facilities; and all programmable equipment; any associated software and data, including data created by persons other than users, and the networking elements which link computing facilities.

"users" include UoE staff, UoE students, and any other person authorised to use computing facilities

"files" include data and software accessed via the computing facilities (but do not include manual files).

And words following the terms including, include, in particular or for example, or any similar phrase, shall be ~~constructed~~ construed as illustrative and shall not limit the generality of the related general words.

Regulations

1. Status of Regulations

Breach of these Regulations by UoE staff or students is a disciplinary offence and may be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary code or procedures. Where an offence has occurred, or is suspected to have occurred under UK or Scots law, the relevant user may also be reported to the police or other appropriate authority. The rules applicable to UoE's investigation of breaches or suspected breaches are in Regulation 6 below.

2. Private use of computing facilities

Computing facilities are provided solely for use by staff in accordance with their normal duties of employment, and by students in connection with their university education. All other use, by any users, is private. Private use is allowed, as a privilege and not a right, but if abused or otherwise used in a way that interferes, either by timing or extent, with the availability of UoE computing facilities, will be treated as a breach of these Regulations. Users should also note that, in the event of a breach of these Regulations, their personal information may be deleted by UoE in accordance with Regulation 6. Any use which does not breach any other Regulation herein, but nonetheless brings UoE into disrepute, or breaches any other internal or external policies and/or codes with which a user is bound to comply from time to time, may also be treated as a breach of these Regulations.

The computing facilities must not be used for inappropriate purposes in either a private or other capacity. Inappropriate use of computing facilities includes, but is not limited to:

- a. use which is unlawful or fraudulent or has any unlawful or fraudulent purpose or effect.
- b. use for the purpose of harming or attempting to harm minors in any way;
- c. use to bully, insult, intimidate or humiliate any person, or the creation or transmission of material with the intent to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety;
- d. use to transmit, or procure the sending of, any unsolicited or unauthorised advertising or promotional material or any other form of similar solicitation (spam);
- e. use to knowingly transmit any data, send or upload any material that contains viruses, Trojan horses, worms, time-bombs, keystroke loggers, spyware, adware or any other harmful programs or similar computer code designed to adversely affect the operation of any computer software or hardware;
- f. creation or transmission, or causing the transmission, of any offensive, obscene or indecent images, data or other material, or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material;
- g. creation or transmission of defamatory material;
- h. creation or transmission of material such that this infringes the copyright of another person;
- i. deliberate unauthorised access to networked facilities or services;
- j. corrupting or destroying other users' data;
- k. violating the privacy of other users;
- l. disrupting the work of other users; or
- m. denying service to other users.

3. Damage to computing facilities

No person shall, unless appropriately authorised, take any action which damages, restricts, or undermines the performance, usability or accessibility of computing facilities; "taking action" may include deliberate omission or neglect, where action might reasonably have been expected as part of a user's duties.

4. Compliance with law

Users must comply with the provisions of all current applicable UK or Scots law, including:

- a. intellectual property law, including laws concerning copyright, trademarks, and patents;
- b. the Computer Misuse Act 1990, and associated instruments;
- c. anti-harassment, hate crime and defamation laws, including the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and the Defamation Acts 1952, 1966 and 2013;
- d. data protection laws; including the Data Protection Act 2018 and [UK GDPR](#);
- e. Freedom of Information laws;

- f. the interception and monitoring laws under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA 2000); and
- g. the Terrorism Act 2000, the Terrorism Act 2006 and the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

Under the Lawful Business Regulations (LBR), the UoE draws to the attention of all users the fact that their communications may be intercepted where lawful under RIPA 2000. The full UoE notice can be found at URL <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/statutory-notices>

The UoE also draws to the attention of all users to its statutory obligation under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) and under the Prevent Duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. The full UoE notice can be found at URL <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/statutory-notices>

The Terrorism Act (2000) defines terrorism in section 1 of the Act, see <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/section/1>.

Users must also comply with the terms of any licence agreement or terms and conditions between the UoE and a third party which governs the use of hardware, software or access to data when such use or access is facilitated by the computing facilities, [to the extent those terms do not conflict with these Regulations](#).

If users are accessing a service via UoE computing facilities that is hosted in a foreign jurisdiction, they may also be subject to local laws which apply to that service. In these case, particular care should be taken to comply with any relevant terms applicable to that service.

5. Security, confidentiality and passwords

Users must take all reasonable care to maintain the security of computing facilities and information to which they have been given approved access. In particular, users must not transfer or share their passwords, IT credentials or rights to access or use computing facilities, to or with anyone else. The confidentiality, integrity and security of all personally identifying data held, or processed on UoE systems must be respected, even where users have been authorised to access it. Users must not attempt to obtain or use anyone else's credentials.

Users must ensure that portable devices used to access UoE information are protected by encryption, whether the device was purchased by the University, is personally owned or belongs to a third party.¹

¹ Please note that iPhones and iPads are automatically encrypted if you set a password. Android has an easy option in settings to encrypt the device.

Guidance on how to encrypt portable devices can be found at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/infosec/how-to-protect/encrypting>

Prior to terminating their relationship with the UoE, users must make appropriate arrangements for the secure return of all UoE computer equipment and for the secure destruction of UoE data in their possession, unless alternative arrangements are agreed beforehand with their line manager and approved by Head of School/Support Unit

Users must ensure the secure destruction of all UoE data prior to disposing of computer equipment, including personally owned devices. These requirements also apply if any equipment is being sent for repair or upgrade as these actions could allow unauthorised third parties to access UoE information. If users are unsure of how to undertake this requirement, they must contact their IT support team for advice prior to disposal or repair of the computer equipment.

Passwords used to access UoE systems or data must not be used to access external services such as Facebook, personal emails etc. Additionally, where possible, the same limitation should apply to usernames used in the UoE, whether centrally generated or created by individual users.

6. Investigation of breaches

If the UoE suspects any breach or potential breach of the Regulations by any user, it shall have full and unrestricted power to access all relevant computing facilities and files (including mobile devices and privately owned devices used to access UoE services, including UoE email) and to take all steps which it may deem reasonable to remove or prevent distribution of any UoE material. It may also require that any encrypted data is made available in human-readable form. UoE may also immediately suspend a user's access to computing facilities and, where appropriate, examine such user's mobile device(s) for UoE material and remove any such material pending an investigation by an Authorised Officer or nominee of UoE as defined in the relevant Disciplinary Policy or Code of Conduct where the user is a UoE staff member or student respectively. Although we do not intend to wipe other data that is personal in nature (such as photographs or personal files or e-mails), it may not be possible to distinguish all such information from UoE material in all circumstances. In particular, where a user's personal data is contained alongside UoE data (for example, if a personal email is sent or received using UoE's email system), it will not be possible to distinguish this from UoE data and such personal data may be wiped. For this reason, you are encouraged not to use UoE email for personal purposes and, if you do, to mark any personal emails "personal" in the subject header. [Similarly, you should not use personal email accounts for University business.](#) Users who use mobile devices for UoE related activity should also regularly backup any personal data contained on their device(s).

7. Liability

By using the computing facilities each user agrees that the UoE shall (to the maximum extent permitted by law) have no liability for any:

- a. loss of, or corruption or damage to, any files or data contained therein;
or
- b. loss or damage (including any special, indirect or consequential loss) to users or to third parties, or their equipment, operating systems or other assets

resulting from the use of UoE computing facilities, or any withdrawal of the use of said facilities at any time by UoE.

Users also agree that UoE is not liable for any consequences arising from the unavailability of the UoE computing facilities and related services, no matter how caused.

Each user agrees that UoE has the right to take legal action against individuals who cause it to suffer loss or damage (including damage to its reputation) as a result of that user's breach of these Regulations, and to seek reimbursement of such loss, and/or any associated costs (including the costs of legal proceedings) arising from such a breach.

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact Claire Maguire on 0131 650 4976 or email Claire.Maguire@ed.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Senatus Academicus Report

Committee Name

1. Senatus Academicus ('Senate').

Date of Meeting

2. Meeting of e-Senate by correspondence from 11 – 19 May 2021. Senate also met on 2 June and a full report from this meeting will be submitted to the next Court meeting.

Action Required

3. To note the key points from e-Senate.

Key points

Draft Resolutions

4. The draft resolutions below were considered by Senate:

Draft Resolution No. 2/2021: Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations

Draft Resolution No. 3/2021: Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations

5. Several comments were received on the Draft Resolutions to request additional contextual information on the changes proposed for 2021/22. An updated paper with key changes noted was circulated to Senate members and added to the Senate website on 13 May 2021. These Resolutions are presented to Senate annually, and in future, contextual information will be included in the paper.

6. One comment was received on Draft Resolution No.2/2021, regulation 9. This is included in Paper S – Resolutions.

Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita

7. e-Senate conferred titles on the nominated candidates.

Communications

8. e-Senate received and noted the communications and reports below:

- Communications from the University Court,
- Report from the Knowledge Strategy Committee,
- Senate Academicus (Senate) Election Results 2021 – Academic staff
- College Academic Management Structures 2021/22
- Report from the Senate Exception Committee
- Dates of meetings of Senate 2021/22

Full Agenda and Papers

9. <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/senate/agendas-papers>

Equality & Diversity

10. No key implications for equality and diversity were raised by Senate. All paper authors are asked to consider and identify equality and diversity implications.

Further information

11. Author

Kathryn Nicol
Academic Policy Officer
Academic Services

Presenter

Peter Mathieson
Principal & Vice-Chancellor

Freedom of Information

12. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Curriculum Transformation Programme Update

Description of paper

1. A summary of the Curriculum Transformation Programme progress since February 2021 including an update on engagement activity since launching in April.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is invited to note and comment on the information presented.

Background and context

3. The primary focus of the Curriculum Transformation Programme led by Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students, since it was brought into formal governance in February 2020 has been the establishment of the Programme Board, aligned Workstreams and preparations for the successful launch in April 2021. Court received an update on the Curriculum Transformation Programme in February 2021 and this paper provides a summary of progress since that point.

Discussion

4. Following the completion of the foundation stage, there was a soft launch of the programme in April 2021 communicated through an email to all staff from Vice-Principal Harmon and the publication of the Curriculum Transformation Hub ([here](#)).

5. The Hub is designed to be a space for our communities to learn about, engage in and co-create the Curriculum Transformation Programme. The Hub launched with six briefing papers, supported by videos from the authors and tools that allow our communities to feedback and join the discussions on how the University can transform our curriculum. Since launch the Hub has seen over 1,500 visitors and over 23,000 site visits from the staff population.

6. In May, two additional briefing papers were added: Learning about Curriculum Transformation Processes from Institutions Internationally; and Insights and Learning from 2020-21. A programme of further briefing paper releases is planned over the summer months with the next one for publication focussing on Wellbeing in the Curriculum in mid-July.

7. In addition to briefing papers, wider stimulus questions are being posed around Curriculum Transformation and engagement encouraged through a number of different means: anonymously via padlet, contact form or by emailing the Programme team directly. Attention is now turning to developing a pipeline of content across a wider range of formats, for example podcasts, blogs, videos, Q&As, this will build upon the briefing papers, delving deeper into themes raised and exploring areas of Curriculum Transformation not yet touched on. Key learnings and findings from events such as the Learning and Teaching Conference 15 – 16 June will also provide a rich source of insight for future Programme development.

8. Recent news posts, including [Bulletin](#), with content relevant to Curriculum Transformation has led to an increase in traffic in reaction to these posts, which indicates colleagues are following the Curriculum Hub and returning to view when new content is published. Awareness and engagement opportunities are also underway with the Directors of Teaching network and through monthly Curriculum Transformation Reference Group meetings convened by Vice-Principal Harmon and Jon Turner (Director of the Institute for Academic Development).

9. The programme plan has the following key phases (in reality slightly more iterative than set out below) with forecast dates set out below for key output/decision points in November 2021 and July 2022, subject to the progress of the work:

- Foundation phase – completed April 2021
- Engage and Shape – institutional engagement, dialogue and co-creation (through to November 2021)
- Design & Test – exploration and evaluation of potential structures and elements (through to July 2022)
- Develop & Refine – preparation of key elements and infrastructure
- Implementation

10. The Programme currently has two critical milestones and decision points:

- a. The definition of the vision for the Edinburgh Graduate (November 2021) when a decision will need to be made to proceed into the next phase or extend timelines to complete this phase of work;
- b. The definition of the Edinburgh Curriculum (July 2022) when a decision will need to be made to proceed into the next phase of work, extend the timeline or not proceed with programme.

11. The programme structure has been developed, discussed and agreed at the Programme Board and is structured into two elements:

- a. The core elements which we expect will persist throughout the length of the programme or are identified as pre-requisite activities. This includes: Programme Leadership and Management; Engagement and Communication Strategy; commissioned work (at this stage including work on assessment and feedback and portfolio scale); identification of future work; and pulling together the key programme outputs.
- b. The workstreams which will be task and delivery activities to lead thinking and development of key areas of activity, delivering key inputs to the vision of the Edinburgh Graduate and the definition of the Edinburgh Curriculum, but also having license for broader scope, thinking, additional outputs and outcomes. Three workstreams have commenced: External Engagement; Future Skills and Employability; Digital Education.

Resource implications

12. None as a result of this update paper.

Risk Management

13. There are no specific risk implications associated with the paper.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

14. The Curriculum Transformation Programme is actively exploring the concept of sustainability in the context of the Programme and will provide an update to Court in due course.

Equality & Diversity

15. The Curriculum Transformation Programme is actively exploring Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the context of the Programme and will provide an update to Court in due course.

Next steps/implications

16. Any action required on the items noted will be taken forward by the appropriate member(s) of University staff.

Consultation

17. This paper was written with input from the Curriculum Programme Support Team.

Further information

18. Author

Amanda Percy
Programme Manager
Curriculum Transformation
June 2021

Presenter

Colm Harmon
Vice-Principal Students

Freedom of Information

15. Open paper



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Edinburgh University Students' Association President's Report

Description of paper

1. This paper is to note developments at the Edinburgh University Students' Association since the last Court meeting, and to provide an update on current work and initiatives.
2. The Students' Association's activities contribute to the following aspects of Strategy 2030: 'We will be a destination of choice, based on our clear "Edinburgh Offer". All of our staff and students will develop here, whether they are from Leith, Lisbon, Lahore or Lilongwe'

Action requested/Recommendation

3. Court is invited to note the report, and consider its contents as supporting other initiatives and projects designed to improve student satisfaction and enhance the student experience.

Background and context

4. This paper outlines current activity, and financial and strategic developments. It is a regular standing item on the Court agenda.

Discussion

Sabbatical Officer Reflections on the year

5. I'd like to note again my heartfelt thanks to the 2020/21 Sabbatical team for their work and support throughout an immensely challenging year. Despite never spending a day physically in the office together, the 2020/21 team has still been able to achieve some great things for students. Just some of our work as a team include:
 - Engaging in national lobbying to communicate students' concerns and frustrations,
 - Successfully securing government funding for Students' Associations,
 - Expanding the University's hardship funding,
 - Made good progression on Student Council motions and
 - Ensuring flexible lease breaks and rent pauses in second semester within University Accommodation when students couldn't return to campus.

Sabbatical Officer On-going concerns

6. Before finishing their term, the 2020/21 Sabbatical Officers reflected on our main on-going concerns which we see to be relevant for the coming academic year, which include:
 - Delay of implementing the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review,
 - Student safety on and around campus, as well as trust in the University's support systems and,
 - University's management of students' expectations about the teaching and learning experience, as well as support for international students trying to get to Edinburgh.

2021/22 Sabbatical Officer Team

7. I'd also like to warmly welcome the 2021/22 Sabbatical Team to the Students' Association and thank Réka Siró, Vice President Activities & Services for joining me on Court. Our handover took place 24th May – 4th June and the new team took Office 7th June 2021, I am really looking forward to working with this new team! The new officer team are developing their priorities for the year both individually and as a team now, alongside their induction activity, and we look forward to sharing our plans and objectives for the year with Court at the next meeting.

Sabbatical Officer (2020/21) Updates

8. At the time of writing this report, the 2020/21 Sabbatical team were still in office so below are their updates to the end of their term in June as well as key concerns within their remit.

Ellen MacRae, President

9. Beyond the regular cycle of University meetings, I've recently been talking to the Russell Group Presidents/Officers and Principal, Peter Mathieson, about improving student representation at the Russell Group Board. The past year has highlighted to me how important student leader collaboration amongst the Russell Group has been. I intend to continue these discussions and to formally establish a group of Russell Group student leaders over my next term.

10. In line with a Student Council motion of Tuition Fee refunds, I aided setting up a 'Tuition Fee Taskforce' of some of our elected student representatives. The topic of tuition fees remains an important one to our students as there is concern that the impact on teaching and learning this year will be forgotten in the next academic year. We were also able to mark Europe Day (9th May 2021) with [quotes from our students](#) about what being European means to them. In line with a Student Council Motion on the Erasmus+ scheme, we also [released a statement](#) expressing our current disappointment in the Turing Scheme proposal. It also conveys students' desire to see the transparent efforts from the University to maintain student mobility.

11. I'm now looking towards the summer and manifesto aims I wish to work towards before the start of the next academic year. Recently, I've been working with our Marketing and Communications team to plan content to go out to our Postgraduate students who remain in University over the summer. Particularly during a pretty isolating year, maintaining this contact and representation work is a key part of the Association's work. Like the rest of the Sabbatical Officers, I've also been planning for the handover to the 2021/22 team. I remain very grateful for the opportunity to continue the work in assisting our recovery from the impacts of Covid-19.

Rachel Irwin, Vice President Activities and Services,

12. Rachel has been preparing to handover to her successor, Réka, and either completing projects or getting them to a place where they can be easily handed over. Beyond this, Rachel has contributed to the completion and passing of some key policies for the Association. After working with An Comann Ceilteach (the Highland Society) over the past year, Rachel oversaw the passing of the Association's Gaelic Language Plan at the Association Executive. As well as this, Rachel worked with Amanda, Vice President Community, to pass the Association's Sustainability Policy at our Strategic Development Subcommittee.

13. Rachel has been working with colleagues and students on the accessibility training we provide for our student leaders, with a view to improving existing provision and including more on online accessibility for the next academic year. She has continued to work on her remaining manifesto aims, including collating a handover document for a new and improved funding page for our new website. Rachel recently presented at the Directors of Quality Network, garnering support and raising awareness for society representation at School-level Student-Staff Liaison Committees amongst relevant University staff. Finally, Rachel has been working to progress the Student Council motions that were allocated to her, covering fast and reliable internet for all students, as well as improving the Association's presence on King's Buildings Campus.

14. Her ongoing concerns looking ahead include the need to ensure that students unable to return to campus come September are sufficiently catered for during Welcome and Induction and that this period is extended. Moreover, returning second-year students who missed out on this experience last year need to also be accommodated for. In terms of use of space on campus for study and extra-curricular activity, it is vital the University's spaces are accessible to students and the booking system is rid of any issues by next semester. The Association is aware that we are being relied upon to produce in-person activity for students where the University is not, thus it is vital that we are supported by the University in doing so, in order to provide students with the high-quality University experience they expect.

Amanda Scully, Vice President Community,

15. Amanda has worked to complete three Student Council motions, one helping the student group Rent Justice Edinburgh, one helping People & Planet's 'Undoing Borders' campaign and a final one in getting Ecosia to become the default search engine on University computers. Within the Students' Association Amanda has finished work on the [Students' Association's flat share site](#), a space to help returning students find new accommodation or flat mates for next year. Amanda has also worked with Rachel, VP Activities & Services, to finalize a Sustainability Policy for the Students' Association. Finally, she worked to create social media content to help students vote in the May 6th elections.

16. Within the University, Amanda sat on the University's Community Grants panel and has worked closely with the Social Responsibility & Sustainability Department to develop a list of student engagement activities for the UN COP26 conference. She also has chaired an event on Responsible Investment at the University with staff and students.

17. Amanda's ongoing concerns for the next year include supporting international students who may struggle to return to campus by Welcome Week and ensuring they have an adequate introduction period. This also extends to returning students, and specifically returning international students, who may be struggling to fully settle in Edinburgh as a city for the first time and may struggle to find accommodation. She is also concerned around the cost of living for students upon their return to Edinburgh, as many students will have incurred additional costs due to covid or may have lost out on part-time work and ensuring they have enough money to live safely and securely is something she hopes the University will help address.

18. Finally, the climate emergency is on the forefront of many students and young people's mind. As more students enter University with a passion to speak out about climate change, she hopes the University will be able to make urgent and large changes to reach its net zero carbon by 2040 and move beyond this to address the global and intersectional issues climate change covers and addresses both through the University's operations and learning, teaching and research.

Fizzy Abou Jawad, Vice President Education

19. Fizzy has focussed on emphasising the importance of student representation in the last month, she recently presented the format of the College of Science and Engineering Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) to the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The College of Science and Engineering SSLCs have been a great success over the past two years and has been a great way to ensure that College specific issues that students are facing are heard directly by staff members. The prospect of the other Colleges utilising College level SSLCs is a positive step toward better student representation at The University.

20. Fizzy completed her campaign on academic integrity - 'Know Your Work'. The campaign will continue to exist as a [subsection of The Advice Place](#) on the website. The campaign is a new resource for students to ensure they are aware of the nuances around academic misconduct and academic integrity. We hope that staff from the University will actively share this campaign as a resource for students. Fizzy has recently attended a Senate Education Committee meeting with the University where she raised concerns on a policy proposing to revert exam duration back to 2-3hrs instead of retaining the flexibility of a 24hr window for exams. This policy passing has added to Fizzy becoming increasingly concerned that the University will regress away from the more progressive teaching and learning environment that has been created this year. Fizzy remains worried that when the University reverts aspects of teaching back to a pre-pandemic model that it appears to staff and students who were not in the room that the University isn't considering lessons learned from this academic year. She hopes the University is transparent and consistently involves the student voice in decision making as the year progresses to combat this.

21. To conclude, Fizzy is content with the progress she has made in her three core objectives over this academic year: Improving teaching and feedback; increasing student support and fostering an inclusive learning environment. Though she recognises that there is still a lot to be done in these areas she is confident that the incoming Vice President Education, Tara Gold, will continue to hold the University accountable and push for improvement in all those areas.

Niamh McCrossan, Vice President Welfare

22. Niamh has assisted Neil McCormick in conducting student consultation in order to review the Accessible and Inclusive Learning policy, and disabled students thoughts on learning, teaching, and exams. This policy is for all students, and needs to be an impactful way to increase accessibility for all, as well as integral to the Curriculum Transformation. She is concerned that disabled students will be disproportionately affected if teaching and examinations revert back to 'the norm', and we don't take advantage of innovation that has happened this year.

23. Niamh has formed a EUSA Equality Diversity and Inclusion committee. This reaffirms EUSA's commitment to EDI, as well as our commitment to the University's action plan relating to our racial equality and anti-racism, gender equality, Widening Participation, accessibility etc.

24. Niamh has been progressing work on consent training for students. She is working with student groups and Karen Chapman, EDI Gender Equality sub-group convenor, to explore consent training as part of a student's pre-matriculation. She is working with Andy Shanks, EUSA, EUSU and ResLife to establish a 'Train the Trainer' model for our bystander intervention training. This will include training 20 student leaders who will deliver training to large cohorts of students. This will increase bystander training to an audience of 1,200 students to 10,000+.

25. She has been pushing for a commitment to tackling sexual violence and supporting survivors. EUSA held a self-care workshop for survivors of trauma and assisted the University's Change in the Community session. However, we remain concerned that current provisions are not adequate. Lesley Johnston, the University's Sexual Violence and Harassment Liaison Manager, has been working for a year without a team and is unable to work on strategic developments to prevent sexual violence, and instead has necessarily focussed on providing support to over 130 students on their experiences. We would like to emphasise the importance of financial commitment, through the Student Experience Action Plan and other routes, to improving provisions for our student quickly and in our fullest capacity.

Finance Update

Full Year Results

26. The Association's financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March. Full year results for the year ended 31 March 2021 are a deficit of just under £1.1m, in line with forecasts. This is after net claims made on the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme of £1.1m, i.e. the underlying deficit was approximately £2.2m. Total social enterprise trading revenue (primarily from our shops, cafes, bars and events) in the year was £0.6m compared to a typical year pre-pandemic of £8m-£9m.

Cash

27. We now have a £1m bank loan in place and a £0.5m overdraft facility. While the loan is interest-free for the first 12 months, repayment of the loan, which will take six years, starts in May 2021 on a quarterly basis. Because of this loan our cash position is now broadly similar to its position one year ago and we plan to operate within the footprint that the loan and overdraft afford us until they are fully repaid.

Budget

28. The budget for 2021/22 was signed off by the trustees in March (and by the University in April) and gives another large deficit position of £1.1m. The budget was drawn up between December and February when full lockdown conditions were in force and some restrictions looked like remaining that way for much of the new financial year. As a result a cautious approach has been taken with the budget. It is too early to say whether this is over-cautious – or indeed, over-optimistic – however for the few weeks that the Garden at Teviot has been open its sales figures have been higher than were budgeted, which is reassuring.

Financial focus

29. The approach for now and the coming years is to focus on rebuilding from the nil / negative reserves point we are now in. Salaried staff costs have been reduced, with headcount reduced by close to 20% since 2019. This has reduced our core cost base by approximately £700k/year. While 'normal' activity still appears to be far off at the point of writing, we remain hopeful that we are on a trajectory towards fewer restrictions and therefore an ability to start working our own way back up.

Continued cost savings

30. In line with our approach to managing our staff cost base, and following significant voluntary staff redundancy or hours reduction earlier in the year, we have been considering the need for compulsory staff redundancies. We have been carefully reviewing our operations and had identified areas that seemed likely to require hibernation in the medium to long term as a result of the pandemic and ongoing restrictions. Whilst restrictions are easing and we anticipate a wider return to student in person activity, we still anticipate significant impact on events/conference activity. We are currently consulting with staff on proposed redundancies in our Honours catering business as we do not see a sustainable level of business to justify continued in-house provision of that service currently.

Planning: Summer, Welcome Week and preparations for Semester 1.

31. Whilst there is optimism on the continued lifting of restrictions there is also much uncertainty, making the planning context challenging. We are of course maintaining our capacity to deliver services digitally such that we can, and will be able to revert to this if required quickly. We are also intending to maintain some elements of digital provision either instead of on campus activity or alongside in parallel, Student Council and elements of Peer support for example have worked well online.

Summer Activity

32. All in person events pre the August festivals have effectively been cancelled, so our focus remains on our underlying trading and building provision, which is focused on Teviot Row House. Teviot Garden opened on 26th April and proved to be an appealing venue for members to return to – we safely welcomed and served 25,000 visitors to the end of May. The Library bar was able to re-open in mid May as Edinburgh moved to level 2 restrictions, with just under 2000 customers visiting across the first 2 weeks of operation. Both the Garden and the Library Bar will continue to operate into the summer, and are enabling some nice activity and promotions to recognise Pride Month in June, and to help celebrate with those graduating students perhaps visiting McEwan Hall for graduation photo opportunities in July. Our other venues, including Potterrow and Pleasance, will re-open in a more phased way – with more of our staff returning to site from July onwards to settle in and prepare, phasing up to a full re-opening prior to Welcome Week.

33. We are continuing some activity to reach our Postgraduate community who are with us year round, and also our 'Matchup Catchup' programme to help individual students connect (with almost 400 students participating since mid March onwards) whilst quieter now, will continue so long as students want to sign up to meet each other. We're running an LGBT+ Matchup Catchup 'special' during Pride Month.

34. On the Festival Fringe we are currently working up proposals for this year, along with our two key partners – Pleasance Theatre and Gilded Balloon – as well as other stakeholders. But again we are all waiting for more positive updates to the Scottish Government Guidance. There is one narrative that potentially by July there will be no social distancing, and individual events of up to (say) 400, which would allow much Festival activity. However the detailed discussion with the Council, Licensing, Event Scotland etc. is far more challenging with funding discussions for example still being based on conditions of outdoor only events at 2m distancing and no food or drink. We have numerous deadlines all coming together around the end of May / beginning of June so are hoping for a better picture by then.

Welcome Week planning

35. This is in progress although is obviously fraught with uncertainty which is a concern. We believe this year it will be important to visibly be present for new and current members, to support them to connect, and to have the opportunity to experience a high level of vibrant on campus activity. The Covid restrictions obviously make this difficult particularly in terms of group sizes and physical distancing as noted above. In terms of major events, such as the Activities and Sports fairs, there are clear challenges on space, and outdoor venues are key. Obviously also we are in a situation where the restrictions could change for the better or worse ahead of September.

36. We are liaising with colleagues in the University but there is currently a mixed picture and everyone is facing the same uncertainty, including just what infrastructure might be available or not. Our own ambition is to focus on Bristo Square area as a major holistic hub of activity which would likely allow the better visibility as well as blend of indoor and outdoor spaces, but of course we might end up with a more fragmented approach dependant on availability / suitability as both restrictions and other activities emerge. We are taking the view that student group activity, and connecting students with those groups, (societies, sports clubs, and peer learning/support), is a priority, and will be aiming to provide in person activity of this nature within the 'educational purpose' guidance, whilst also supporting groups to provide digital alternatives both to manage the risks of changes in restrictions, and also to be inclusive and accessible. In addition, we are scaling up 1st year buddying schemes which support smaller group in person activity, which is less at risk of change, and will be relaunching our very successful matchup catchup scheme for the new academic year, noting that not all students feel comfortable or confident immediately engaging with group activities when they first arrive. We are also developing an engaging programme of potential in person events – a smaller programme than previously but one that allows for events to be repeated to ensure as many students as possible have the chance to participate, and with video and livestreaming to enable participation by new students wherever they are, and to take account of the potential for students isolating on arrival.

Semester 1 Planning

37. As a first principle we consider in-person delivery to be our core model, noting even during tighter restrictions, students wanted to come and be in their union spaces, even if we weren't as fully open as we would have been usually. We see being there in person for our members to be vital. There will still need to be a hybrid approach to some services, and also, restrictions or no restrictions, we want to retain

the best of our learning from working and delivering services remotely, to ensure both student-facing services and support, and back of house functions can be streamlined and simplified, as well as accessible, inclusive and flexible. We are well under way with planning for our student-facing activities for 21-22 – during April and May we have trained 400 new peer support leaders, supported society committee changeovers with 2400 students taking on leadership roles in societies, and we have also trained our new School Reps, Section and Liberation reps (and now our new Sabbatical Team) in preparation for another busy year of student representation. We have also been working to prepare for a return to on-site student group activity, and are part way through a major project to strengthen our support for and engagement with student groups on site in order to maximize the use of our spaces and the impact of student group events, and for us to deliver more activity in our spaces and venues in partnership with our student groups, including as part of our wider entertainments programme.

Digital Development

38. April also saw us launch our new website, but more relevantly for us behind the scenes switch to a new web portal provider. This is a key work stream in our Digital transformation as part of our 2025 strategy. Our new platform had already been used for the Virtual Fairs last year and the elections.

The switch to a new website and CRM (customer relationship management system) has been a 12 month project. The changeover went well, and early analytics* (some of which are noted below) are positive.

- Overall site users are up by 93% (an increase from 4,198 to 8,107)
- Multiple page views have more than doubled (5,132 to 11,877), so a 131% increase
- Mobile sessions are up by 245% (4,335 to 14,959)
- Bounce rate is down 17% on mobile and 22% on desktop

* based on the same time frame of 20 April - 5 May for 2020 vs 2021.

39. We are now in phase 2 of the CRM & Web move (May – August) which involves deploying additional functionality (e.g. course mate – a rep feedback and tracking system); working with the provider to develop new functionality (e.g. societies finance expenses management); and content enhancement (e.g. additional video content and sustainability related content).

Celebrating our students and staff

40. Our annual flagship schemes culminated in 2 online Awards events last month. Our **Student Awards** were announced at a live online evening event, enabling stories of the nominees and winners' achievements to be shared. The evening was also punctuated with 3 fantastic online performances by student groups, showcasing their creativity, effort and tenacity – our Salsa society's video compilation brought their members performing from their homes, in Edinburgh, UK and far beyond, together. Savoy Opera Group performed an extract of their brand new original musical inspired by student life during lockdown, and 45 members of our Music Society delivered an on point virtual classical performance. Alongside the stories of student members going above and beyond this year to provide students with the opportunity to connect with and support each other, and participate in school-based and community-based initiatives, it was an inspiring evening showing just how much our students have persevered and been there for each other when many of the

normal elements of university life just weren't available. You can watch the awards and also check out the shortlist and winners [here](#).

41. Our **Teaching Awards** were celebrated across our social media during a single day, with a live announcement every half an hour. We were able to show videos of our winners talking about their delight at being nominated. With over 3000 students nominating this year, it was very clear throughout the scheme just how much it meant to staff to have the recognition for their work in this very difficult year with staff navigating significant challenge and change both at work, and at home. We've previously highlighted the blogs hosted on the Hybrid Teaching Exchange with academic staff sharing their feelings on being nominated, and their experiences this year. We're proud to have been able to show how much students have valued the efforts and positive experiences staff have worked hard to provide. You can read about our winners [here](#).

42. We've been really pleased to see some of the local reactions to the Awards, like [this one](#) from the School of Social and Political Studies, with schools proudly sharing stories of their nominees and winners too. We've also really enjoyed the winner reactions:

'I was incredibly touched to be nominated, and then when I heard that I'd been shortlisted, it was actually quite difficult to take in. So I'd like to thank EUSA for this recognition. Without question, it's a real boost. Being a Personal Tutor is part of a team effort, so I'd also like to thank my colleagues, including our outstanding Student Support Team. But especially I'd like to thank the students who nominated me. It really does mean a great deal to know that what we do makes a difference.'
Professor Judy Hardy, School of Physics; Winner of Best Personal Tutor 2021

Resource implications

43. This is a regular update report, there are no resource implications outlined.

Risk Management

44. Financial risks are highlighted in the report.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

45. Several of the activities outlined do support a wide variety of the SDGs.

Equality & Diversity

46. Equality and Diversity considerations are implicitly included in this paper. EUSA represents the interests of a diversity of student groups and exists to maintain the equal representation of students and student groups.

Next steps/implications

47. There are no next steps to be taken as a result of this paper.

Consultation

48. Consultation on this paper was not required.

Further information

49. Author & Presenter

Ellen MacRae

President

June 2021

Freedom of Information

50. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Edinburgh University Sports Union Report

Description of paper

1. This paper is to note developments at Edinburgh University Sports Union since the last Court meeting, providing updates on current work and strategic progress.
2. The Sports Union's activity and direction clearly contributes to the following aspects of Strategy 2030:
 - i) The undergraduate curriculum will support breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it.
 - ii) We will be leading Scotland's commitment to widening participation.
 - iii) We will be a destination of choice, based on our clear "Edinburgh Offer". All of our staff and students will develop here, whether they are from Leith, Lisbon, Lahore or Lilongwe.
 - iv) We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.
 - v) We will be on track to be a Carbon-Zero University by 2040.

Action requested/Recommendation

3. Court is invited to note the report, recognising the wider benefit of sport and physical activity to the University community, and consider its contents as supporting other initiatives and projects designed to improve student satisfaction and enhancing the student experience.

Background and context

4. This paper outlines current activity and EUSU strategic developments. It is a new item on the Court agenda, now alongside the report of Edinburgh University Student's Association.

Discussion

5. In-person activity has continued to increase over the past month, with indoor activity such as gymnastics and badminton resuming in a COVID compliant manner. Contact sports, such as Muay Thai, have resumed in an outdoor capacity, with restrictions almost fully lifted on sports such as football.
6. In addition to getting active in the more traditional sense, we joined the Active Lives team at Easter Bush for "[The Big Dig](#)", working with Estates to plant trees in partnership with the Woodland Trust. Groups across multiple dates planted 120 wild harvest, 120 wildwood, 100 working wood, among others.

Charity efforts

7. [Women's football raised £2,071](#) for the charity Health in Mind, by completing 4 miles every 4 hours for 24 hours on May 22nd. Several players and coaches took part, running, walking or cycling the distance. A tremendous effort by the group has raised some crucial funds for this worthwhile charity.



Women's football members completing their Health in Mind charity challenge.

8. Peter Sawkins, Badminton Club President and GBBO winner, completed the Edinburgh Marathon Festival Marathon in an impressive time of just under 3 hours and 30 mins, raising over [£2,200 for CALM](#) (Campaign Against Living Miserably).

New staff and volunteers

9. Recruitment for our Coaching and Volunteering Academy intern was extremely competitive, receiving over 30 applications for this part time role. Some exceptional candidates took part in the interview process, and we are delighted that Hannah Campbell is our new CVA Intern for 2021-22.

10. Our [Inclusion Committee applications](#) are open for 2021-22. We are recruiting for all roles across the summer period.

11. Many of our 65 sports clubs have now completed their new committee handovers, with new Presidents taking the reins ahead of the 1 July handover deadline. Similarly, the Sports Union Presidential handover will informally begin on 7 June, prior to Gregor's contract beginning on 15 June. I am very excited to see all the positive change these individuals will bring to our Sports Union across next academic year.

12. While our Sports Coordinator – Communication and Events, Bethany Lawrie, is on secondment within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, we are delighted to welcome Ailis Foster to the team. She has already been a fantastic addition, and I have no doubt she will continue to drive EUSU forward.

13. On June 3rd we will begin our first training session for incoming committee members in the form of Treasurers Q+A session, led by outgoing EUSU Honorary Treasurer Cecilia Bosman alongside incoming Honorary Treasurer Ben Dickens.

Leavers

14. We have teamed up with kit provider PlayerLayer to create one-of-a-kind [Leavers Kit](#). This is just a small token to provide our students with a thank you for all they have done for student sport across their time at Edinburgh.



Some of the PlayerLayer items being modelled by final year EUSU students.

Blues and Colours Awards

15. Concluding the final Blues and Colours Committee meeting of the year, the committee have awarded 47 Half Blues, 27 Blues and 97 Colours this year. Blues and Half Blues recognise those who have achieved sporting success, meanwhile Colours recognise those who have gone above and beyond in their voluntary roles. These awards represent a 20% increase on last year's total, demonstrating the phenomenal efforts of all Sports Union members this year. We are currently reaching out to Senior Advisors and notable alumni ahead of our virtual Blues and Colours Awards ceremony in June.

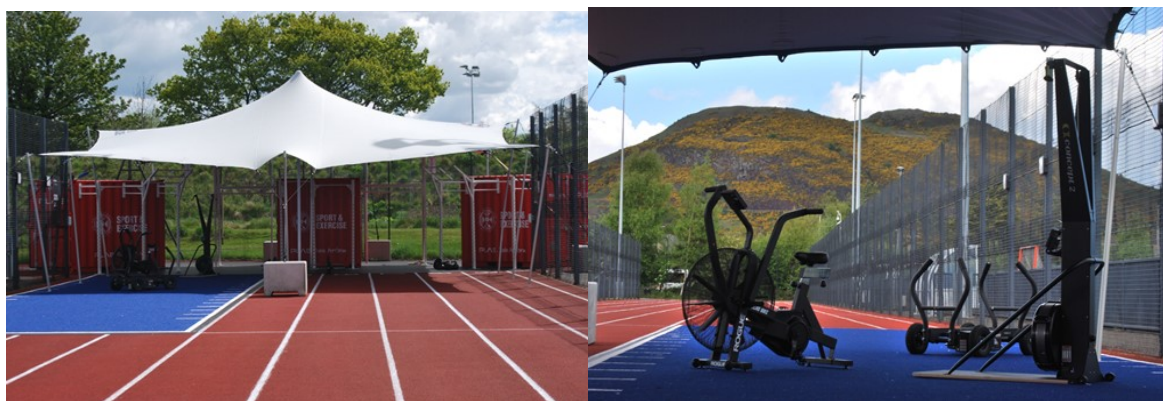
Media team

16. As part of our #PeopleoftheSU campaign, our Media team are now getting in touch with notable alumni in order to share some of their incredible stories. Keep an eye on our social media for these coming soon.

Sport and Exercise updates

17. Clubs and our Sports Coordinator – Competitions and Intramural Sport, Ollie Cruickshank, are currently planning for preseason. This will take place in late August and early September and will give clubs a chance to welcome athletes back ahead of Welcome Week.

18. Additionally, we are delighted to have now officially opened the [PLAE outdoor conditioning space](#) at Peffermill. This space will be invaluable to catering for our athletes in the coming seasons.



PLAE conditioning space, with stunning views of Arthur's Seat.

19. Since Pleasance Sports Centre's reopening on 26 April, we have surpassed the milestone of over 40,000 user bookings. This clearly demonstrates the demand for sport and physical activity amongst the student population currently in Edinburgh.

Resource implications

20. This is a regular update report from the Sports Union; therefore, no resource implications are outlined.

Risk Management

21. As we continue to offer a world class sporting experience for a substantial proportion of Edinburgh students, we must work to combat facility capacity issues moving forward. We eagerly await the verdict on the Peffermill Sports Village appeal from the City of Edinburgh Council.

22. As demonstrated across 2020-21 and this report, student sport and physical activity plays a key role in the wellbeing and student sense of belonging for many. Therefore, the risk of losing Wednesday afternoons to scheduled classes moving forward poses a huge threat to the livelihood of our sports clubs, recreational sporting offer and the wider student body. We are working with the Vice Principal Students, the Planning Group for 2021-22, as well as the Students' Association to drive this message to the relevant individuals.

23. EUSU is looking to switch website providers, from MSL to SUMS, after discussions with EUSA on the benefits this has provided them. As part of this, the link up with matriculation data will become even more imperative (please see point 26).

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

By the very nature of the Sports Union, we work to promote healthy living and ensure our members are well. Through our collaborative work with Sport and Exercise, we work to ensure as many students and staff as possible have the opportunity to get active.

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Our Coaching and Volunteering Academy (CVA) offers two version of the Edinburgh Award, with the opportunity to complete a Leadership version following the

completion of the first year. This programme is central to our wider CVA, which works to achieve people development through learning and volunteering.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Our two elected Women in Sport Officers on our Inclusion Committee have worked this year to ensure females are empowered across our Sports Union, through various initiatives and fundraisers. Similarly, our Volunteer Zambia programme sees us work with female coaches in Lusaka to upskill these individuals and empower them to become better leaders.

SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

EUSU strives to provide a good working environment for all staff, promoting a flexible schedule for each individual. Through our CVA, we support internal staff development to ensure all CPD opportunities are utilised. EUSU aims to keep costs low for students across all activity.

SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Our Inclusion Committee contains representatives from a variety of previous underrepresented groups, including LGBT+ Officer; Trans and Non-Binary Officer; International Students Officer; Disabled Students Officer; Postgraduate Students Officer; Ethnic Minorities Officer; Women in Sport Officer and Widening Access Officer. From their work this year in consulting with these groups more widely, we are now pulling together the first ever EUSU Inclusion Survey which we hope to promote widely in 2021-22.

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

We have a huge drive for all our club's playing kit to be environmentally friendly in collaboration with our partner PlayerLayer. We have worked with the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability to reduce and adapt all travel carried out to minimise the carbon footprint. Furthermore, we are working on projects to off-set emissions from travel.

Equality & Diversity

24. Equality and Diversity considerations are implicitly included in this paper. EUSU are committed to offering opportunities to students regardless of their background, working alongside our Inclusion Committee to break down barriers to sport and physical activity for underrepresented groups. EUSU represents the interests of a diversity of student groups and must ensure we maintain the equal representation of students and student groups.

Next steps/implications

25. An implication of this paper which Court are asked to consider is the protection of Wednesday afternoon time for student experience and recreation, as this loss would be detrimental to the wider student experience and wellbeing. We are grateful for Court members support thus far in protecting this time, and hopefully enabling students to develop a great sense of belonging to both the city and the University.

26. It is imperative we establish a matriculation data link up for our membership, achieving the same link up which the Student's Association website offers when

students register. We have been in communication with the Director of Student Systems and Administration for approximately six years on this topic and require some staff time from their team to complete this project. This link up would ensure we are promoting Equality and Diversity at every opportunity by more clearly understanding our membership demographic and beginning to identify areas where we need to improve. This is even more essential with our website revamp currently being undertaken. Any support Court members could give in moving this work forward would be greatly appreciated.

27. If any Court members would be interested in hearing more about the work of the Sports Union and meeting some of our incredible volunteers, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me on sports.president@ed.ac.uk.

Consultation

29. Consultation on this paper was not required.

Further information

30. <u>Author</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
Katie Macdonald	Not applicable
Sports Union President	
June 2021	

Freedom of Information

31. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Academic Year 2021/22 Planning Group Report

Description of paper

1. This paper provides Court with an update on the work of the Academic Year 21/22 Planning Group. This paper covers the period April and May 2021.
2. This paper supports the outcomes set out in Strategy 2030 by supporting the University's continued sustainability.

Action requested/Recommendation

3. The Committee is invited to comment on the report.

Background and context

4. The Academic Year 21/22 Planning Group has been established with senior membership from across the University, is operating and will report into the University Executive on a monthly basis.
5. As part of the process to stand down Adaptation and Renewal, it was agreed it was necessary to maintain a planning and operational group to consider the anticipated and actual changes in Scottish Government guidance and in particular how this impact on our planning for the 2021/22 academic year, student, staff and the estate; as well as the period between April 2021 and the start of the academic year.

Discussion

Paragraphs 6-40: Closed section

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

41. There are no direct impacts or considerations.

Equality & Diversity

42. We will ensure the Academic Year 21/22 Planning Group is equipped to carry out Equality Impact Assessments.

Further Information

43. Author & Presenter
Barry Neilson
Director of Strategic Change

Freedom of Information

44. Closed. Our approach to adaptation and renewal planning is commercially sensitive.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Director of Finance's Report

Description of paper

1. This paper provides an update on the 2021-22 Planning Round along with an indicative University Group Quarter Three forecast position for 2020-21. Appendix 1 outlines our draft (unaudited) Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (COSI) for 2020-21 and provides more detail on the non-cash accounting entries that we have to make when preparing our annual report and accounts each year.
2. This paper supports all of the outcomes set out in Strategy 2030 by supporting the University's continued drive towards financial sustainability.

Action requested/Recommendation

3. Court are asked to review and comment on the latest update.

Background and context

4. The paper provides a regular update on finance related issues for Court.

Paragraphs 5-16: Closed section

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

17. This Director of Finance and the Finance Team fully supports the outcomes of Strategy 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals by working to secure the ongoing financial sustainability of the University.

Equality & Diversity

18. Specific issues of equality and diversity are not relevant to this paper as the content focusses primarily on financial strategy and/or financial project considerations.

Next steps/implications

19. We would welcome feedback as outlined in the discussion above.

Consultation

20. The paper has been reviewed by Lee Hamill, Director of Finance.

Further information

21.

<u>Authors</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
Rachael Robertson	Lee Hamill
Deputy Director of Finance	Director of Finance
Stuart Graham	
Head of FIRST (Financial Information, Reporting & Strategy Team)	
1 June 2021	

Freedom of Information

22. This paper should not be included in open business as its disclosure could substantially prejudice the commercial interests of the University.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Planning Round 2021-22 proposals

Description of paper

1. This paper summarises the outcome of the 2021-22 planning round process and requests Court approval and endorsement of the proposed budgets and plans.
2. The planning round supports delivery of the University's Strategy 2030, and in their submissions budget areas are asked to reflect on their contribution across the breadth of the strategy.

Action requested/Recommendation

3. Court is requested to discuss and approve the proposed approach to budgeting and planning in 2021-22.

Paragraphs 4-30: Closed section

Consultation

31. The planning round process was discussed at University Executive, Policy & Resources Committee and Court in October/November 2020; the amended timetable was discussed at University Executive in January 2021. SLT have held discussions on the planning and budgetary process from February to May. University Executive discussed a version of this paper at its meeting on 18 May 2021, and Policy & Resources Committee discussed on 31 May 2021.

Further information

32. Authors

Pauline Manchester
Interim Director of Strategic Planning
Lee Hamill, Director of Finance
Jonathan Seckl, Senior Vice Principal
1 June 2021

Presenter

Pauline Manchester
Interim Director of Strategic Planning

Freedom of Information

33. This paper is closed.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Update on current and pipeline partnerships in China

Description of paper

1. The purpose of this paper is to update Court on the status of existing strategic partnerships in China and also pipeline partnerships in China with indicative timelines for progression.

Paragraphs 2-59: Closed section

Further information

60. *Author and Presenter*

James Smith, Vice-Principal International

Freedom of Information

61. Closed paper – commercially confidential



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Joint Institute between the University of Edinburgh and the Low Carbon College, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

Paragraphs 1-32: Closed section

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

33. The LCC Joint Institute will contribute to a number of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, focus will be in SDG 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) and SDG 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact).

34. Through the focus on achieving the energy- and resource-sustainable cities of the future, we will reduce their environmental impact, increase their sustainability and improve the quality of life within an increasingly urbanised society. In addition, we will promote exchange, growth and implementation of existing best practices as well as emerging low carbon ideas and technologies through a targeted outreach programme for key influencers and implementers, both locally and internationally, including: government officials; financial, economic and environmental policy makers; city-dwellers; and school children. Our goal is for the LCC Joint Institute to play a major role in shaping the strategies required to meet 2050 decarbonisation targets.

Equality & Diversity

35. The LCC JI will follow University of Edinburgh protocols on equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of recruitment, training and career development of both students and staff.

Paragraphs 36-38: Closed section

Further information

39. <u>Author</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
Professor Margaret Graham	Professor James Smith
Director of Internationalisation	Vice-Principal International
School of GeoSciences	
7 June 2021	

Freedom of Information

40. Closed paper – commercially confidential



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Usher Institute for Population Health Sciences



Paragraphs 1-39: Closed section

Sustainability, climate change and sustainable development goals implications

40. The project aligns to the following Sustainable Development Goals:

SDG3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all ages

SDG4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

SDG8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

SDG9 – Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

SDG11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

SDG12 – ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

41. The Usher Institute has been modelled using the Edinburgh Sustainability Model Evaluator (ESME) Tool, which sets the Estates and Social Responsibility & Sustainability criteria for all development projects. This is used to evaluate projects at each RIBA stage and determine the level of sustainability afforded by the building design, specifications and operational criteria against the University sustainability targets.

42. The ESME evaluation of the recently completed RIBA Stage 4 design will be undertaken by the end of May 2021 and the result reported to the Estates Committee Sub-Group along with the report of the tender offer. The Stage 4 design includes changes to the original Stage 3 design, approved by the Project Board, in order to address the change to hybrid working, the new challenges presented by COVID-19, the market testing and the feedback from CEC planning department. The evaluation will also be provided to Estates Committee when the request for approval of the appointment of the main contractor is submitted.

Equality & Diversity

43. An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out at this point. However, this will be developed by the Project team for the respective works including the design.

Paragraphs 44-45: Closed section

Consultation

46. The revised Full Business Case was reviewed and approved by the Project Board on 27 April 2021 and also reviewed by the Director of Estates and the Director of Finance. Estates Committee approved the revised Full Business Case on 19 May 2021, and indicated enthusiastic support for this important strategic initiative. Policy & Resources Committee reviewed an earlier version of this paper on 31 May 2021 and recommended it for approval by Court.

Further information

47. Authors

Katharine Isherwood,
Estates Development Manager

Catherine Elliott
College Registrar, CMVM
7 June 2021

Presenter

Catherine Martin
Vice-Principal (Interim) Corporate
Services

Freedom of Information

48. This paper is closed as disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of the University.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

University Pharmacy

Description of paper

1. Following review of the provision of pharmacy services on campus after the retirement of the current Superintendent Pharmacist (expected September 2021) it is recommended that we sell the contract to deliver a pharmacy function based in the Health and Wellbeing Centre at Bristo Square to an independent pharmacy provider. The proposal and the delegations requested at paragraph 4 were reviewed by the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 31 May and recommended for approval by Court.

2. It is anticipated that a sale to a specialist pharmacy provider will deliver a Pharmacy with the required governance structure, professional oversight and infrastructure to provide a thriving and high-quality pharmacy function on the University campus for students and staff.

3. The proposal will contribute to the following outcomes set out in Strategy 2030:

- i) We will have more efficient systems to support our work.
- ii) Our estate will be fit for purpose and sustainable.

Action requested/Recommendation

4. Court is invited to:

- approve the proposed sale of the University Pharmacy; and,
- delegate to the University Secretary, acting in consultation with the Deputy Secretary, Governance and Legal and Director of Legal Services, the authority to conclude and execute the legal documentation relating to the sale of the Pharmacy (including the lease of the premises) in line with the principles outlined in this paper.

Paragraphs 5-25: Closed section

Freedom of Information

26. Closed paper due to commercial confidentiality. We will require to enter into confidentiality agreements with the prospective purchaser and request that all sections of this paper be closed.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Institutional Position on Scottish Independence

Description of paper

1. The paper reminds Court of the current institutional position on Scottish independence as previously agreed by Court and seeks a recommendation that this position be reaffirmed.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is invited to review the current neutral stance position taken by the University on Scottish independence and to agree that this be reaffirmed.

Background and context

3. In the lead-up to the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence the University took a neutral stance on the constitutional question. This was most recently reaffirmed by Court in March 2017, when the First Minister of Scotland proposed a second referendum on Scottish independence in the wake of the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union. As a potential second referendum on Scottish independence remains a live topic of political debate following the recent Scottish Parliamentary elections, it feels timely to review the institutional position.

Discussion

4. The current institutional position as agreed by Court in March 2017 is published on the University's [website](#) and reads as follows:

Position on Scottish independence

The University's governing body sets out its neutral stance.

The University of Edinburgh recognises that a range of views, both for and against independence, are held within our large and diverse community of students, staff and alumni. Given that diversity of views, the governing body of the University of Edinburgh (the University Court), has decided that the University will continue to be neutral on Scottish independence. It would of course scrutinise and challenge all sides if another referendum on independence were held – as it did in 2014 – to set out how they would ensure the continued success of the higher education sector in Scotland.

In addition, the University is firmly committed to being a platform for debate if another referendum were held and would doubtless host events at which all options in the debate are put under critical scrutiny. The University would also encourage our academics to bring their expertise to bear – in the same way as it does around other issues that relate to their research and/or their profession.

5. Given the current political debate on the topic, it is proposed that this statement be reaffirmed and the website updated to note this reaffirmation. This will continue to

ensure that a statement is available for any interested parties, internal to the University or external, to consult.

Resource implications

6. None as a result of the statement.

Risk Management

7. As the current statement has been published on the University website for over four years and has not attracted a critical response, a reaffirmation of the statement is not anticipated to be contentious. A move away from a neutral stance would however be highly contentious both within the University community and more widely and is not recommended. Reaffirming the statement would remove any doubt (should any exist) that the University's position might have subsequently changed since 2017.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

8. No impacts as a result of the statement.

Equality & Diversity

9. The statement recognises the diversity of views amongst the University community on the topic.

Next steps/implications

10. If agreed, the website will be updated accordingly.

Consultation

11. The March 2017 statement was reviewed and approved by Court. The reaffirmation of this statement was considered by Policy & Resources Committee on 31 May 2021 and recommended for approval by Court.

Further information

12. Author

Lewis Allan
Head of Court Services
7 June 2021

Presenter

Sarah Smith
Vice-Principal Strategic Change &
Governance; and University Secretary

Freedom of Information

13. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Court Internal Effectiveness Review

Description of paper

1. This paper provides an internal review of Court’s effectiveness for the 2019/20 academic year and suggestions for an internal review for the current year. This paper is part of compliance with external requirements and general good governance practice and an effective Court is important for oversight of progress in achieving the University’s strategic objectives.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is invited to consider and approve the annual review for 2019/20 and to consider arrangements for a review of the 2020/21 year.

Background and context

3. The Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (‘the Governance Code’) states that: ‘the governing body is expected to review its own effectiveness each year and to undertake an externally facilitated evaluation of its own effectiveness and that of its committees, including size and composition of membership, at least every five years. As part of these processes or separately, the effectiveness of the academic board (also known as Senate, Senatus Academicus or academic council) is expected to be reviewed similarly.’ It also adds that: ‘Members’ individual contributions are expected to be reviewed regularly, at a minimum every two years, through a standardised process with the active involvement of the member concerned.’

Discussion

Compliance with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 (‘the Governance Act’)

4. The major area of governance work has been achieving full compliance with the Governance Act before the 31 December 2020 deadline for doing so. 8 Ordinances and 1 Resolution have been amended or revoked and replaced as part of this work, as well as updates to the Standing Orders of Court and the terms of reference of many of the Court committees to reflect the new Governance Act-compliant membership of the Court.

Table 1: Ordinances Amended or Revoked and Replaced

No.	Name	Status
187	Composition of the University Court	Revoked and replaced with Ordinance 211 (Composition of the University Court) with full effect from 1 August 2020 to create a new Governance Act-compliant membership
192	Local Authority Membership of the University Court	As above

200	Removal of Co-opted Members of Court	Revoked and replaced by Ordinance 216 (Removal of Members of the University Court) with effect from 16 December 2020 – incorporates sections of the Governance Act regarding the power for Court to remove its own members in certain circumstances
202	General Council Membership and Registration: Amendment of Ordinance No. 186	Revoked and replaced with Ordinance 213 (General Council Membership and Registration) with effect from 12 February 2020 – removes reference to General Council Assessors being elected positions as they are now appointed following open recruitment and removes some other outdated elements highlighted by the General Council
204	Composition of the Senatus Academicus	Revoked and replaced with Ordinance 212 (Composition of the Senatus Academicus) with effect from 1 August 2020 – to create a new Governance Act-compliant membership
206	Composition of the Senatus Academicus – Amendment	As above
208	Employment of Academic Staff	Amended by Ordinance 215 (Amendment of Ordinance 208 (Employment of Academic Staff)) with effect from 16 December 2020 – replaced definition of academic freedom with new expanded definition included in the Governance Act
210	Election of Chancellor and General Council Assessors and Chairing of General Council Meetings	Revoked and replaced with Ordinance 214 (Election of Chancellor and Chairing of General Council Meetings) with effect from 12 February 2020 – removes reference to General Council Assessors being elected positions as they are now appointed following open recruitment

Table 2: Resolution Revoked and Replaced

No.	Name	Status
28/2000	Procedure for Removal of Co-opted Members of Court	Revoked and replaced with Resolution 74/2020 (Procedure for Removal of Members of the University Court) with effect from 16 December 2020 – to underpin the new Ordinance on the same topic, setting out a Governance Act-compliant procedure for the removal of Court members

Table 3: New categories of Court member established on 1 August 2020

Title	Appointment details
Senior Lay Member	Following an open recruitment and interview process from January to March 2020 and an election held on 31 March-2 April 2020 with students, staff and Court members all eligible to vote, Janet Legrand was appointed as the University's first Senior Lay Member
Academic Staff Member and Senatus Assessor	Following an election held on 24-26 March 2020 with all academic staff members eligible to nominate and to vote, Fiona Mackay was appointed as the University's first Academic Staff Member and Senatus Assessor on Court
Professional Services Staff Member	Following an election held on 24-26 March 2020 with all professional services staff members eligible to nominate and to vote, Sarah McAllister was appointed as the University's first Professional Services Staff Member on Court (replacing the Non-Teaching Staff Assessor position)
Trade Union Professional Services Member	Following nomination by the recognised staff unions, Joyce Anderson was appointed as the University's first Trade Union Professional Services Member on Court
Trade Union Academic Staff Member	Following nomination by the recognised staff unions, Kathryn Nash was appointed as the University's first Trade Union Academic Staff Member on Court

Compliance with the Governance Code

5. A review of compliance with the Governance Code over 2019/20 has been undertaken to provide assurance that the University has been compliant with the 7 high level principles and 83 underlying provisions in the Governance Code from 1 August 2020 since the implementation of the new composition of Court. As this is a large document and is not required to be a component of the internal effectiveness review it is provided on the Court [site](#) under the 'Additional Information' column.

Individual Court Member Review Meetings

6. The last full series of individual review meetings with all Court members took place between September 2019 and January 2020. Subsequently, the Senior Lay Member has held individual introductory meetings with continuing Court members in post in July 2020, which fed into a Court seminar discussion on 28 September 2020. Actions taken as result of this discussion have included:

- Circulation of the following documents:
 - An annual schedule of Court business
 - The University's Organisational Chart
 - A schedule of all Court and Court committee meeting dates
 - A calendar of events to which Court members are regularly invited to (and signposting to where other events of interest can be found)
 - A glossary of acronyms often used in the University and/or in higher education more widely

- Photographs of Court members
- Photographs of Court attendees
- Option to opt-in to the following communications:
 - Public Affairs update
 - Daily Media Coverage (press cuttings)
 - Enlightened, a Development & Alumni Office e-newsletter for alumni
 - All staff emails - for those who do not receive these at present
- Organising more informal sessions outside of the formal Court meetings, with a Court-Senior Leadership Team session held on 21 January 2021, regular finance briefings from the Director of Finance and more sessions will be organised over the summer period
- Assurance to members that they are welcome to contact senior staff to discuss topics of interest or concern; and,
- Encouragement that members can raise questions or concerns by email on Court papers before the meeting.

External Effectiveness Review

7. David Newall, former Secretary to Court & Director of Administration at the University of Glasgow and current Chair of the Board of Management at Glasgow Clyde College, facilitated an external effectiveness review of Court, which was approved by Court in February 2019. The report covered five themes: People; Structure and Processes; Conduct of Business; Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement; and, Openness and Accountability, with People identified by David Newall as the highest priority, which Court agreed. Action to address the People theme in 2019/20 focused on succession planning by Nominations Committee given the departure of a number of highly experienced members and the move to a new composition of Court. This included the use of a search agency to aid in identifying suitable candidates for the new position of Senior Lay Member, with 22 applications received and a separate recruitment campaign for a new Co-opted Member with 13 applications received and 5 candidates interviewed for the sole position. Follow-up work on the other themes has been slowed by the impact of the pandemic but more progress is planned on the second theme, Structure and Processes, with a review of the Delegated Authority Schedule over the summer.

Senate's effectiveness

8. During 2019/20 work was undertaken to make major revisions to the composition of Senate to comply with the Governance Act with effect from 1 August 2020. Senate's membership in 2019/20 was mainly comprised of all Professors on an *ex officio* basis (over 700) and a relatively small number of elected academic staff in other categories (e.g. Lecturers, Readers, totalling around 70) plus some other *ex officio* positions for a total membership of over 800. From 1 August 2020, the Senate membership changed to becoming a majority elected body of up to 300 members, split into up to 100 elected Professorial staff, up to 100 elected academic staff, up to 30 student members and the remainder *ex officio* appointments. New election regulations for Senate to enable this change were approved by Court in December 2019, with elections held over 24-26 March 2020.

9. Senate has undertaken an internal review of its effectiveness in 2019/20 and set out plans for reviewing its effectiveness in 2020/21 and these papers are both available on the Court [site](#) under the 'Additional Information' column should members

wish to consult these. No issues have identified from the 2019/20 review that require escalation to Court.

2020/21 Internal Review

10. Individual Court member review meetings will be arranged over the summer period/early autumn with the Senior Lay Member and University Secretary and this will feed into a review paper to be submitted to Court in the next cycle of meetings.

Resource implications

10. There are no specific resource implications associated with this paper.

Risk Management

11. Best practice in governance arrangements, including an annual review of effectiveness, supports effective risk management.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

12. This paper does not directly contribute in responding to the climate emergency or the Sustainable Development Goals but is fulfilling an external regulatory requirement.

Equality & Diversity

13. The effectiveness review includes consideration of compliance with the equality and diversity provisions in the Governance Code.

Next steps/implications

14. If approved, the report will be published. Arrangements will be made for a review of the current year, including individual review meetings with all Court members.

Consultation

15. The paper has been reviewed by Sarah Smith, Vice-Principal Strategic Change & Governance; and University Secretary.

Further information

16. *Authors*

Kirstie Graham, Lewis Allan
Court Services Office
4 June 2021

Presenter

Sarah Smith
Vice-Principal Strategic Change & Governance/
University Secretary

Freedom of Information

17. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Implementing the Prevent Duty: Update June 2021

Description of paper

1. This short report updates Court on the implementation of the Prevent duty at the University from July 2020 to June 2021.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is asked to note that the University has implemented the Prevent duty in line with the revised guidance published by the Home Office on 1 April 2021:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-higher-education-institutions-in-scotland>.

3. No specific action is required of Court, although members' observations, or comment, on any of the items would be welcome.

Background and context

4. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) imposes a duty on universities and other public bodies to have due regard to need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. This duty is commonly referred to as "the Prevent duty".

5. Under the guidance published for Scottish universities, "Monitoring and Enforcement" is understood to be the responsibility of each institution's governing body.

6. This guidance sets out high level expectations for the University in the areas of:

- External speakers and events
- Leadership
- Engagement with local Prevent or CONTEST multiagency groups
- Staff training
- Safety online
- Welfare and pastoral care.

Discussion

7. In line with discussions at Court in September 2015, the University has continued to approach implementation of the Prevent duty in a proportionate manner. This is also consistent with the government guidance referenced above, which states that: "...We do not envisage the new duty creating large new burdens on institutions and intend it to be implemented in a proportionate and risk-based way."

8. Higher risk events with external speakers, and any cases of concern for students, are referred to the University Compliance Group, which is chaired by the University Secretary.

Key statistics

9. In Academic Year 2020/21:

- Events on campus: there were far fewer events held on campus due to the pandemic situation and 0 referrals were made to the University Compliance Group about higher risk events with external speakers;
- Referral of vulnerable students: 0 students were referred to the University Compliance Group; and,
- Revised research ethics procedures: 6 cases of students carrying out research as part of their dissertations into sensitive / extremism-related areas were flagged in Academic Year 2020/21.

Resource implications

10. Not applicable.

Risk Management

11. The University has a legal duty to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.” Failure to comply with the duty may lead to the Prevent Oversight Board recommending that the Secretary of State use the power of direction under section 30 of the Counter-Terrorism Act (2015). This power would only be used when other options for engagement and improvement had been exhausted.

Equality & Diversity

12. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out in implementation of the Prevent duty, and equality and diversity is taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis by the University Compliance Group.

Next steps/implications

13. N/A

Consultation

14. N/A

Further information

15. Author & Presenter

Gavin Douglas

Deputy Secretary, Student Experience

7 June 2021

Freedom of Information

16. This paper is open.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Education Act 1994 requirements in relation to the Students' Association

Description of paper

1. This paper introduces the annual Certificate of Assurance supplied by the Edinburgh University Students' Association to demonstrate University compliance with the requirements of The Education Act 1994 (the Act). This is attached as Appendix 1. Also introduced is a review of the Association's Constitution. This is required to be approved by the Governing Body at periods of no less than five years. The review of the constitution concludes that the current constitution, made up of the Articles of Association and Regulations, is both legally compliant and fit for purpose. The review is attached as Appendix 2.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is invited to note the Certificate of Assurance and be assured of current compliance. It is recommended that the Articles of Association (remaining as previously) receive the continuing approval of the Court.

Background and context

3. Section 22 of the Education Act (1994) requires that the Governing Body of every establishment shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that any students' union operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances. Governing Bodies are also required to ensure that there is adequate publicity for the requirements of the Act, through the issuing of a Code of Practice which sets out how arrangements are made to both secure its observance, and through the provision of information to intending and matriculated students about the right to opt out of student membership.

4. Within this requirement it is determined that any students' union should have a written constitution and the provisions of that constitution should be subject to the approval of the governing body at intervals of not more than five years

Discussion

5. Court is provided with assurance each year that the University is compliant with the provisions of the Education Act in relation to the activities of the Students' Association. On occasion the code of practice itself requires minor updates, mainly to take account of changes in terminology as a result of Association regulation changes, but there are no updates required this year, and therefore the code remains the same as last year.

6. The Association has reviewed its written constitution in the form of the Articles of Association and the associated regulations. The Articles have remained the same since a review in 2016. The regulations have been amended over the last 5 years, with amendments being approved by Court where appropriate. The review has concluded the documents remain legally compliant and fit for purpose. The review has identified some areas for future consideration in line with the Associations principle on continuous improvement. Changes will continue to be brought forward to Court on an annual basis as appropriate.

7. No significant matters have arisen which require to be specifically raised, and Court can be assured of current compliance with the Act.

Resource implications

8. There are no specific or additional resource implications associated with this paper.

Risk Management

9. There are no specific risk implications associated with the paper although some reputational risk may be relevant to certain items. No change is required to the University Risk Register.

Equality & Diversity

10. Due consideration to equality and diversity has been given to ensure compliance with the Act.

Next steps/implications

11. The completion of the Certificate of Assurance at the end of each academic year will be supported by a review of actions/processes in place to fulfil the key requirements of the Act. This will be updated by the Students' Association and presented at the last meeting of Court in each academic year.

Consultation

12. This paper has been reviewed by Students Association colleagues and the Deputy Secretary, Student Experience.

Further information

13. <u>Authors</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
Stephen Hubbard	Gavin Douglas
CEO, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Deputy Secretary, Student Experience
Gavin Douglas	
Deputy Secretary, Student Experience	

Freedom of Information

14. Open paper.



Code of Practice relating to the Edinburgh University Students' Association

THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Purpose of Code of Practice

The 1994 Education Act (Section 22) requires University Court, the governing body of the University, to ensure that the Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances. This Code of Practice sets out how the University will carry out its responsibilities under the Act

Overview

The Code of Practice covers areas such as:

- The right of students to opt out of membership;
- EUSA's democratic processes;
- EUSA's financial and resource allocation mechanisms;
- Affiliations by EUSA to external organisations; and
- The implications of Charity Law on the activities that EUSA can undertake.

Scope: Mandatory Code of Practice

This Code of Practice applies to all University of Edinburgh students, and is brought to their attention annually by publication on the EUSA and the University website.

Contact Officer	Gavin Douglas	Deputy Secretary, Student Experience	Gavin.Douglas@ed.ac.uk
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Document control

Dates	Approved: June 21	Starts: June 21	Equality impact assessment: N/A	Amendments: N/A	Next Review: June 2022
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Approving authority	University Court
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Consultation undertaken	EUSA, Deputy Secretary Student Experience
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Code of Practice relating to the Edinburgh University Students' Association

Part II of the Education Act 1994 places a range of responsibilities on the governing bodies of university institutions in regard to the organisation of students' unions. In particular the governing body shall prepare and issue, and when necessary revise, a code of practice as to the manner in which certain requirements of the act are carried into effect.

1. Edinburgh University Students' Association qualifies as a students' union within section 20 of the Act.

2 This Code of Practice, approved by University Court with the agreement of the Students' Association, sets out how the University will carry out its responsibilities under the Act. The specific responsibilities to be included in the code are highlighted in bold italics below:-

Constitution

The students' union should have a written constitution and the provisions of that constitution should be subject to the approval of the governing body at intervals of not more than five years.

3. The Students' Association is governed by its Articles of Association approved by the University Court. The Articles of Association make provision for detailed regulations to be published which shall be approved by the Association Trustee Board and /or the student body as defined by the Articles of Association.

4. Copies of the Articles of Association and Regulations are available to any student, on request, from the President of the Students' Association. They are also available on the Students' Association website.

5. The Articles of Association are to be reviewed by the University Court at intervals of not more than five years. This need not mean a special quinquennial review of the Articles of Association. The Court may take the opportunity to review the terms of the Articles of Association should the Students' Association at any time bring forward proposed amendments.

Membership

Students should have the right not to be members of the students' union. Students who exercise that right should not be unfairly disadvantaged, with regard to the provision of services or otherwise, by reason of their having done so.

6. All matriculated students of the University of Edinburgh, whether full-time, part-time or online distance learning; undergraduate or postgraduate, including visiting students or students on exchange; and all sabbatical trustees during their period of sabbatical office shall be entitled to membership of the Students' Association. Any student who wishes not to be a member, or who decides to withdraw from membership of the Students' Association, should inform the President of the Students' Association and the Secretary of the University in writing.
7. Any student not in membership of the Students' Association is not entitled:
 - (a) To participate in the government of the Students' Association and, in particular, to propose or vote in referenda, attend meetings, stand or vote in the election of Students' Association Officers, Students' Council, Standing Committees and Representative Committees, or play any part in any other comparable bodies that may be established.
 - (b) To hold office in any Students' Association Committee or Society.
 - (c) To benefit from any concessionary rates for membership of Societies, or for attendance at entertainments events, that may be offered exclusively to Students' Association members.
8. Any such student shall cease to be a member immediately and may not re-apply for membership until the following academic session.
9. Students who are eligible for full membership, but have exercised the right not to be a member, shall have access to all services and activities provided by the Students' Association other than those outlined in paragraph 7, and shall be subject to the same disciplinary procedures in relation to their use of these services and participation in these activities.
10. The University has made no special arrangements for the provision of services or facilities for non-members of the Students' Association, since it is satisfied that the provision made by the University and the Students' Association for all students, whether they are members of the Students' Association or not, is sufficient to ensure that those who have exercised the right of non-membership under the Act are not unfairly disadvantaged. There will be no financial compensation to students who have exercised their right of non-membership.

Elections

Appointment to major students' union offices should be by election in a secret ballot in which all members are entitled to vote. The governing body is required to satisfy itself that the students' union elections are fairly and properly conducted. A person should not hold paid elected students' union office for more than two years in total.

11. Major students' union offices shall be defined as full time sabbatical Students' Association Executive Officers who have been granted a Laigh year by the University.
12. All elections in the Students' Association shall be conducted in accordance with regulations laid down in accordance with the Articles of Association and approved by the Governance Subcommittee of the Trustee Board. These regulations shall ensure that

appointment to major students' union offices, as defined in 11 above, is by election in a secret ballot in which all full members are entitled to vote.

13 Any complaint regarding the conduct of elections shall be decided upon by the Returning Officers appointed by the Governance Subcommittee of the Trustee Board, subject to appeal to the Elections Appeals Committee whose decision shall be final.

14. The University Secretary (or their nominee) may observe any part of the election process and an annual report will be made to the University Secretary on the conduct and outcome of the elections to the major students' union offices.

15. Paid students' union offices shall be defined as full time sabbatical Students' Association Executive Officers. No person shall hold such office for more than two terms of one academic year each term and this is provided for in the regulations.

Finance

The financial affairs of the students' union should be properly conducted and appropriate arrangements should exist for the approval of the students' union's budget and the monitoring of its expenditure by the governing body.

The Students Association is to publish a financial report annually or more frequently. The report is to be made available to the governing body and to all students and will contain, in particular, a list of external organisations to which the Students' Association has made donations during the period to which the report refers and details of those donations.

16. The Students' Association Finance, Risk & Audit Subcommittee shall prepare an annual budget and forward business plan prior to the commencement of each financial year, which shall be submitted to the Students' Association Trustee Board for approval. The annual budget shall be presented for ratification to the University Policy & Resources Committee acting on behalf of the governing body.

17. The Students Council shall receive the annual audited accounts of the Students' Association for information and the Students' Association Trustee Board shall receive the annual audited accounts of the Students' Association for approval. The annual audited accounts shall be presented for information to the University Policy & Resources Committee acting on behalf of the governing body.

18. The Students' Association will provide Financial and Management Information to the University Secretary and Director of Finance in line with the requirements set out in the University's annual letter of grant. The Director of Finance will report any points of note to the University Policy and Resources Committee.

18. The accounts shall contain details of any donations made to external organisations during the financial year.

The procedure for allocating resources to groups or clubs should be fair and should be set down in writing and be freely accessible to all students.

19. The allocation of resources to groups and societies affiliated to the Students' Association are managed by the Finance, Risk & Audit Subcommittee of the Trustee Board. The procedures are included in the Regulations which are available to any student, on request, from the President of the Students' Association. The procedures and opportunities for funding are also available on the Students' Association website under the Activities/ Resources section.

Affiliations and Donations

If the student union decides to affiliate to an external organisation it must publish notice of its decision, stating the name of the organisation and details of any subscription or similar fee paid or proposed to be paid and of any donation made or proposed to be made to the organisation and such notice is to be made available to the governing body and to all students.

20. All affiliations and donations made by decision of a Referendum, Students' Council, Standing Committees, Representative Committees or Students' Association Executive Officers shall be published in the annual accounts of the Students' Association.

When a student union is affiliated to any external organisation there are to be procedures for the review of affiliations under which the current list of affiliations is submitted for approval by members annually or more frequently, and at such intervals of not more than a year as the governing body may determine, a requisition may be made by such proportion of members (not exceeding 5 per cent) as the governing body may determine, that the question of continued affiliation to any particular organisation be decided upon by a secret ballot in which all members are entitled to vote.

21. An annual vote, by secret ballot, at a general meeting of the Students' Council open to all members, will be held to consider the affiliation of the Students' Association to any continuing affiliations previously agreed.

22. Any affiliation made by the Students' Association may be rescinded by a decision of students made in accordance with the procedure for referenda outlined in the regulations which provide for a call for referenda being made by not more than 5% of members.

Complaints Procedure

There should be a complaints procedure available to all students or groups of students who are dissatisfied in their dealings with the students' union, or claim to have been unfairly disadvantaged by reason of having exercised the right to not be a member. This procedure should include the provision for an independent person appointed by the governing body to investigate and report on complaints.

24. Any student or students who are dissatisfied in their dealings with the Students' Association, or claim to be disadvantaged by reason of their having exercised the right to withdraw from membership, shall be entitled to have their complaint considered in accordance with the Students' Association complaints procedure and this is available to all students. This procedure includes the right of appeal to the University Secretary (or their nominee) and the subsequent right of appeal to an independent person appointed by University Court.

The following aspects are not required to be referenced in the code of practice, but it is an obligation for the governing body to bring these matters to the attention of students at least once a year. These will be published alongside this code on the Students' Association website.

Charity Law

The activities of the Students' Association are restricted by the law relating to charities. Consequently the Students' Association cannot have a political purpose and must not seek to advance the interest of a political party, but it may seek to influence opinion on issues relating directly to its own stated purposes, provided such activity is within its powers. The ways in which charities may or may not legitimately engage in political activities is the subject of advice and legislation from time to time by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, courts of law, Parliament and government departments.

Code of Practice

This Code of Practice is brought to the attention of students annually by publication on the Students' Association and the University website.

Information for prospective students

The right of a student to not be a member of the Students' Association, and the arrangements for students to still access those services provided by the Students' Association for all students whether members or not, is made available to prospective students via inclusion in this code of practice which is published on the Students' Association website and on the University's website.

Approved by University Court, June 2021

Appendix 2 - Students Association Constitution Review

1.0 Introduction

This paper constitutes a review of the Students Associations Constitution, as required under the Education Act 1994. The last formal review under the act was in 2016, with changes implemented in 2017. Those changes were mainly in relation to democratic structures and procedures. The Act requires a quinquennial review, which need not be for the specific purposes of the Act.

2.0 Background and context

2.1 The Education Act

The Education Act 1994 (part 2, sec 22) determines oversight of a Students Union / Association by its Institution. There are various requirements under the act. These are summarised in a Code of Practice agreed with the University and reviewed annually. The Code covers all the main provisions of the Act (in relation to Students' Unions), including the need for a quinquennial review of the constitution as a minimum.

“The students’ union should have a written constitution and the provisions of that constitution should be subject to the approval of the governing body at intervals of not more than five years.”

Full version of the code can be accessed here: [code of practice](#)

2.2 Constitution

The legal structure of the Students' Association is that of a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity. This incorporated structure was formed in 2012. Effectively the constitution of the previously unincorporated Association was at that time dissolved and replaced by the Articles of Association of the company. These are registered with both Companies House and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). We consider the Articles of Association and the formal regulations that sit under the Articles as our 'Constitution' for the purposes of the Education Act.

For information the [Articles of Association](#) and [Regulations](#) can be viewed online.

2.3 Approach to constitutional review at Edinburgh University Students Association

Since the last significant review in 2016 the Association has had in place a governance subcommittee of its Trustee Board, this in turn supported by a good governance working group. The committee has taken the view that continuous improvement is appropriate and therefore has brought forward changes each year to enhance governance and the operation of the Association.

In order for this continuous review process to have some order, priorities are identified and agreed in June each year and investigated and proposals brought forward for internal review if appropriate. The internal governance around any changes cumulates with proposals at the Trustee Board in May the following year. If appropriate and required, proposals follow to University Court in June. As a result, this annual cycle has seen minor amendments brought forward and agreed each year.

3.0 Scope and Process of this review

The review looks specifically at the Constitution of the Association – therefore considers the Articles of Association and associated Regulations.

In considering this review of the Constitution it is noted that the process of continuous review has picked up various changes and clarifications over the preceding years. These changes have been within the regulations. There have been no changes to the Articles since those implemented in 2017 (following the 2016 review).

This review has been completed by the Good Governance working group of the Student Association, we have utilised the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) Good Governance Check Up, The National Union of Students Good Governance Code and the recently updated UK Good Governance Code (2020). The former two models are based on an earlier version of the latter but haven't yet been updated. Effectively all three models being therefore very similar. It should be noted these models of good governance cover more than the constitutional elements, and of course there is benefit in considering the wider elements of the model, but that is not the subject of this paper.

We have also specifically reviewed the key changes brought about in 2016. A brief commentary is below, and a more detailed matrix given in the Appendix 2.1.

3.1 The 2016 review

The last review with significant changes was in 2016. There were a number of changes to the governance and democratic structures. Changes included: an increase in the number of Sabbatical officers (from 4 to 5), the introduction of second terms of office as a possibility, the appointment of Student Trustees to the Trustee Board, provisions for online ballots, and particular changes to the membership of Students' Union council.

3.2 Subsequent changes to 2016.

The continuous improvement process since 2016 has also brought about changes, for example a remodelling of the subcommittees of the Board and a reduction in number from six to four; changes to the student representatives that make up various committees and Students' Council and the detail for enactment of a Vice Chair role (already provided for in the Articles of Association).

4.0 Key aspects of review

4.1 Legal Compliance

The Articles of Association have remained the same since 2017 (following the 2016 review implementation) they were legally compliant at that time, indeed the changes to the articles were fairly limited with most changes enacted through regulations. As such the Articles remain largely as there were at the date of first incorporation in 2012.

Further there has been no change in the law surrounding the specific governance of Students Unions, Education Act itself hasn't been updated. At a base level therefore anything that was legally compliant in 2017 when the Articles were last amended and accepted by companies house and OSCR will remain so now.

4.2 Good governance models

The various Good Governance Models look further than legal compliance, suggesting best practice. In short we feel we meet the majority of the elements of Good Governance models through a combination of our board and subcommittee structures; our regulations – which include elements such as defined delegations of authority; Strategic planning and review and our financial and risk management processes.

Whilst we feel there are no specific gaps, there are of course elements for improvement. Areas to be targeted as a result of this review include:

- To better communicate the work of the Trustee Board specifically – This is often a secondary communication priority following on from the high profile work of the Sabbatical Officers.
- To better understand and ‘stress test’ the relationship between the Trustee Board and Students Council. – We have a clear understanding of the responsibilities of each, understanding that the Trustee Board takes precedence were there a policy conflict; but the mechanisms to manage any conflicting policy or priority could be enhanced.
- To improve the performance and effectiveness reviews of the Trustee Board – We have done this, but should have a more consistent and transparent approach.
- To further explore the enhancements to governance (and wider) that digital technology can provide, building on recent improvements.

4.3 Is the Current Constitution Fit for Purpose?

The current articles are legally compliant, and have served us reasonably well. Many aspects of governance are embedded in the Regulations rather than the Articles themselves, as such the Articles are broad and the Regulations detailed. Much work has been done to ‘tidy up’ and clarify the regulations, putting them into a single consistent format and making them more understandable as well as relevant. The Articles, although compliant and fit for purpose are not as easy to read, and therefore transparent to our members. Whilst deemed fit for purpose, a clearer ‘plain English’ version could be an enhancement, but is not a current priority in the plan of work for the next 12 months.

5.0 Conclusion, Recommendation and Future areas for improvement

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendation

- **This review concludes** that the current constitution, made up of the Articles of Association and Regulations is both legally compliant and fit for purpose.
- **It is recommended** that the Articles (remaining as previously) receive the continuing approval of University Court
- The process of annual review and continuous improvement has worked well and should continue. This does largely negate a quinquennial review in practice, but not in legal requirement.

5.2 Future areas for improvement

These are identified through this paper and the appendix 2.1. A summary of key areas is:

- To better communicate, and to stress test, the relationship between the Trustee Board and Students Council in terms of were there a policy conflict.

- To explore digital enhancements to governance procedures and methods.
- To review the Activities representative roles on Students Council.
- To review the opportunity for further digital engagement in democracy and specifically online voting on issues and policy development.
- To better communicate the work of the Trustee Board.
- To improve the process of Board performance review.

Appendix 2.1 - Review of Democratic changes 2016/17

This year marks four years since the implementation of the Students' Association's last democratic review which made substantial changes to our democratic structures, most notably:

- Increase in the number of Sabbatical Officers from 4 to 5, and a review of their remits and titles
- Introduction of the option for Sabbatical Officers to run for a second term
- Introduction of Activities Representative roles
- Introduction of weighted voting for Elected Representatives at Student Council meetings
- Introduction of automatic Online Ballots for issues on which Student Council cannot reach a consensus
- Introduction of honorarium payments for Liberation Officer roles
- Revision of Trustee Board membership, and introduction of appointed as opposed to elected student trustees

The democratic review also recommended the introduction of part-time, paid, College-level student representatives, but this has not been progressed.

In addition, 2021 marks the quinquennial review of the Association's governance by the University, in line with their responsibilities under the 1994 Education Act.

At this time, there is no appetite for further substantial changes to our democratic structures and processes, but we are keen to evaluate the impact of the changes which were made in the previous review.

Further details of this review are in Table A below.

Element for review	Initial reflection	Intended form of evaluation	Timeli ne
Increase in the number of Sabbatical Officers from 4 to 5, and a review of their remits and titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Officer number is working well • No appetite to significantly review roles this year 	2020/21 Sabbatical Officer team to review remits and titles ahead of handover to identify challenges and potential improvements Continuous Improvement approach	May/June
Introduction of the option for Sabbatical Officers to run	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option for Sabbatical Officers to run for a second term has been used relatively infrequently but without issue • No appetite to review this year 	NA	NA

for a second term			
Introduction of Activities Representative roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging to recruit candidates for Activities Representative roles, and positions sometimes uncontested • Lack of clarity around role remit and purpose • Appetite to review roles this Summer ahead of 2022 Student Elections 	Representation and Democracy Manager to discuss potential alternatives with VP Activities and Services and Student Opportunities Manager, and develop proposal for approval by Student Council in September/October 2021	June-October
Introduction of weighted voting for Elected Representatives at Student Council meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weighted voting understood by Elected Representatives, but rarely alters the result • Student Council attendance by Elected Representatives remains overall good but inconsistent 	NA, but work to be conducted by Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator to emphasise the importance of attendance to incoming Elected Representatives	NA
Introduction of automatic Online Ballots for issues on which Student Council cannot reach a consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of Student Council businesses passes or falls almost unanimously, so very few Online Ballots conducted • Online Ballots themselves have varying levels of engagement dependent on the topic from very high thousands to low hundreds. • Online Ballots often result in negative feedback from students due to a lack of context and broader understanding of our democratic processes • Need to review relationship between voting at Student Council (which is now conducted online and open to all students), voting in Online Ballots, and voting in Referenda 	Representation and Democracy Manager to reflect on relationship between various forms of online voting, including modules available through our new website provider; Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator to continue to liaise with MarComms Team to increase awareness and understanding of democratic processes	2021/22
Introduction of honoraria payments for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honoraria continue to be appreciated by Liberation Officers, but minimal impact on Officers' output 	NA, unless appetite from Governance Subcommittee to	N/A

Liberation Officer roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No appetite internally to review honoraria payments, but note on-going feedback from wider student body regarding level of reward 	amend level of honoraria	
Revision of Trustee Board membership, and introduction of appointed as opposed to elected student trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes have generated some additional Board diversity and length of service Unclear as to extent we can achieve more. 	People and Culture Subcommittee and subsequent Board agreed to maintain appointed Student trustees.	Complete
Introduction of part-time, paid, College-level representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various options were explored in 2016/17, but significantly challenges in terms of resource and embedding proposed roles within existing student representation structures Minimal appetite from University stakeholders to implement formal College-level representation 	Proposal that Governance Subcommittee / trustees approve the formal discontinuation of this work strand.	May 2021 Complete



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Changes to the Students' Association Democracy Regulations

Description of paper

1. The Students' Association has a process of annual review of our governance, to ensure continuous improvement. As part of this process, this year changes are proposed to the Democracy Regulations to improve postgraduate representation. This now requires Court approval.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is invited to approve the changes to the Democracy Regulations.

Background and context

3. The Students' Association has been working to improve Postgraduate (PG) engagement, and have seen growth in interest in Postgraduate representative roles over the last few years, with the majority of seats contested, no unfilled seats, and a very engaged cohort of PG student reps. The Students' Association have this year reviewed their PG representation structures in order to respond to representatives' and students' feedback that there are challenges to the current structure of a single PG rep for each school who represents both Taught and Research Postgraduates. In the majority of cases, the management and representation structures for the 2 aspects of PG provision are often different, and separate, in Schools, and the issues and concerns of students in each cohort can be very different. It is important for the rep to be able to easily connect with and understand the concerns of the cohort they represent.

Discussion

4. The Students' Association has therefore been working with the Governance Subcommittee of their Trustee Board, and with Student Council to develop an alternative approach. They have proposed changes to sections 1 and 2 of the Democracy Regulations, to make provision for 1 taught postgraduate and 1 research postgraduate representative per School instead of just 1 PG rep per School..

5. These changes have been through the required internal processes at the Students Association, and have now been considered and approved by Student Council, and by the Trustee Board. There are no other changes proposed to the Democracy Regulations.

6. The Students' Association are therefore presenting their revised Democracy Regulations to University Court for approval. The changes are shown below and the full Democracy Regulations with the changes marked up are available on the Court [site](#) under the 'Additional Information' column.

Section 1: Democratic Structures

3. Elected Officers

3.2.6 A Postgraduate [Taught](#) School Representative for each School;

[3.2.7 A Postgraduate Research School Representative for each School-](#)

Section 2: Elections

1.5 In the First Semester there shall be a By Election which shall be a cross-campus ballot.

1.5.1 The following positions shall be elected at the By Election:

- a) A Postgraduate Taught School Representative for each School;
- a)b) A Postgraduate Research Representative for each School;

2. Eligibility to stand and vote in cross-campus ballots

2.3.2 Only pPostgraduate Taught students in a given sSchool shall be eligible to stand to be its Postgraduate Taught School Representative.

2.3.3 Only Postgraduate Research students in a given School shall be eligible to stand to be its Postgraduate Research School Representative

Resource implications

7. There are no specific or additional resource implications associated with this paper.

Risk Management

8. There are no specific risk implications associated with the paper.

Equality & Diversity

9. Due consideration to equality and diversity has been given in formulating these proposals.

Next steps/implications

10. Subject to Court approval, the Students' Association will move to the new structure in time for Postgraduate Elections in October.

Consultation

11. This paper has been reviewed by Students Association colleagues and the Deputy Secretary, Student Experience.

Further information

12. Author

Sarah Purves
Edinburgh University Students'
Association

Presenter

Gavin Douglas
Deputy Secretary, Student Experience

Freedom of Information

13. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Awards of University Benefactor

Description of paper

1. The paper proposes candidates for the award of University Benefactor status.
2. By bestowing Benefactor status to our high level philanthropists we are creating a culture of philanthropy which supports a range of the outcomes set out in Strategy 2030.
 - i) We will see our research having a greater impact as a result of partnership, international reach and investment in emergent disciplines.
 - ii) We will be leading Scotland's commitment to widening participation.
 - iii) We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.
 - iv) Multidisciplinary postgraduate education pathways will support flexible whole-life learning.
 - v) Our estate will be fit for purpose, sustainable and accessible. We will support learning, research and collaboration with our neighbours, businesses and partners.

Paragraphs 3-6: Closed section

Resource implications

7. The cost of Benefactor gowns and associated celebrations are met from existing budgets.

Risk Management

8. Any reputational risk associated with the receipt of large donations is assessed by the Ethical Fundraising Advisory Group, before consideration of the award of Benefactor status.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

9. Donors support a range of the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals through their donations. By recognising donors with the University Benefactor award, the University is seeking to strengthen relationships and ensure future support for these activities.

Equality & Diversity

10. Court previously approved the widening of scope for University Benefactor status to include posthumous awards, noting that this would be very likely to improve the gender balance among individuals within the group of Benefactors.

Next steps/implications

11. Those awarded are invited to participate in a ceremony where they will be presented with a Benefactor gown and certificate on behalf of the University. This is usually within a University graduation ceremony but can be a separate event, for example, the official opening of a building funded by the donor.

Consultation

12. All proposals have been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Principal following nomination by Chris Cox, Vice-Principal Philanthropy & Advancement.

Further information

13. Author

Katie Littlefair
Donor Relations Manager

Presenter

Peter Mathieson
Principal & Vice-Chancellor

Freedom of Information

14. Closed paper until all awards have been made and accepted by the recipients.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Annual Recognition of Alumni Clubs

Description of paper

1. This paper recommends the annual formal recognition of University of Edinburgh alumni clubs as outlined in the initial Court paper approved in February 2018.
2. Development & Alumni continue to identify and develop opportunities to engage alumni in programming that enables them to actively participate in facilitating the University's global impact and play a role in shaping the futures of our graduating students, both of which contribute to aspects of a number of the University's goals under Strategy 2030.

Action requested/Recommendation

3. Court is invited to renew formal recognition of the nine University of Edinburgh alumni clubs currently recognised and note activity over the past 12 months.

Background and context

4. Court approved a paper on the governance of Alumni Clubs in February 2018, which set out proposals to introduce a more systematic approach to the development and support of the range of alumni groups acting on behalf of the University in locations around the world and to manage the reputational risk involved.
5. Nine alumni clubs have been approved for formal recognition to date, an initial seven alumni clubs in June 2018 followed by two further clubs in October 2018 and June 2020 respectively.
6. In addition, we have over 50 active alumni groups and regional contacts connecting local alumni in locations across the world. New alumni groups have been formed in Zhejiang and Switzerland over the past year.

Discussion

7. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the activity of our alumni networks over the past year, with the majority of in-person events having to be postponed or cancelled. We have, however, supported and encouraged our alumni community to come together in new ways. Tailored communications encouraged continued engagement throughout this period, featuring key University updates and virtual engagement ideas and advice.
8. We have engaged our alumni networks in number of key virtual University events and alumni club volunteers in a range of strategic and priority programmes including support for student recruitment and student engagement initiatives such as the Insights Programme.
9. A number of our alumni clubs successfully moved activity online, in some instances expanding the reach of their events. For example, in North America, our four formally recognised clubs joined forces and collaborated with a number of our

more informal or recently established groups to host a successful virtual Burns Night in January.

10. A number of in-person events were able to take place in Mainland China as restrictions eased, with a St Andrews Day ceilidh taking place in Shanghai in November 2020 bringing together the local alumni network and current students, many of whom were unable to travel to study on campus. Face to face alumni club events have also taken place in Beijing and Zhejiang.

11. Even with restrictions easing it will still likely be some time before we see a return to the level of in-person activity facilitated pre-pandemic in the majority of countries across the world. In the meantime we will continue to identify, develop and deliver engagement opportunities and initiatives to ensure our global alumni network continue to feel a strong connection to the University community and supported in organising their own activities.

12. The following nine clubs are recommended for renewed formal recognition:

- Edinburgh University Club of Toronto (EDUCT)
- Edinburgh University Boston Club
- Edinburgh University Club of New York
- Edinburgh University Alumni Club of Washington DC
- Edinburgh University Club of London
- Edinburgh University Brussels Society
- University of Edinburgh London Alumni Network
- University of Edinburgh Alumni Association of Hong Kong
- University of Edinburgh Alumni Association of Shenzhen

Resource implications

13. There are no specific resource implications associated with the paper.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

14. This paper is fulfilling operational governance. However, alumni relations programming which enables the participation of our graduates in the life and work of the University, supporting the delivery of University strategy and objectives, will in a number of ways tie in with the University's work across climate mitigation and the SDG goals.

Risk Management

15. There are no significant risk implications arising from this paper.

Equality & Diversity

16. No Equality and Diversity issues are identified.

Next steps/implications

17. As our network of alumni clubs, groups and regional contacts continues to grow and develop, we are aware of the need to continue to ensure that our model supports this growth as effectively as possible. We plan to evaluate the framework over the coming year to ensure that it is enabling alumni in different parts of the world to engage with the University community in the most meaningful way, while also aligning with wider developing alumni relations, and University, priorities and strategy.

Consultation

18. This paper has been prepared by the Alumni Relations team and approved by Chris Cox, Vice-Principal Philanthropy & Advancement.

Further information

19. Author

Natalie Fergusson
Global Alumni Clubs Manager
May 2021

Freedom of Information

20. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Donations and Legacies; Alumni Events

Description of paper

1. A report on legacies and donations received by the University of Edinburgh Development Trust or directly by the University from 1 April to 27 May 2021.
2. The paper also includes an update on current alumni relations activities.
3. All gifts contribute to different aspects of the University's goals under strategy 2030 and due diligence procedures ensure there is no conflict with the values summarised in the strategy.

Action requested/Recommendation

4. Court is invited to note the legacies and donations received and the update on current alumni relations activities.

Paragraphs 5-7: Closed section

8. Summary of current alumni relations activities.

Platform One

9. Over the past three years Platform One has grown to become a thriving community of over 12,000 University of Edinburgh people, with alumni, students and staff connecting and sharing knowledge, insights, ideas and experience. A new and improved version of the software launched in May, bringing a fresh new design, smarter navigation, improved search functionality and more dynamic instant messaging between members.

10. This new version has greater potential for customisation, introducing the ability for us to add to and customise the site ourselves. This will allow us to strengthen its distinct 'Edinburgh' feel further and make Platform One more personal, with members being encouraged to review and update their profiles to reflect this. This is an exciting new phase and we look forward to growing the space in collaboration with all members of the University community as we develop our programmes.

Class of 2021

11. Planning for Class of 2021 communications is well underway, involving wider collaboration with the Careers Service, Student Administration, Communications and Marketing, and Schools and Colleges. Our bespoke communication plan for the graduating class includes a dedicated website, tailored emails and social media, all of which will lead seamlessly into our Multi Story Edinburgh newsletter and podcast. A special retrospective feature provides a window into the Multi Story Edinburgh podcast and you can read about what it has been like to graduate in a pandemic [here](#).

12. This work is another step forward in the ever strengthening working relationship between the Development & Alumni and Careers offices. Rather than simply reference each other in separate communications, we now share a single identity in this area and all content is developed around a joint thematic structure. Messaging and advice has been interlinked and what is now produced draws on the strengths and resources of both departments, highlighting our offer and emphasising practical support available. This more integrated approach in look, feel, language and messaging is key to how we present graduate communications in 2021 and beyond.

Sharing things, the podcast

13. Season four of our podcast, sharing things, launched in May. Each episode of this season features one of our 2020/21 intake of students. Three episodes have been released so far with guests including alumna and current Ringmaster of Circus250, Dee Birkett, in conversation with medical student, Alex Bethwaite, alumna and BBC presenter, Laura Maciver, in conversation with first year Biological Sciences student, Niche Sarkar, and alumnus and television writer, Neil Forsyth, in conversation with Entrepreneurship and Innovation student, Nausherwan Aziz. Listen to season four [here](#) and get to know our community a little bit better.

Alumni sharing insights and experience

14. We continue to actively facilitate alumni volunteer involvement in an array of online events and activities for prospective and current students. Alumni took part in two panel sessions as part of the Postgraduate Online Learning Open Days in May. Five online masters graduates joined current students over two days to share insights with prospective students, answering their questions about studying online.

15. Alumni Ambassadors will take part in a series of offer holder events for postgraduate students from across East Asia throughout June. Alumni will share insights into their academic experience, learning and living in the city, and where their Edinburgh degree has taken them since graduation.

16. The Career Mentoring Programme which supports final year students, and is another collaboration with the Careers Service, has connected over 40 students with alumni so far this year. Alumni can play an important role in boosting the confidence of our 2021 graduates, helping them to recognise their skills and attributes, and supporting them at a time when new graduates face unprecedented challenges starting out in their careers. While the programme is primarily focussed on supporting students from a Widening Participation background, a separate strand has focussed on identifying mentors for our MasterCard Foundation Scholars.

Insights Programme

17. The Insights Online Week, offering integrated virtual activities, was developed in response to the pandemic and was piloted in June 2020 with a further edition in February 2021. A third edition will take place from 31 May to 4 June 2021.

18. The week has been structured to connect students with the Insights community through events and activities aiming to support student career exploration and network building. Over 120 students have registered to take part and over 40 alumni have volunteered their support.

19. This time a group of PhD facilitators will run smaller focused workshops and daily “drop-ins” for the students. Five early career alumni will take part in a panel discussion on the topic of being curious and informed. Volunteers are based in Scotland, Hong Kong and the USA and working in sectors spanning marketing, government, asset management, media and aerospace. 25 alumni volunteers with representation from Scotland and UK, Europe, Asia-Pacific and USA, will take part in a series of scheduled coffee conversations, in which alumni will host their own video calls with small groups of students. The alumni involved represent a diverse range of career stages and sectors including financial services, social policy, entertainment, law, government, education and international development. Further alumni involvement will come via integrated Platform One activities, offering guidance and support in getting started on the platform and updated to reflect the new version of the software.

20. The ambitions to further grow and develop the Insights Programme include an online strand as part of our ongoing offer to further widen access.

Resource implications

21. There are no specific resource implications associated with this paper. The funds received will be appropriately managed in line with the donors’ wishes.

Risk Management

22. There are policies and procedures in place to mitigate risks associated with funding activities including the procedure for the ethical screening of donations.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

23. The preference of many donors to make a difference in the world through their support of our teaching and research ensures that a number of specific gifts tie in directly with the University’s work across climate mitigation and the SDGs.’

Equality & Diversity

24. There are no specific equality and diversity issues associated with the paper. Cognisance is however taken of the wishes of donors’ to ensure these reflect the University’s approach to equality and diversity and that these comply with legal requirements.

Next steps/implications

25. The University is grateful for the support provided to enable it to continue to provide high quality learning and research.

Consultation

26. This paper has been reviewed and approved by Chris Cox, Vice-Principal Philanthropy & Advancement.

Further information

27. Authors

Gregor Hall

Finance Manager, Development & Alumni

Natalie Fergusson

Global Alumni Clubs and Groups Manager, Development & Alumni

Freedom of Information
28. Closed paper



UNIVERSITY COURT

14 June 2021

Resolutions

Description of paper

1. This paper invites Court to approve two Resolutions presented in final form, containing annual updates to the degree programme regulations.
2. Regular review and updating of degree programme regulations contributes to Strategy 2030 aspirations to ensure the curriculum will support breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it.

Action requested/Recommendation

3. Court is invited to approve the following Resolutions:
 - Resolution No. 2/2021: Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations
 - Resolution No. 3/2021: Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations

Background and context

4. The Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 enables the Court to exercise by Resolution approval for 'any additions or amendment to regulations for existing degrees' on the recommendation of the Senate.
5. Senate's Academic Policy & Regulations Committee is responsible for the academic regulatory framework. It has undertaken its annual review of the undergraduate and postgraduate regulations and recommended changes. Resolutions were formulated to deal with the recommended changes and attached to these Resolutions are a list of degrees to which these regulations apply.

Discussion

6. At its April meeting, Court considered the Resolutions in draft form, including an explanation of the key changes proposed, and agreed to refer them to the General Council and to Senate for observations.
7. The draft Resolutions were referred to the General Council and Senate for consultation and published on the University website. One comment was received from a Senate member: 'I think the changes appear sound and sensible. In future revisions, undergraduate regulation 9 (timing of enrolment without Head of College exception) may merit further consideration as to whether the balance of administrative burdens on students and teaching staff may favour a longer window than 2 weeks' and this will be shared with the appropriate colleagues.
8. In accordance with the agreed processes and with no further observations having been received from Senate, the General Council or any other body or person having an interest, Court is invited to approve the Resolutions. The full text of the Resolutions are available on the Court [site](#) under the 'Additional Information' column.

Resource implications

9. Where the proposed amendments have potential resource implications, these have been given due consideration by the Academic Policy & Regulations Committee.

Risk Management

10. The Academic Policy & Regulations Committee has considered any risks presented by the proposed amendments, and regards these as minimal.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

11. This paper does not directly contribute to the climate emergency but is relevant to Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Equality & Diversity

12. There are no specific equality and diversity issues associated with the proposed amendments.

Next steps/implications

13. The list of approved Resolutions is annually reviewed and published on the University's website.

Consultation

14. Senate and the General Council were asked for observations on the draft Resolutions and a notice is was published online to enable observation from any other body or person having an interest to express observations.

Further information

15. Authors

Adam Bunni, Susan Hunter and Ailsa Taylor, Academic Services

Kirstie Graham, Court Services

7 June 2021

Freedom of Information

16. Open paper.