

## **JOB DESCRIPTION: RECTOR**

**Purpose:** The Rector's principal purpose is to preside at meetings of the University's Court, the University's governing body, at which all major decisions affecting the University are taken and in the absence of the Chancellor meetings of the General Council (the body consisting of the alumni of the University). This very important role is at the centre of the governance arrangements of the University. Uniquely elected by students and staff, the Rector requires to ensure that the interests of the whole University community are considered in the Court's decision making processes. The Rector also represents the University at ceremonial and other high profile events.

Key responsibilities:

- To preside at meetings of the University Court, the University's governing-body. To manage Court meetings, ensuring that: meetings operate in a business like-way; adequate time is available for discussion of all agenda items (particularly for strategic issues) and the key decisions and conclusions are drawn out from discussions.
- To promote a culture of openness and debate by facilitating the effective contribution of Members in discussions, particularly student and staff Members.
- Works with the Vice-Convener of Court, Principal and senior team to make sure that the University is well connected and communicates with its stakeholders (staff, students, General Council and the wider community), particularly with students and Edinburgh University's Student Association.
- As a Member of Court, to be a Trustee of the University and the Andrew Grant Bequest (a scholarship bequest), to be responsible for the long-term sustainability of the institution and its strategic direction.
- As a Member of Court, to provide high-level strategic oversight and ensure that adequate control and monitoring arrangements exists to support management in exercising proper stewardship and working towards agreed strategic direction. This role is different from the executive management of the University, responsibility for which rests with the University's senior managers.
- To act in accordance with accepted high standards of behaviour in public life, which embrace selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. All Members of Court are independent members, who act in the best interests of the University, rather than representing the interests of particular groups.
- To preside at General Council meetings in the absence of the Chancellor.
- To represent the University at events and participate in official ceremonies.

The role of the Rector is different from the role of the Vice-Convener of Court (who is the most senior lay person on Court and similar to 'Convener' in other institutions). Further information about the role of the Rector and Vice-Convener of Court can be found: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Governance/RoleofRector.pdf>

## **Importance of the role of Rector**

The University (Scotland) Act 1858 made provision for the position of University Rector. At Edinburgh there has been a long and impressive lineage with previous Rectors including: Sir Winston Churchill, David Lloyd George, Sir Alexander Fleming, Gordon Brown and Muriel Gray.

The role of Rector is central to the good governance of the University. Rectors make sure that Court meetings are carried out effectively and in a fair manner enabling the views of all members of Court to be expressed and considered as part of the decision making process.

In this pivotal role, Rectors gain an in depth understanding of how the University functions and its strategic priorities as well as insight into the overall workings of the Scottish higher education sector and access to wide professional networks.

## **Role of the University Court**

The Court is the governing body and legal persona of the University of Edinburgh. It is composed of twenty two members both internal and external to the University. The internal members are staff and students of the University. A number of the external members are appointed or elected by specific bodies while eight external members are appointed by Court itself.

The Court is the employer of all University staff and the owner of all the University's assets (which are valued at £1.8 billion). It is responsible for the safeguarding of those assets, including the University's extensive estate, and ensuring proper financial control arrangements and accounting for the University's turnover of approximately £739 million per annum, much of this derived from public funds. The Court is also responsible for ensuring effective audit and risk oversight arrangements and for the University's compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations, including health and safety of staff and students.

The Court is collectively responsible for overseeing the University's activities, determining its future direction and fostering an environment in which the institutional mission can be achieved and the potential of all learners maximised. This responsibility includes considering and approving the University's strategic plan, which sets out the University's goals, aims and objectives and identifies the financial, physical, staffing and other strategies necessary to achieve them. The Court takes all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the institution and is required to regularly monitor its own effectiveness and the performance of the University.

## **Period of role**

If elected, the Rector will be elected for a period of 3 years from 1 March 2015 to 28 February 2018.

## **Remuneration**

In common with most higher education institutions, there is no remuneration directly associated with membership of Court but the University will meet reasonable expenses incurred in connection with membership of the Court or activities on behalf of the University including meeting child and other dependent care costs.

The Rector is also provided with secretarial assistance.

## **Time commitment**

The Court currently meets six times a year on Monday afternoons, with two additional seminars held at the beginning and the middle of each academic year.

General Council meetings take place on a Saturday in February (in the centre of Edinburgh) and June (at various locations). The meetings are normally two hours in length, followed by a lunch.

The Rector will also be invited to attend other meetings, University events and often will undertake an ambassadorial role at official ceremonies, including graduations.

## **Election**

If you would like to stand for University Rector please see <http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/rectorial-election/> for more details. To take part in the election you will need to submit a completed Nominations Form (with at least 40 signatures of University of Edinburgh staff and students) and an Acceptance of Nominations Form. These forms must be lodged with the Deputy Returning Officer in hard copy no later than 12 noon on Tuesday, 13 January (Mrs Tracey Slaven, Deputy Returning Officer, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL).

The University strongly recognises the benefits of a diverse University Court and welcomes interest from all sections of the community. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that Members can fully participate in the work of the Court. For more information on the Court's Equality and Diversity Policy please see:

<http://www.docs.sasq.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Governance/UniversityCourtEqualityDiversityPolicy.pdf>

All Court Members are asked to sign up to a Code of Conduct (in line with good governance practice), and to confirm that they are not disqualified from being a Trustee under the Charities and Trustee Investments Act (Scotland) 2005.

## **Confidential discussion**

For an informal conversation, please contact Dr Katherine Novosel on 0131 650 9143, by email [Rectorial.Elections@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Rectorial.Elections@ed.ac.uk), or in writing to Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL.

## **Further details about the University Court**

Standing Orders of Court (rules setting out how the Court operates)

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/governance/university-court/standing-orders>

Statement of Court's Primary Responsibilities

<http://www.docs.sasq.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Governance/Governance/CourtsResponsibilities.pdf>