



University Court  
Playfair Hall, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh  
Monday, 29 November 2021

**AGENDA**

**OPENING ITEMS**

- |          |   |  |
|----------|---|--|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Minute</b><br>To <u>approve</u> the minute of the meeting and note of the seminar held on 6 October 2021   | <b>A1, A2</b>  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Matters Arising &amp; Review of Action Log</b><br>To <u>raise</u> any other matters arising and <u>review</u> the Action Log   | <b>A3</b>  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Principal's Report</b><br>To <u>note</u> a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal  | <b>B</b>   |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Senior Leadership Recruitment</b><br>To <u>approve</u> a paper from Peter Mathieson, Principal   | <b>C</b>   |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Committee Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Senior Lay Member's Overview</li><li>• Exception Committee</li><li>• Policy &amp; Resources Committee</li><li>• Nominations Committee</li><li>• Audit &amp; Risk Committee</li><li>• Remuneration Committee</li><li>• Knowledge Strategy Committee</li><li>• Senate</li></ul> | <b>Verbal</b><br><b>D1</b><br><b>D2</b><br><b>D3</b><br><b>D4</b><br><b>D5, D6</b><br><b>D7</b><br><b>D8</b> |

**KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION**

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|----------|--|------------------------|
| <b>6</b> | <b>Student Experience Update</b><br>To <u>comment</u> on a paper presented by Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students   | <b>E</b>               |
| <b>7</b> | <b>Students' Association and Sports Union Reports</b><br>To <u>note</u> the reports presented by Ellen MacRae, EUSA President <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Students' Association Report</b></li><li>• <b>Sports Union Report</b></li></ul> | <b>F1</b><br><b>F2</b> |
| <b>8</b> | <b>Audit &amp; Risk Committee Annual Report</b><br>To <u>consider</u> the annual report presented by David Law, Convener of Audit & Risk Committee   | <b>G</b>               |
| <b>9</b> | <b>Risk Management Post Year End Assurance Statement</b><br>To <u>consider</u> the assurance statement presented by Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services  | <b>H</b>               |

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|-----------|--|-----------|
| <b>10</b> | <b>Finance</b><br>To <i>consider</i> the papers presented by Lee Hamill, Director of Finance   |           |
|           | • <b>Director of Finance's Report</b>  | <b>I1</b> |
|           | • <b>Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21</b>  | <b>I2</b> |
|           | • <b>Letter of Representation</b>  | <b>I3</b> |
|           | • <b>Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 – US GAAP</b>  | <b>I4</b> |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Outcome Agreement</b><br>To <i>approve</i> a paper presented by Rona Smith, Director of Strategic Planning & Insight  | <b>J</b>  |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement across Campus</b><br>To <i>consider</i> a paper presented by Chris Cox, Vice-Principal Philanthropy & Advancement  | <b>K</b>  |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Queen's Medical Research Institute &amp; Chancellor's Building Co-location and Bioresearch and Veterinary Services Estates Strategy</b><br>To <i>approve</i> a paper presented by Jonathan Seckl, Senior Vice-Principal | <b>L</b>  |

**ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

- |           |   |          |
|-----------|---|----------|
| <b>14</b> | <b>Court Internal Effectiveness Review</b><br>To <i>approve</i>           | <b>M</b> |
| <b>15</b> | <b>General Council Membership &amp; Registration</b><br>To <i>approve</i> | <b>N</b> |
| <b>16</b> | <b>Donations, Legacies, Alumni Events</b><br>To <i>note</i>               | <b>O</b> |
| <b>17</b> | <b>Any Other Business</b><br>To <i>consider</i> any other matters.        |          |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Date of Next Meeting</b><br>Monday, 21 February 2022                   |          |



UNIVERSITY COURT

6 October 2021, Wolfson Hall, Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

[DRAFT] Minute

- Members Present:** Debora Kayembe, Rector (in Chair)  
Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member  
Douglas Alexander, General Council Assessor  
Joyce Anderson, Trade Union Professional Services Staff Member  
Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member  
Sarah Cooper, Senatus Assessor  
Alastair Dunlop, Chancellor's Assessor  
Perdita Fraser, Co-opted Member  
Ruth Girardet, Co-opted Member  
David Law, Co-opted Member  
Fiona Mackay, Senatus Assessor & Academic Staff Member  
Ellen MacRae, Students' Association President  
Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor  
Sarah McAllister, Professional Services Staff Member  
Hugh Mitchell, Co-opted Member  
Kathryn Nash, Trade Union Academic Staff Member  
Frank Ross, City of Edinburgh Council Assessor  
Réka Siró, Students' Association Vice-President Activities & Services  
Alistair Smith, Co-opted Member  
Sarah Wolffe, General Council Assessor
- Apologies:** Jock Millican, General Council Assessor  
Claire Phillips, Senatus Assessor
- In attendance:** Sabira Akram, Governance Apprentice Programme 2021/22  
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  
Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to  
the University  
Theresa Merrick, Director of Communications & Marketing  
Dorothy Miell, Vice-Principal & Head of College  
Dave Robertson, Vice-Principal & Head of College  
James Saville, Director of Human Resources  
Jonathan Seckl, Senior Vice-Principal  
Rona Smith, Director of Strategic Planning & Insight  
Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility & Sustainability (for Item  
14)

Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (for Items 7 and 15)  
Barry Neilson, Director of Strategic Change (for Item 7)  
Ashley Shannon, Director of Operations, Corporate Services Group (for Item 13)  
Sandy Tudhope, University Lead for Climate Responsibility and Sustainability (for Item 14)

## **OPENING ITEMS**

### **1 Minute**

**Paper A1**

Debora Kayembe, Rector, noted apologies and welcomed members and attendees. New Court members Douglas Alexander, Ruth Girardet and Alistair Smith and new attendee Rona Smith were welcomed to their first meeting.

The Minute of the meeting held on 14 June 2021 was approved.

### **2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log**

**Papers A2-A3**

- **Lease for Secondary Substation, Advanced Computing Facility**

Court approved a lease from a date of entry to be agreed for a Secondary Substation for the Advanced Computing Facility at Easter Bush.

The action log was reviewed and an update on the development of a transport strategy requested. It was noted that the University-funded Central Area-King's Buildings shuttle bus for students and staff has resumed operation for the new academic year on a free of charge basis. The Scottish Government's decision that all residents in Scotland under the age of 22 will be eligible for free bus travel from 31 January 2022 will need to be considered within any new transport strategy.

### **3 Principal's Report**

**Paper B**

Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, supplemented the written report with the following points:

- Members and attendees were thanked for the contributions to the Court seminar that took place prior to this afternoon's meeting and considered the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and freedom of expression and academic freedom;
- The successful return or introduction to campus for many students and staff at the start of the new academic year has helped create a positive atmosphere of renewal after the disruptions of the previous 18 months; and,
- The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced earlier this week a new artificial intelligence fund for student scholarships and research fellowships. The Russell Group subsequently invited the University to produce a statement in response in recognition of the University of Edinburgh's leadership in this area.

Members raised the following points:

- What the estimated financial impact of the UK Government's 1.25% Health and Social Care Levy from April 2022 will be – this has an estimated direct cost of £1m in the current year and £3-4m per annum from 2022/23 onwards. There will also likely be an indirect cost as suppliers may increase prices as their own operating costs increase;
- The University's participation in the UK Government's Turing Study Abroad Scheme – the University has been successful in bidding to be a major participant in the scheme and would also be keen to be involved in any Scottish Government-funded international student exchange scheme, as has been mooted;
- The impact of the increased student intake this year on the future size and shape of the University – external factors have meant that the student intake has been larger than planned, with a similar position evident at many comparator institutions. A general growth in overall student numbers is not a planning assumption or aim;
- The Scottish Funding Council's Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability – the review encourages collaboration within and between universities and colleges, which the University is involved with and is keen to continue doing;
- The UN COP26 Climate Change Conference – a briefing note detailing the University's engagement with the conference can be circulated. There is leadership involvement in the COP26 Universities Network from Professor Dave Reay, involvement in a wide range of events in both the 'green' and 'blue' zones of the conference, as well as hosting events in Edinburgh, where many delegates will stay or visit during their time in Scotland;
- The proportion of teaching in groups under 50 that is taking place in-person – this varies by School and by course but on average over 80% of teaching of groups under 50 is presently in-person. For the next semester the aim is to increase the 50 person cap to 120, which should lead to a further increase in on-campus teaching; and,
- The reasoning for a cap on teaching groups in-person that are no larger than 50 – this is a reflection of capacity constraints when timetabling decisions were made with assumptions of what the public health guidance would be for universities and is in-line with Scottish Government expectations of careful management of a return to greater levels of on-campus activity this year. As this has been successful from a public health perspective there is confidence to raise the cap next semester, although much will depend on how the pandemic develops over the winter period.

#### **4 Senior Leadership Recruitment**

#### **Paper C**

An update on recruitment for four senior leadership posts – Provost, Vice-Principal Research & Enterprise, Vice-Principal and Head of College of Science & Engineering and, Vice-Principal and Head of College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences – was noted, with an encouraging level of interest from high quality applicants evident.

## 5 Committee Business

### • Senior Lay Member's Overview

Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member, noted that individual meetings with continuing Court members and the University Secretary took place as planned over the summer period. A distillation of reflections from these meetings will be included within the annual effectiveness review paper to be submitted to the next meeting. As members have welcomed the opportunity to meet in-person at this meeting it is planned to continue this approach for the next Court meeting, with the next cycle of committee meetings to take place by videocall. The Senior Lay Member is scheduled to meet with Jamie Hepburn MSP, Scottish Government Higher Education Minister, as part of the Committee of Scottish Chairs (where the Senior Lay Member has been appointed as vice-chair) and will participate in the autumn plenary meeting of the UK Committee of University Chairs later this month.

### • Exception Committee

Paper D1

Matters approved on behalf of Court by Exception Committee were noted as set out in the paper, including:

- Provision of hardship support for managed isolation costs for those international students from 'red list' countries who would otherwise be prevented from coming to the University;
- The following appointments:
  - Vice-Principal Corporate Services – Catherine Martin
  - Trustee of the Staff Benefits Scheme – Ashley Shannon, Director of Operations in the Corporate Services Group, for a three year term of office;
  - Audit & Risk Committee – David Law appointed as Convener for a two year term of office; Ruth Girardet appointed for a three year term of office;
  - Remuneration Committee – Hugh Mitchell appointed as Convener for a three year term of office; Frank Armstrong appointed for a two year term of office;
  - Nominations Committee – Hugh Mitchell appointed for a three year term of office;
  - Policy & Resources Committee – Douglas Alexander appointed for a three year term of office;
  - Intermediary Court member – Frank Armstrong appointed for a two year term of office;
  - Court USS Sub-Group – Janet Legrand appointed as Convener on an interim basis; and,
  - Nominations Committee's appointment of Alistair Smith to Estates Committee for a three year term of office was noted.
- Proposed expenditure (including contingency) of £2.9m from within the Court-approved budget envelope for 2021/22 on the following strategic priorities: Curriculum Transformation; Programme and Course Information Management; Personal Tutor and Student Support; and other covid-related impacts; and,
- Additional funding to enable the contract award for the construction of the Usher Institute building.

- **Policy & Resources Committee** **Paper D2**

The report was noted, with key items considered including the People & Money System implementation featuring later in the agenda.

- **Nominations Committee** **Paper D3**

The report was noted and all members who agreed to take on the new appointments set out in the paper were thanked.

- **Court Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) Sub-Group** **Paper D4**

The report was noted, with the seminar held in the morning providing the latest update on the topic.

- **Audit & Risk Committee** **Paper D5**

Key points from the Committee's first meeting of the new academic year were summarised, including preparatory work for the Annual Report & Accounts and discussions on risk management and the internal control environment.

- **Senate** **Paper D6**

The report of the Senate meeting held by videoconference on 2 June 2021 was noted.

## **KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION**

### **6 National Student Survey Results** **Paper E**

*Secretary's note: Items 6, 7 and 15 were considered jointly within Item 6.*

Findings from the 2021 iterations of the undergraduate National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey were reviewed. The results remain disappointing for the NSS in particular, with a decline in the overall satisfaction score to 71%, in comparison to a sector average of 79%. It was noted that, while the pandemic has led to an overall decline in student satisfaction levels for the sector, some institutions have improved over this period. Many comments submitted by students chime with findings from the recent Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR), such as a desire to reform the current Personal Tutor system, improving quality and timeliness of feedback on academic work, inconsistency between Schools, a slow pace of change and the general complexity of navigating the University from a student perspective. While the overall ELIR outcome is positive, there are challenging recommendations in the report for the University to consider and act upon. A draft action plan to respond to the recommendations has been developed for initial review by Court and will be submitted to Senate for approval.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Postgraduate and postdoctoral staff who support undergraduate teaching could have greater training provided before teaching and this should be resourced; and more generally, the level of resource that may be required to take forward the draft Action Plan was queried – there will be a resource commitments made as part of implementing the Action Plan, such as reform of the Personal Tutor system;
- A long-standing issue has been a propensity to over-assess students and this should be considered within the Curriculum Transformation Programme – the approach to assessment has been ‘bottom-up’ to date and a strategic approach is needed that is clear and consistent for students;
- Course Enhancement Questionnaires will not be offered this year but they have been a useful source of data on the student experience – response rates have been in decline and a new approach will be taken with a mid-course rather than end-course questionnaire in place from 2022/23. This should allow for action to be taken on issues raised before the course concludes;
- How well understood the particular issues with assessment and feedback are – there is a desire for feedback that is timely, consistent and useful in the sense of being linked to the requirements of the course and helping students develop further;
- Setting appropriate metrics (e.g. using a narrow peer group that most closely matches the University) to measure success, focusing on a small number of key improvements to make and improving accountability for leaders in each area (e.g. inclusion in annual review discussions) could add an impetus for improvement;
- NSS results have been disappointing for a prolonged period of time, despite the high priority given to them by Court and whether there a resourcing and/or governance element to this if there are some areas with persistently low results that do not make significant changes as a result. The ELIR report also highlights the governance challenge of the highly devolved nature of the University;
- The disappointing results are recognised by staff and a great deal of work has been undertaken over the years in response – it would be helpful for Schools to have a document that brought together analysis of this to aid future action;
- Improving communications to students to reinforce positive action taken;
- Any feeling of institutional acceptance that low student satisfaction scores are inevitable should be challenged by Court and all parts of the University; and,
- From a student perspective, one of the biggest difficulties is not feeling valued and not feeling a sense of belonging as an individual in the institution and in the wider city – it is notable that student satisfaction tends to be higher on smaller, more close-knit courses. In addition, students from widening participation backgrounds may need particular support and find that a single negative incident may affect them disproportionately.

Court agreed to emphasise the high strategic priority it places on improving student satisfaction measures and in particular its desire to see a greatly increased pace of change in this area and offered support to the senior leadership team in advancing this change.



**7 Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Response Action Plan Paper F**

*Secretary's note: this was considered within Item 6 above.*

**8 Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Violence Paper G**

An update on activity in preventing and responding to sexual violence and gender-based violence and the work of a University taskforce on the subject, now integrated into the Gender Equality Sub-Committee of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, was reviewed. Work at the University is focused on: better support for those affected; encouraging greater disclosure of incidents; and, culture change to reduce incidences. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Whether online modules in consent and tackling harassment could be implemented on a mandatory basis this academic year – the software has only recently been purchased and complex issues around triggering (e.g. those who might recognise for the first time a previous experience as being an experience of sexual violence having completed the module) should be considered further before a decision is taken; and,
- Whether the intention in the paper to “reduce incidences of sexual violence over time through education and culture change” should aim for eradication rather than reduction – it was acknowledged that long-term societal-wide change is needed, which the University can help to contribute towards, as well as greater support for those who disclose and encouraging disclosure.

**9 Students' Association and Sports Union Reports Papers H1,H2**

Ellen MacRae, Students' Association President, presented reports from the Students' Association and the Sports Union and introduced a brief video highlighting some of the many Welcome Week events held in Bristo Square. Over 25,000 visits to the 'Gem', a temporary covered outdoor space took place in Welcome Week. The Gem hosted student societies and sports club fairs and helped introduce first years and many second years new to Edinburgh to the campus.

It was noted that difficulty in finding suitable and affordable private accommodation in Edinburgh is a serious concern for many students this year. This could be further exacerbated in the coming years as the large cohort of first year undergraduate students seek private accommodation for their subsequent years of study. The Association's President asked that accommodation availability in the city be considered in thinking on the future size and shape of the University.

**10 Director of Finance's Report Paper I**

The draft financial results for 2020-21, the latest iteration of the five-year financial scenario modelling and an update on the Universities Superannuation Scheme valuation were reviewed. It was noted that the planning round will be harmonised with capital planning work to give a five year time horizon for both.

## 11 Performance Measures to Support Strategy 2030

Paper J

Performance measures to support engagement with, and measurement and delivery of, the University's Strategy 2030 were considered and approved. It was noted that the intention is to establish baselines, recognising that the pandemic will have a disruptive effect on the stability of some of the measures, benchmark where possible and to embed the measures in the planning round as well as providing progress reports to Court and the University Executive. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The measures were welcomed as a necessary means for Court to assess progress in meeting the University's Strategy 2030 ambitions;
- Support was expressed for suggestions made at Policy & Resources Committee to consider leading measures for student experience, suitable measures for Data-Driven Innovation and greater use of external benchmarking with comparable institutions where possible;
- Whether a staff engagement measure could use comparative information from staff surveys at peer institutions;
- Whether a reputation measure could be developed – noting that international university reputation surveys tend to be based on research activity and the difficulties in disentangling different elements which might contribute to reputation but are not related to present day activity, e.g. history and location; and,
- The measures will be one element of a larger toolkit for measuring performance, with the top-level measures to be published within the Annual Report & Accounts and should be suitable for that format.

## 12 People and Money System

- **People & Money Implementation**
- **People & Money Governance and Assurance Changes**

Paper K1

Paper K2

A revised plan for the implementation of the People & Money System (the programme delivering the core IT system for HR, Finance, Payroll and Procurement) was presented. The programme was reviewed over the summer period by Professor Dave Robertson, Vice-Principal and Head of College of Science & Engineering, resulting in a recommendation to seek additional funding to complete the implementation using a new approach. This should include working to fixed 'go-live' dates, de-scoping in some areas, additional operational management and adoption, working closely with the main budget holders and strengthened governance and assurance changes. Given the scale and nature of the programme, risks, while reduced, will remain, with institutional perception and confidence in the new system vital for success. The proposed governance and assurance changes have been developed by the Principal and include establishing an Enactment Group to focus on the implementation of the programme, to be co-chaired by Dave Robertson and Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services and bringing an external perspective with Professor Anthony Finkelstein, President of City, University of London, and an expert in systems change, agreeing to provide independent advice on a pro bono basis. The following points were discussed:

- The proposals have been reviewed and the recommendation supported by the Policy & Resources Committee and its People & Money Sub-Group, which includes lay members with experience of the implementation of systems of

this type in their own organisations and the additional complexities such programmes often encounter as they develop;

- Continuing to provide Court with assurance that programme milestones are being met – there will be fortnightly reporting to the Enactment Group, monthly reporting to the University Executive and reporting to the Policy & Resources Committee and the Knowledge Strategy Committee, which in turn will report to Court within their regular reports; and,
- Whether there will be additional costs borne in local areas in implementing the system – any additional ‘bedding down’ costs will be funded by the six budget holders for their own areas.

The recommended option to complete the programme using the new approach set out in Paper K1 was approved along with the additional costs associated with the budget variance, noting that this in the context of strengthened governance and assurance changes set out in Paper K2.

### **13 Edinburgh BioQuarter: Update on Formalising Partnership Arrangements and Procurement of a Private Sector Partner**

**Paper L**

An update on plans to formalise partnership arrangements with Scottish Enterprise and the City of Edinburgh Council and to procure a private sector partner to assist in the development of a Health Innovation District at the BioQuarter site, Little France, was reviewed.

Court agreed to support:

- a) the formation of a company limited by shares, EBQ3 Ltd, in which the University would hold a third of the equity alongside Scottish Enterprise and the City of Edinburgh Council, in accordance with the terms of the EBQ3 Shareholders’ Agreement which will govern decision making including appropriate reserved matters.
- b) the University’s Director nominees of EBQ3 Ltd as Ashley Shannon, Director of Operations in Corporate Services and Gary Jebb, Director of Place.
- c) the proposed future structure of the BioQuarter partnership with the Private Sector Partner (PSP) through a Strategic Joint Venture arrangement and associated legal framework.
- d) the publication by EBQ3 Ltd and the 3 BioQuarter partners of the Contract Notice and undertaking the formal public procurement process to select a PSP. This procurement process will ultimately lead to the University entering into the Strategic Joint Venture Agreement with the other BioQuarter partners and the PSP, as well as the other legal agreements necessary to progress the development of the BioQuarter site and,
- e) the principles of the Outline Business Case set out in the paper.

A delegation of authority in accordance with the Delegated Authority Schedule was agreed for:

- a) the Principal to oversee the procurement and appointment process for the selected bidder in accordance with the parameters of the partnership’s procurement strategy and supported by members of the University’s Senior Leadership Team and other senior staff of the University as required;

- b) the Vice-Principal Corporate Services to conclude the arrangements associated with approval matters noted above, including the University's corporate interests in EBQ3 Ltd and the Strategic Joint Venture arrangement with the other BioQuarter partners and the PSP;
- c) the University Procurement Director to approve the final procurement arrangements and associated documentation to support the formal launch and undertaking of the public procurement process specifically relating to point d) in the section above; and
- d) the Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance and University Secretary to provide signing authority (including the ability to be sole signatory by electronic means) for all associated legal documentation in consultation with the Vice-Principal Corporate Services and Deputy Secretary, Governance and Legal and the Director of Legal Services and the Interim Director of Estates.

## **14 Carbon Sequestration through Forests and Peatland**

## **Paper M**

An update on plans to sequester carbon to offset unavoidable emissions associated with travel as an essential component of meeting the Strategy 2030 outcome of "We will be on track to be a Carbon-Zero University by 2040" was reviewed. Initial scoping work considered a market based approach (purchasing carbon offsets from third party providers on a transactional basis) and the alternative approaches of purchasing land or working in partnership with existing landowners to restore peatland or expand forests or working in partnership with existing landowners. Having found the market based approach to be more expensive and to offer less certainty than a land ownership or land partnership approach, a combination of land ownership and land partnership is proposed to combine the favourable elements of both – with land ownership offering the greatest amount of certainty and the ability to develop related research and teaching opportunities on the land and the partnership approach not requiring an initial capital investment and the benefit of working with experienced custodians of the land. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Whether the scale of land purchase proposed will be sufficient to meet the level of carbon offset required – the proposal includes both land purchase and working in long-term partnership with existing landowners and should enable the level of carbon offset sought to be met by 2040;
- Airlines are increasingly offering travellers the opportunity to carbon offset journeys and if this becomes included as standard in airline tickets in future the need for the University to offset travel emissions separately would reduce – this is uncertain and by acting now the University can show leadership in this area. Should travel emissions reduce or be offset by airlines and other transport providers the University will still need to offset other activities that generate emissions such as electricity for high performance computing use and the proposals can contribute to this;
- More generally, the extent to which the policy landscape is changing rapidly in this area, making the costs and benefits of a long term decision such as land purchase more difficult to assess at present and at a time when forestry land has been increasing in price – while there is uncertainty at present the direction of travel for organisations aiming to achieve net zero emissions is increasingly to include carbon offsetting as part of a strategy to achieve this. The University of Edinburgh would be at the forefront of the higher education

sector by acting now and given the increasing interest in carbon offsetting forestry land is likely to become more expensive in future;

- The level of prioritisation for the proposal compared to other capital projects – the project is modest in its capital requirements and has been recommended as a strategic priority;
- The benefit to the University’s reputation and credibility from showing leadership in this area and taking a significant step towards the ‘zero by 2040’ aim;
- Likely support from the student body for the proposals and the opportunity for teaching and research activities on the land to create wider benefits and a virtuous cycle of activity; and,
- Considering further the communication of the proposals given the commercial confidentiality of some aspects.

Subject to further discussion with relevant members on planned communications, Court supported the proposals and:

- (i) approved expenditure of capital to enable purchase of land for carbon sequestration through forests and peatland; and,
- (ii) noted expenditure of the associated revenue elements, noting that this would be found from within existing resources for 2021-22 and factored into the University’s planning round for future years.

## **ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

### **15 Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2020/21 Paper N**

The report was approved and the Senior Lay Member authorised to sign the accompanying statement.

### **16 Singapore Office Bank Account Paper O**

The opening of a corporate bank account with Standard Chartered in Singapore in the name of ‘The University of Edinburgh (Singapore Branch)’, to be operated as set out in the paper, was approved.

### **17 Donations and Legacies; Alumni Events Paper P**

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

### **18 Any Other Business**

It was requested that the impact case studies developed for the Research Excellence Framework submission be made available for information when appropriate.

The Rector noted an invitation to the Women of the Year awards ceremony later this month and recorded thanks to the University Chaplaincy Service for their support following a recent close family bereavement.

**19 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday, 29 November 2021



**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**29 November 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.
2. The activity noted supports our commitment to deliver on our vision and ambitions including all four key areas of focus highlighted in Strategy 2030: People, Research, Learning and Teaching and Social and Civic Responsibility.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

3. 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**

4. 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**

5. Semester 1 is now well under way with the majority of our students back in Edinburgh and many more colleagues now working on campus, for at least some of the week. We are delivering circa 75% of our teaching face to face while still working to the 50 people internal limit and utilising hygiene and ventilation measures. Evidence shows that the large scale return to campus by the student population has not resulted in a significant rise in cases for students or staff. Our Semester 2 plans for teaching intend to build on our current approach and there has been much interaction with the Scottish Government on the exact nature of this.
6. Court will be aware that the mandate for Industrial Action at Edinburgh, in the recent University & College Union (UCU) ballots, was achieved on both counts of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and the 2021/22 Pay Award & Conditions. UCU has called three days of strike action on Wednesday 1st, Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd December. Action short of a strike, in the form of working to contractual hours and duties will be continuous from Wednesday 1st December until no later than 3rd May 2022, when the mandate for action will expire.
7. We have also received a formal note of dispute from UNISON and understand it intends to ballot between 6 December and early January 2022 for strike action on the imposed 2021/22 pay award. EIS (Educational Institute of Scotland), which is not formally recognised by the University but represents a number of its teaching staff, is presently balloting its members for strike action and action short of a strike, with the ballot due to close on 8th December. At time of writing we await the outcome of Unite's consultation with its branches on whether to ballot for strike action on the same pay related issues.

8. I hosted, with senior staff, the latest in a series of virtual Town Hall sessions with over 700 staff joining us to pose questions on any subject they wished. Myself and Lee Hamill gave an introduction covering key financial information and the USS situation. Working from home and hybrid working remains a key area of interest for many staff, the USS pensions dispute, pay and conditions and career progression opportunities are also all high on the current agenda. The session was recorded and made available for those staff who couldn't attend to watch at a convenient time. Staff were also invited to a seminar by Mercer giving an independent summary of the USS pensions situation, which again was made available to those who could not attend via a recording for all staff.

9. I am very pleased to report that we were able to hold the Chancellor's Dinner this year, including the presentation of the 2021 Chancellor's awards. Congratulations to the awardees and to everyone that was nominated: we see extraordinary staff contributions every year and the circumstances this year have emphasised the remarkable abilities and application of so many of our colleagues. It is not possible to give awards to them all, but we should acknowledge that there are many deserving cases. We changed the criteria this year to include our Professional Services colleagues and our Chancellor's Award winners for 2021 are:

- Winner of the Outstanding Contribution award is Lyndsay Wilkie, Director of Business Development and Occupancy in Accommodation, Catering and Events (ACE), Corporate Services Group. Lyndsay is recognised for her commitment to residents in the University's catered and self-catered accommodation throughout the pandemic, and also for her contribution to strategic decision making in ACE.
- Winner of the Research Excellence award Professor Aziz Sheik, Chair of Primary Care Research, Director of the Usher Institute and Dean for Data. Aziz is recognised for the way in which he has enhanced the University's reputation through both his research, his inspiration and support of others' research, alongside his recent tireless commitment to generating, analysing and utilising for policy purposes, the very best linked data for understanding Covid-19.
- Winner of the Rising Star award Dr Dave O'Brien a Chancellor's Fellow in the Cultural and Creative Industries based in Edinburgh College of Art. Dave is recognised for his significant contribution to research in Edinburgh College of Art in opening up the field of cultural policy and in introducing new methodological approaches to data.
- Winner of the Innovative Teaching award Professor Tim Stratford, Director of Learning and Teaching in the School of Engineering. Tim is recognised for his leadership in transforming the School's teaching and curriculum both prior to and during the Covid-19 pandemic, and also for his personal, award-winning pioneering of new learning and teaching methods in structural engineering.

10. Our sincere thanks to our Chancellor for hosting the celebration and our hearty congratulations to the winners.

11. I was also very pleased to recognise staff through the Principal's Medal winners for 2021. Again recognising our committed colleagues from across the University for their superb contribution during an extraordinarily difficult year. This year the Medal winners are:



- Tim Aitman, the Chief Investigator for the TestEd Programme and Director of the Centre for Genomic and Experimental Medicine, Institute of Genetics and Cancer representing the TestEd Team. The Team are recognised for their significant achievements in pioneering a way to mass population test in an infectious epidemic and in providing practical Covid-19 testing to the entire University staff and student population in a short time through their cross-disciplinary endeavours.
- Linda Bauld, Bruce and John Usher Professor of Public Health and Head of the Centre for Population Health Sciences is recognised for her excellent communication of often complex and difficult ideas to the Scottish Government, worldwide media and the public throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Paul Gorman, Deputy Head of Help Services, User Services, Information Services Group. He is recognised for his outstanding contribution to the University's goal of improving the student experience through his commitment to, and skill in, setting up and leading the EdHelp student support service; while coping with the additional difficulties introduced by the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.
- Lauren Hall-Lew, Reader, based in the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences. Lauren is recognised for her exceptional service to the University's goals of promoting a diverse and inclusive community. As creator and coordinator of the University's BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) Mentoring Programme, and as a key member of the Women of Colour network, alongside her research interests and collaborations she has set a powerful example to all.
- Dr Emma Wild-Wood, Director of Postgraduate Studies, and Dr Sara Parvis, Director of Postgraduate Taught Masters, in the School of Divinity are joint winners in recognition of the way they provided pastoral care under difficult circumstances in the last year or so, and proactively created a welcoming community for their School's postgraduate students.

12. It was very pleasing to see the input from University colleagues to COP26, key activity is detailed below. There were some very thoughtful and inspirational contributions made by our staff and great support from across the University for the activities and visits that we were able to host. My thanks and appreciation to everyone involved.

13. The late October Comprehensive Spending Review was relatively positive and confirmed an uplift in research funding. The question of the UK's participation in Horizon Europe still remains unresolved. There was mention of a UK-only scheme as back-up in the budget announcement, although for us the EU scheme will remain preferred in order to get full benefit from the collaboration it brings.

14. The Scottish Funding Council's Research Excellence Grant (REG) and Research Postgraduate Grant (RPG) consultation on methodology launched last week, with a response due by the 12th January. This will determine REG and RPG allocations from 2022-23, based on REF2021 results. REF results will be published on 12 May. Edinburgh's annual share of REG is currently £82M (one-third of the sector total), and our RPG allocation is £7.8M (one-fifth of the sector total).

## *Selected meetings and events from October to end November*

### 15. University

- Academic Strategy Group (core membership the Heads of School) continues to meet frequently and is a very useful forum for consultation and discussion on a wide range of matters including delivering hybrid teaching in semester two and to hear regularly about the University's financial situation and other aspects of our local, regional and international standing.
- Leaders' Forum, comprising around 150 of the University's senior staff, continues to meet every 6-8 weeks, this group is now returning to its original focus of using the meetings to explore different aspects of leadership development. At the October meeting climate leadership was discussed.
- Senior Leadership Team weekly meetings continue, now in hybrid format.
- Hosted a dinner for this year's Gifford Lecturer Professor David Hempton, Senior Professor and Dean of Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University, who gave a series of very interesting lectures on the theme of: 'Networks, Nodes, and Nuclei in the History of Christianity, c. 1500-2020'.
- Participated in the Edinburgh Futures Conversations on 'Future of Economy', which included external speakers: Dame Susan Rice, the first woman to head a UK clearing bank (and of course a much-missed Court member); Gordon Brown, Former UK Prime Minister; Chinelo Anohu, Head of the Africa Investment Forum; Omar Shaikh, Managing Director and Co-Founder Global Ethical Finance Initiative; Hiro Mizuno, UN Special Envoy Innovative Finance and Sustainable Investments; Mariana Mazzucato, Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value, University College London; Katherine Trebeck, Senior Strategic Advisor for the Wellbeing Economy Alliance.
- Welcomed The Rt. Hon Jim Wallace PC QC, Lord Wallace of Tankerness, on a tour of Old College including the Edinburgh Law School.
- Participated in the Edinburgh College Digital Care Hub launch. This is a partnership with Edinburgh College which has resulted in the creation of a state-of-the-art practical care training facility at the College's Sighthill campus.
- COP26 Welcomed guests to the Edinburgh Earth Initiative Launch Event.
- COP26 Welcomed guests to the 'Because the Ocean' Declaration event, which was attended by HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, who was joined by a senior delegation which included the Minister for Public Works and the Environment, Celine Caron-Dagioni and the CEO of the Monaco Foundation, Olivier Wenden; Carolina Schmidt, COP25 President and Minister of the Environment for Chile; His Excellency Henry Puna, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum and Pacific Ocean Commissioner; Andrés Couve, Minister of Science, Technology, Innovations and Knowledge for Chile; Kakia Khattabi, Minister of Climate, Environment, Sustainable Development & Green Deal for Belgium.
- Chaired a Q&A session for all staff.
- Participated in the Remembrance Day Service in Old College Quad.
- Welcomed Jeremy Farrar, Director of the Wellcome Trust to the University prior to him delivering the Edinburgh Infectious Diseases Winter Lecture 2021.
- Welcomed participants of the 12th A. G. Leventis Conference in Hellenic Studies on 'The Greek Revolution and the Athens of the North 1821–2021.
- Met with Phil Cotton, Director, Human Capital Development at Mastercard Foundation.

- Participated in the Chancellor's Dinner, kindly hosted by the Chancellor at the Palace of Holyroodhouse.
- Welcomed students and staff to the annual Christmas Tree lights switch on in Old College Quad.

#### 16. Edinburgh and Scotland

- Participated in Edinburgh Festivals Forum meetings.
- Chaired the quarterly meeting of the Higher Education - Further Education Strategy Group, which 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 meetings.
- Met with officials from UK Government and Scottish Government for the "annual conversation" on our City Deal. Our City Deal is recognised by both governments to be hugely successful and providing leadership and good practices for other City Deals including around reporting methodology, Key Performance Indicators and cross-sectoral collaboration.
- Represented the University at the Heriot Watt Bicentenary Dinner.
- Participated in a Civic Reception hosted by the Lord Provost and City of Edinburgh Council to mark undergraduate Peter Sawkins' win of the Great British Bake Off last year.
- Invited speaker at the Scotland Development Conference at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre.
- Participated in a Newbattle Abbey College Trustees meeting.
- Met with the new Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Enterprise, Adrian Gillespie.
- Participated in the Next Generation RAF reception and supper held in Dynamic Earth and the City Chambers Edinburgh.
- Participated in the Sir Walter Scott celebrations, hosted by Sir Angus Grossart and featuring an unprecedented ceremonial procession (in fancy dress) from St Giles' Cathedral to the Scott Monument on Princes Street.
- Participated in the launch of the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities' Project on Decoloniality.
- Participated in various COP26 related events: Green Finance Innovations and Investment Showcase in Glasgow, where I gave the vote of thanks; dinner hosted by the Royal Bank of Scotland in Glasgow in partnership with the United Nations; welcomed guests to the Realising a Compassionate Planet event, a university event; UK-Africa Partnership, guests included Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Environment from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eve Bazaiba; Her Excellency Dr Baomiatotse Vahinala Raharinirina, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Government of the Republic of Madagascar; a Special Reception to Celebrating Reinvigorated United States Climate Action – hosted in the Playfair Library and attended by the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Rt. Honorable Professor Charles Hendry CBE, and the Honorable Kathy Castor, Chairwoman of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis of the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Participated in a tour of the FastBlade facilities in Rosyth. Fastblade is the world's first composite and materials test facility with regenerative fatigue loading currently being developed by the University and Babcock International.

- Participated in a panel at the Scottish Council for Development & Industry forum where we discussed the topic 'Learning through life'.

#### 17. 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 including: several Board meetings; discussions with Sir Patrick Vallance, Chief Scientific Officer to the UK Government and Raj Jethwa, Chief Executive of the Universities and Colleges Employers Association; a round table with Wellcome; discussion on delivering skills with Michelle Donelan MP, Minister of State for Universities.
- Joined various Universities UK Members' meetings: Vice-Chancellor discussions on the USS valuation; discussions on other current issues; a discussion on managing risks in international collaboration.
- Participated in various Universities Scotland meetings: main committee meeting;
- Participated in a Universities Scotland and Scottish Funding Council Liaison meeting and a meeting on the SFC review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability.
- Participated in various meetings on Security as part of my role as Lead for security issues in higher education for the Russell Group and Universities UK.
- Participated in Scottish Health and Industry Partnership Oversight Group meetings.
- Participated in Sustainability of health research meetings.
- Participated in a round table discussion about the Centre for Security Research, chaired by Baroness Annabel Goldie, Minister of State for Defence, hosted in Old College.
- Participated in the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Board dinner hosted by Heriot Watt University.
- Delivered introductory reflections at the Ditchley discussion on 'Higher Education Leadership – opportunities for regional renewal and green recoveries'.
- Vice-Principal Colm Harmon and I participated in a discussion with Oscar Tapp-Scotting, Deputy Director within the International Education Division at the UK Department for Education, and his colleagues Daniel Brooks and Sefina Dogore, who are exploring ways in which the UK Government can do more to encourage collaboration and partnerships between some of our schools, colleges, and universities across the UK.
- Welcomed Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Economy, Kate Forbes MSP, to the University for a tour of the Edinburgh Futures Institute followed by a City Region Deal meeting on Data Driven Innovation.
- Gave the Engineering Scotland Innovation Lecture 2021 and talked about how the University contributes to engineering in Scotland and our future plans.
- Participated in the Times Higher Education launch of the World Reputation Rankings.
- Participated in a dinner hosted by the University of Glasgow for Dame Ottoline Leyser, Chief Executive Officer of UK Research & Innovation.
- Led for Universities Scotland in a meeting with Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills, Mr Jamie Hepburn MSP, Minister for

Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training, Professor Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director of Healthcare Quality and Strategy, Professor Linda Bauld, Interim Chief Social Policy Adviser within the Scottish Government, and Universities Scotland members, about planning around covid-19 restrictions for the delivery of in-person learning for the rest of the academic year.

- Participated in an 'Enhancing security to support international collaboration in the Higher Education sector' meeting organised by Wilton Park with contributions from UK Research & Innovation .
- Participated online in a panel discussion on 'Driven Knowledge Generation: Research, Excellence & Impact' at the IE University and Luiss University (Rome) conference entitled "Re-Inventing Higher Education".
- Participated in the national Leadership Development Programme Steering Group.
- Participated in a discussion on the Independent Review of the Research and Development and Innovation Organisational Landscape, organised by Universities UK and including Sir Paul Nurse, Chief Executive Officer of The Francis Crick Institute and chair of the Review.
- Participated in an introductory meeting with George Freeman MP, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation.
- Participated in the Aurora Forum at Goodwood House.
- Hosted a dinner at Old College for His Excellency Mr Kim Gunn, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

18. International (online from Edinburgh!)

- Welcomed partners and signed several Memoranda of Understanding with: University of the Witwatersrand and separately with the University of Sydney; British Ecuadorian Chamber of Commerce and the Universidad San Francisco de Quito.
- Participated in the U7+ meeting of Presidents (virtual), and also met with students and staff from Northwestern University (Illinois, one of our active partners in this alliance) in Edinburgh during their visit to Scotland for COP26.
- Interviewed by Sue Cunningham, President and Chief Executive Officer of Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the recording to be shown as part of the opening of the CASE Europe conference. Participated as a Trustee of CASE in several online meetings including of the full Board and of the Executive Committee.
- Participated in the Yun Posun virtual symposium with colleagues in Korea.
- Participated in the Una Europa General Assembly.
- Chaired the Association of Commonwealth Universities' Europe Regional Committee meeting.
- Participated in multiple U21 Presidents' Peer-to-Peer meetings.
- Took part in the Rectors' Assembly of the League of European Research Universities.
- Spoke at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Global Science Forum workshop on 'Integrity and security in the global research ecosystem: managing conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment'.

### **Resource implications**

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

### **Risk Management**

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

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

21. As the paper represents a summary of recent news and general activity, it does not directly relate to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

### **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 & Presenter*

Professor Peter Mathieson  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor  
November 2021

### **Freedom of Information**

27. Open paper



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Senior Leadership Recruitment**

**Description of paper**

1. To update Court on the latest position with respect to the Senior Leadership of the University including: the intention of the Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance and University Secretary, Ms Sarah Smith, to stand down from her role as University Secretary and as a member of the Senior Leadership Team on July 31<sup>st</sup> 2022; to seek approval from Court for plans for an ongoing leadership development role within the University for Ms Smith and update Court on the ongoing Senior Leadership Team recruitment exercise.

2. Strong senior leadership of the University is essential for delivering on all of the four key areas of Strategy 2030, establishing and maintaining the highest standards of leadership is a priority for the organisation.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

3. Court are requested to approve the recommendation to appoint Ms Sarah Smith as Vice-Principal Leadership Development for a period of two years from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 and note the other information presented.

**Background and context**

4. Since updating Court in October about the progress of the Senior Leadership Team recruitment there have been further developments as I have accepted Ms Sarah Smith's intention to demit the office of University Secretary on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022 in order to pursue a new leadership development role within the University. This is something that Sarah and I have been discussing over a period of time and we have agreed this timing so that her departure will coincide with the other changes that are being made to the University's senior leadership.

5. I wish to formally record my sincere thanks to Sarah for her exemplary service to the University in the 8+ years that she has served as University Secretary. My own personal thanks also for the period that I have worked with her, where she has been a most valued and respected member of my Senior Leadership Team.

6. Court approved the process for appointing a new University Secretary in 2014, agreeing that Nominations Committee will be responsible for approving the recruitment and appointment process. The final decision on the individual to be appointed will be approved by Court.

**Discussion**

*Vice-Principal Leadership Development*

7. There is a strategic institutional need for focused activity to help build leadership capacity in the University's top 200 leaders. This is a key enabler of ensuring that we deliver effectively on Strategy 2030. Dedicated work with this leadership group would aim to deliver the following outcomes: a leadership group which acts as champions for what the University as a whole is achieving and aspiring to achieve;

better alignment of priorities and approach to Strategy 2030; strengthening ability of that cohort of leaders to speak confidently, positively and with authenticity about the University as a whole; and a greater ability to challenge themselves and their teams in continuous learning and improvement.

8. In addition there is a clear role to offer personal support, advice and counsel to the Principal through such a significant period of change and transition in the senior leadership of the organisation.

9. Sarah is uniquely placed to carry out both of these roles given her long experience at very senior level within the University; and her own extensive leadership development (including MBA at Imperial; Advanced Management Programme at Harvard Business School; Top Management Programme; and Executive Masters in Change at Insead) and experience as an Advanced Executive Coach (Academy of Executive Coaching).

10. I am therefore proposing to Court that Sarah is engaged as Vice-Principal Leadership Development on a 0.4 FTE for a period of two years from 1 August 2022.

#### *Senior Leadership Team Recruitment*

11. The recruitment process continues to go well as at time of writing shortlisting has been undertaken for the post of Provost and Vice-Principal Research and Enterprise. Both have strong fields and the interviews, of five and six candidates respectively, will take place in early December.

12. As previously indicated we have a core panel for all of the appointments, supplemented with senior staff from across the University and a Focus Group process which again draws on key senior staff. N.B. Any member of staff who applied for any of the posts has been discounted from membership of the appointment panel and/or the Focus Groups.

13. The appointment panels for each post are as follows:

Core appointment panel members:

Professor Peter Mathieson (Convener), Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance and University Secretary Sarah Smith, Vice-Principal Students Professor Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal & Head of College Medicine & Veterinary Medicine Professor Moira Whyte, EUSA President Ellen MacRae, Senior Lay Member of Court Janet Legrand QC (Hon).

Additional panel members: *[Closed section]*

#### **Resource implications**

14. Nothing to note at this stage.

#### **Risk Management**

15. The actions noted above are designed to minimise risk to the University across all areas including by ensuring the highest quality leadership for the University that will enhance our ability to set and deliver on both our strategic direction, ongoing management responsibilities and policy areas. Professional support from a world



leading recruitment company, Perrett Laver will help to ensure the highest quality of candidate and a robust appointment process.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

16. In part as an adaptation of the pandemic, all long and shortlisting meetings are taking place virtually. It is considered preferable for external panel members to attend the interviews in person and sustainable travel methods will be used where possible to facilitate this. This will also be true for candidates invited to interview.

### **Equality & Diversity**

17. Equality and Diversity aspects have been a key part of the planning with external recruitment companies required to submit their approach as part of the tender process and assessment. This has been followed through with panel makeup and will be a factor in the salary recommendations to ensure a balanced approach.

### **Next steps/implications**

18. Recruitment will proceed as outlined above and Court will be kept informed. Remuneration Committee will be consulted fully with regard to approving salary recommendations.

### **Further information**

19. Author & Presenter

Professor Peter Mathieson  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor  
November 2021

### **Freedom of Information**

20. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

Exception Committee Report

**Committee Name**

1. Exception Committee

**Date of Meeting**

2. The Committee considered one item for approval by correspondence between 18-23 November 2021, set out below.

**Action Required**

3. To note the matter approved on behalf of Court by Exception Committee.

**Key points**

*Institute of Genetics & Cancer – Additional Project Funding Request*

4. The Committee approved additional funding to enable the award of the contract for construction services.

**Full minute**

5. N/A

**Further information**

6. Author

Lewis Allan  
Head of Court Services

Presenter

Janet Legrand  
Convener, Exception Committee

**Freedom of Information**

7. Open version.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Policy & Resources Committee Report**

**Committee Name**

1. Policy & Resources Committee

**Date of Meeting**

2. 8 November 2021 (by videoconference).

**Action Required**

3. To note the key points from the meeting.

**Key points**

*Matter Arising*

4. It was noted an additional funding request to allow the appointment of a main contractor for the expansion of the Institute of Genetics & Cancer facility will be submitted to Exception Committee shortly (reported in Paper D1).

*Director of Finance's Report*

5. The Director of Finance's Report was reviewed, including the draft Annual Report & Accounts 2020-21 and the latest five-year financial scenario modelling.

*Outcome Agreement*

7. A draft Outcome Agreement 2021-22 and Self-Evaluation Report for 2020-21 were reviewed prior to submission to Court and then to the Scottish Funding Council. It was noted that the intention is to return to a medium term approach rather than the shorter in-year approach necessitated by the pandemic. The section relating to the student experience action plan was discussed and it was agreed that revisions will be made to further reference the student experience strategy currently under development. It was agreed that some additional comments of detail on other areas would be circulated to the authors following the meeting.

*People & Money System Update*

8. An update on the implementation of the People & Money System (the programme delivering the core IT system for HR, Finance, Payroll and Procurement) was reviewed. The revised approach approved at the most recent Court meeting is underway, with the Enactment Group established and meeting weekly.

*Queen's Medical Research Institute & Chancellor's Building Co-location and Bioresearch & Veterinary Services Estates Strategy*

9. An overview of the joint College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine and Bioresearch & Veterinary Services Estates Strategy for the relocation of the Centre for Discovery Brain Sciences at the Queen's Medical Research Institute and the linked Chancellor's Building located at the BioQuarter campus was considered. The external funding award was welcomed and the projects recommended to Court for overall funding approval.

*Other items*

10. The regular People report and reports from the Estates Committee and the Committee's People & Money Sub-Group were reviewed.

**Full minute**

11. N/A

**Further information**

12. Author

Lewis Allan  
Head of Court Services

Presenter

Janet Legrand  
Convener, Policy & Resources Committee

**Freedom of Information**

13. Open version.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

Nominations Committee Report

**Committee Name**

1. Nominations Committee

**Date of Meeting**

2. 8 November 2021 (by videoconference)

**Action Required**

3. To note the key points below.

**Key points**

*Court and Committee memberships*

4. The current membership of Court and its committees and a forward look at expected vacancies and succession planning was reviewed.

*Paragraphs 5-6: Closed section*

*Court Recruitment*

7. A process to recruit a new Co-opted member of Court to fill a current vacancy was considered.

*Paragraphs 8-11: Closed section*

**Equality & Diversity**

12. Issues related to equality and diversity were considered within each paper, including reviewing anonymised data on the protected characteristics of the current Court membership as a whole to inform the recruitment of new members.

**Further information**

13. Author

Lewis Allan

Head of Court Services

Presenter

Janet Legrand

Convener, Nominations Committee

**Freedom of Information**

14. Open version.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Audit & Risk Committee Report**

**Committee Name**

1. Audit & Risk Committee.

**Date of Meeting**

2. 18 November 2021 (by videoconference)

**Action Required**

3. Court is invited to note the key points from the meeting and to approve the Modern Slavery Statement (Appendix 1).

**Key points**

*Paragraphs 4-13: Closed section*

*Modern Slavery Statement*

14. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires the University publish an annual statement detailing what steps they have taken to mitigate the risk of modern slavery in their own operations and in their supply chains. The Committee considered the Draft Statement for 2020/2021, attached as Appendix 1, and recommended it to Court for approval.

*Paragraphs 15-17: Closed section*

**Equality & Diversity**

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

**Further information**

19. Author  
Kirstie Graham  
Deputy Head of Court Services  
November 2021

Presenter  
David Law  
Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee

**Freedom of Information**

20. Closed paper.

## **[DRAFT] MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT**

For the period 1st August 2020 to 31st July 2021.

The finalised version of the statement is published here:

[https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/modern\\_slavery\\_statement\\_2020-21\\_hq.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/modern_slavery_statement_2020-21_hq.pdf)



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Remuneration Committee Annual Report**

**Description of paper**

1. This is the annual report from Remuneration Committee to Court. In order to align with the University's financial year Court agreed that it be submitted to the November Court meeting and reflect the previous academic year.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. Court is invited to note the contents of the report.

**Background and context**

3. This is the thirteenth annual report from Remuneration Committee to Court. It covers an extended period from 1 January 2020 to 31 July 2021 to cover Remuneration Committee activity since the last report, which was submitted to Court in February 2020.

4. The Remuneration Committee<sup>1</sup> is responsible for the annual review and approval of revisions to the remuneration of the University's senior management, including the Principal, their direct reports and other senior staff. Approved increases are effective from 1 January.

5. In December 2018, Court approved revisions to the Remuneration Committee's Framework for Decision Making<sup>2</sup> to ensure compliance with the revised Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2017 edition), namely that, 'prior to decision-making on the remuneration package of the Principal and the senior team, all Court members will be consulted on the overall proposed approach, with the key principles underpinning the proposal explained'.

6. The key principles underpinning the Remuneration Committee Framework for Decision Making are to:

- ensure a transparent process
- ensure that the process reflects robust equality practice
- ensure that the process takes account of the quality and standing of the University of Edinburgh and to acknowledge that this quality and standing sets normal expectations of sustained high impact contribution from its senior staff
- describe and review the kinds of indicators that are used to identify sustained excellence beyond this expected level, and
- make use of appropriate comparative information on employee remuneration from established independent sources.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/pay-reward/remuneration-committee>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20181203-remuneration\\_committee\\_framework.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20181203-remuneration_committee_framework.pdf)



7. The Remuneration Committee meets at least three times per year. In the time period of this report, the committee met on 27 January, 26 May and 23 September 2020 and on 26 January, 8 March, and 25 May 2021. Decisions relating to individual staff remuneration, for example appointment salaries, may be dealt with by electronic correspondence. These decisions are formally recorded at the next committee meeting.

8. Membership of the Remuneration Committee over the time of this report:

- Susan Rice (Convener) (January and May 2020 meetings)
- Caroline Gardner (Convener) (from September 2020 meeting)
- Anne Richards (Vice-Convener of Court) (January and May 2020 meetings)
- Janet Legrand (Senior Lay Member) (from September 2020 meeting)
- Doreen Davidson (General Council Assessor)
- Alan Johnston (Co-opted Member)
- Andrew Wilson (EUSA President) (January and May 2020 meeting)
- Ellen MacRae (EUSA President) (from September 2020 meeting)
- Sandy Tudhope (Senatus Assessor) (January 2020 meeting and May 2020)
- Claire Phillips (Senatus Assessor) (from September 2020 meeting)

In attendance:

- Peter Mathieson, The Principal and Vice-Chancellor<sup>3</sup>
- Sarah Smith, Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance and University Secretary<sup>4</sup>
- James Saville, Director of Human Resources
- Linda Criggie, Deputy Director of HR (Employee Relations, Employment Policy, Equality & Diversity and Reward)
- Sheila Jardine, Senior HR Partner – Reward (from May 2020)
- Clare Struthers, Executive Officer to the Director of Human Resources

*Paragraphs 9-34: Closed section*

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

35. This paper does not contribute directly to the Strategy 2030 outcomes or SDG goals. However, remuneration decisions for the senior team partially reflect performance against key strategic priorities based on strategy 2030.

### **Equality & Diversity**

36. Salary recommendations and decisions reflect the principles that underpin the Remuneration Committee's decision making, specifically to ensure the process for reviewing the reward of senior staff reflects robust equality practice and that the reward of senior staff is fair, equitable and responsive in a highly competitive environment.

### **Next steps/implications**

37. Annual reports summarising the activity of the Committee will continue to be presented to Court in November each year.

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<sup>3</sup> The Principal's remuneration is considered at separate sessions of the Remuneration Committee, which the Principal does not attend.

<sup>4</sup> Withdraws when own remuneration under consideration.

**Consultation**

38. This paper has been written on behalf of the Convener of Remuneration Committee, Hugh Mitchell, who has agreed its content.

**Further information**

39. Author

James Saville

Director of Human Resources

Presenter

Hugh Mitchell

Convener, Remuneration Committee

**Freedom of information**

40. Closed paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Senior Leadership Team Remuneration Review 2022: Proposed Approach**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper outlines the Remuneration Committee's recommendations for the 2021 review of the Remuneration of the university's Senior Management Team, including the Principal.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. Court is asked to endorse the approach to the review of senior management remuneration and the Principal's salary, which will be presented for approval by the Remuneration Committee in January 2022.

**Background and context**

*Senior Management Team Remuneration – Annual Review, effective 1 January 2022*

3. The Remuneration Committee is responsible for the annual review and approval of revisions to the remuneration of the University's senior management, including the Principal, their direct reports and other senior staff. Approved increases are effective from 1 January.

4. In December 2018, Court approved revisions to the Committee's [Framework for Decision Making](#) to ensure compliance with the revised Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2017 edition), namely that 'prior to decision-making on the remuneration package of the Principal and the senior team, all Court members will be consulted on the overall proposed approach, with the key principles underpinning the proposal explained'.

*Paragraphs 5-12: Closed section*

**Equality & Diversity**

13. The recommendations reflect the principles that underpin the Remuneration Committee's decision making; specifically to ensure the process for reviewing the reward of senior staff reflects robust equality practice and that the reward of senior staff is fair, equitable and responsive in a highly competitive environment.

*Paragraph 14: Closed section*

**Consultation**

15. The proposed approach to the review of senior staff remuneration has been endorsed by the Remuneration Committee

**Further information**

16. Author

James Saville

Director of Human Resources

Presenter

Hugh Mitchell

Convener, Remuneration Committee

## **Freedom of Information**

17. Closed paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Knowledge Strategy Committee Report**

**Committee Name**

1. Knowledge Strategy Committee

**Date of Meeting**

2. 11 October 2021 (by videoconference).

**Action Required**

3. To note the key points from the meeting.

**Key points**

*Chief Information Officer Update, including People & Money Update*

4. Key activities and updates since the last meeting were reported.

5. The People & Money update was discussed, noting that the system will have a wide impact on different aspects of the University and ensuring appropriate accountability to different stakeholders outside of the Enactment Group. It was noted that the Enactment Group reports to the University Executive, which has University-wide membership and responsibilities and that any professional services role changes linked to the new system will involve consultation with the Joint Union Liaison Committee, following usual practice. The Committee's desire to ensure that consultation takes place for any wider People & Money-related changes was noted.

*Digital Strategy*

6. An update on the work to develop a Digital Strategy was reviewed. A first full draft is expected by the end of October and this will be subject to consultation before submission to Knowledge Strategy Committee and other committees. As part of the Digital Strategy, a Digital Estate workstream is underway and is developing outline business cases for eight digital estate projects.

*Digital Estate Business Cases*

7. Two of the eight outline business cases developed as part of the Digital Estate workstream of the Digital Strategy were considered: Timetabling; and, Managing User Access to Systems and Data, with the remaining cases under development.

*IT Committee Terms of Reference*

8. The Committee approved:

- A minor change to the terms of reference for IT Committee; and,
- The appointment of Michael Rovatsos, Professor of Artificial Intelligence, as Convener of IT Committee for a four year term from November 2021 to October 2025 inclusive.

9. A further minor revision was suggested to the IT Committee Terms of Reference. This will be included within a wider set of proposed revisions to be submitted to a subsequent meeting.

*IT and Library Spends in Excess of £500k*

10. One planned expenditure within the Committee's delegated authority approval level of £500k to £2m was reviewed and approved.

*Research Publications and Copyright Policy (2021)*

12. An updated Research Publications and Copyright Policy to ensure that grant holders comply with new open access requirements for a number of major research funders and to allow authors to reuse their own content in teaching and future scholarship was reviewed.

*Information Security Update*

13. The regular Information Security update was reviewed.

*Other items*

14. Proposed Digital Research Services investments for 2021/22 were approved as set out in the paper. The following papers were noted: a revised Open Educational Resources Policy; an update on student study space provision on campus for the new academic year; an update on the development and implementation of the Core Systems Strategies; a progress report on the deployment of the new University data network; a progress report on the replacement of the University's Enterprise Infrastructure; an update on the ten-year forecast for the Information Services Group capital plan; and, regular reports from the IT Committee and Digital Research Services Steering Group.

**Full minute**

15. All papers considered at the meeting and the draft Minute can be accessed by Court members.

**Further information**

16. <u>Author</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
Lewis Allan	Colm Harmon
Head of Court Services	Interim Convener, Knowledge Strategy Committee

**Freedom of Information**

17. Open version.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

Senatus Academicus Report

**Committee Name**

1. Senatus Academicus ('Senate').

**Dates of Meetings**

2. Meeting of e-Senate by correspondence from 21-29 September; Meeting of Senate by videoconference on 20 October 2021; Meeting of Senate conducted by videoconference on 12 November 2021.

**Action Required**

3. To note the key points from the Senate meetings.

**Key points**

*e-Senate meeting, 21-29 September*

*Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2019/20*

4. e-Senate formally noted the report. Comments were received and were included in a paper to the October Court meeting.

*Membership of the Knowledge Strategy Committee*

5. Approval of the Senate membership of the Knowledge Strategy Committee was deferred to a full meeting of Senate on 12 November 2021.

*Senate meeting – 20 October*

*Senate Presentation and Discussion: Freedom of Expression*

*Introduction and overview of the University of Edinburgh statement – the Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance and University Secretary, Sarah Smith*

6. Key points:

- Freedom of expression is under debate in society at large, as well as in universities.
- The University has thought deeply about this issue, and a Statement on Freedom of Expression was published last year, which reasserted that freedom of expression is fundamental to the University's purposes.

*Freedom of expression, academic freedom and other statutory obligations – What does the law say? – Deputy Secretary, Governance and Legal, Leigh Chalmers*

7. Key points:

- An overview on the relevant law on freedom of expression.
- Freedom of expression is a universal but qualified right, and a number of legal factors apply to the exercise of the right to freedom of expression.
- Academic freedom and freedom of expression are related but distinct concepts. Academic freedom is defined in the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended). Academic freedom is freedom within the law. The precise definition is subject to debate.

- The purpose of universities to openly debate challenging ideas means that universities can set only limited restrictions on freedom of expression.
- Competing rights and complementary rights (such as the right to protest) may arise and can be challenging.
- Internal policies such as the Dignity and Respect Policy, Code of Student Conduct and HR disciplinary policies are also relevant.

*Speakers and events – how does the UoE manage higher risk events? – Deputy Secretary, Student Experience, Gavin Douglas*

8. Key points:

- The University has a Policy on Speakers and Events. This includes events held under the auspices of the University, including student events, but not the University's normal academic or administrative business, for example a research seminar organised by a subject area.
- The Policy includes an assessment process using established criteria aligned to previous Universities UK guidance.
- There is a strong presumption in favour of allowing events / speakers, with conditions if required to mitigate risks.
- To date, no events have been refused under the Policy.

*Freedom of Expression and Dignity and Respect – University Lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley*

9. Key points:

- Freedom of expression is not an unfettered freedom, and there needs to be consideration of our responsibilities to each other, to our institution and to society, prompting reflection not just on what we say, but when and how we say it.
- The University Dignity and Respect Policy aims to promote a positive culture, and a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The policy asks us as a University to foster a positive culture for working and studying, which permits freedom of thought and expression, within a framework of mutual respect.
- Issues that arise cannot be settled only through policies, but must be attended to through scholarship and practices, including reflection, dialogue and support. This requires a recognition of inequality and processes of exclusion, taking relative power and context seriously, to find a way to use freedom of expression as an enabler, not an inhibitor, of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Our whole community needs to engage to promote inclusive, yet challenging, dialogue.

*Freedom of Expression: the student view – Senate heard a recorded presentation from Ellen MacRae, the Edinburgh University Students' Association President.*

10. Key points:

- Edinburgh is a global university with a vast diversity of thought and personal experience relating to freedom of expression.
- Students and Student Associations are often a focal point when media and government are talking about freedom of expression. EUSA has never cancelled an event due to a no-platforming policy: there is no such policy. There is a safe space policy, which is simply a code of conduct.



- Three main aspects were explored in this talk: the inclusion of marginalised voices; the recognition of the boundary between explorative discussion and factual analysis; the responsibility of power-holders in this debate.
- Universities are the best place for students to engage in discussion and debate, but we only have truly achieved this when everyone feels comfortable to participate and express their own views, and reflect on their own experiences. Students are at university to learn, and academics hold a lot of power in their platform as teachers.

*Freedom of Expression and academic freedom – Professor Richard Andrews, Head of Moray House School of Education and Sport*

11. Key points:

- In consideration of freedom of expression, it is worth discussing the related concept of academic freedom.
- The presentation attempts to define academic freedom, and notes that freedom comes with responsibility.
- Toulmin's *The Use of Argument* used to diagram the process of making claims, providing evidence, and challenging claims.
- Argumentation is a key element of academic freedom, and argumentative rationality may be subject, in contemporary society, to challenges from narratives that are promoted without reference to argument or evidence.

12. *Presentations were followed by a Q&A session and the following points were made:*

- Digital events held under the auspices of the University are also subject to the Policy on Speakers and Events.
- The decision to publish a Statement on Freedom of Expression was an important assertion of the University's values, but it could not be expected that such a statement, though necessary, would be sufficient to address these issues. The University will always need to ensure that it works within the law while also seeking to support colleagues and students. The University is often very constrained in what it can say publicly about individual cases due to duties of confidentiality.
- A suggestion was made that a procedure is required to enable challenges to freedom of expression to be resolved when they do occur. If an event is delayed temporarily to allow issues to be explored, there does not seem to be a process for ensuring that this discussion comes to a conclusion and decision.
- How does the University prevent only one side of an argument being platformed, and avoid the risk of a chilling effect that could lead to self-censorship or marginalisation of some views and people. Could academic freedom champions help to address issues as they arise?
- How do we build student and staff capacity for tolerating difficult discussions and good faith rebuttals and rational discussion of emotional issues: is this a curriculum challenge?
- How do we move to the next phase of the discussion on academic freedom and freedom of expression? Will this process listen to the voices of those who have had their academic freedom curtailed? Should this presentation be the start of a series of conversations, moving on to questions of practical action?

- An unreasonable burden may be placed on marginalised groups to contest ideas. Some argue that the position that it can be ‘interesting’ to debate some controversial topics is itself a position of privilege. Should the debate move from what academics may be *permitted* to do, to consideration of what academics *should* do with their academic freedom, in terms of their responsibilities to marginalised and under-represented groups?
- In the context of institutional partnerships with possible implications for academic freedom, the University has risk assessment and due diligence processes in place, and such issues are taken into consideration in the process of contracting with partner institutions.
- In relation to equipping students with abilities to contest dominant narratives and to counter narratives with argument and evidence, and the tools of academic debate, it was noted that this kind of skills development is key to the thinking involved in the Curriculum Transformation project.
- Are there plans to publicise the Statement on Freedom of Expression more widely to students, and to introduce this topic into the curriculum more broadly?
- The University has adopted the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. The University was approached by the University Jewish Students Society, and the University did not have an existing definition of anti-Semitism. It is understood that the definition may be considered by some as controversial, but in practice to date there is no evidence of academic freedom or events being curtailed by the adoption of this definition.
- A question was raised on whether the University is for ‘truth seekers’ or ‘social justice seekers’. Other attendees suggested that such a binary opposition was unhelpful.
- While this has been a valuable opportunity to share ideas and hear questions and insights, some people may not feel comfortable joining the conversation, and it will be important in the process of developing approaches to the issue of freedom of expression that opportunities are created that are accessible to all members of the University community.

13. It was noted that following the discussions at both Senate and earlier at Court, a paper and proposals would be taken to the University Executive for further discussion.

#### Senate Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021

##### *Report from E-Senate*

14. Senate decided that the E-Senate report should not be approved pending the opportunity to discuss other items on the agenda, specifically the remit and membership of Senate Standing Committees and the E-Senate process. The E-Senate report was held over until the meeting on 12 November 2021.

##### *Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) Action Plan*

15. Tina Harrison presented the paper and explained that two areas of priority were highlighted as a result of the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review. These were Assessment and Feedback and Student Support. It was highlighted that significant changes had to be implemented ahead of the next review in 5 years’ time. It was highlighted that the initial stage of the process would be to consult with all Schools in relation to both areas to see what would be possible.

16. There was some discussion around the growth in student numbers and the impact that this has had on resources. It was noted that this would be considered as part of the consultation process. There was further discussion around improvements required in relation to Assessment and Feedback and these were noted by Tina Harrison and Colm Harmon and would be taken into consideration as part of the planning process.

17. Senate voted to approve the paper.

18. The agenda was not completed at this meeting, and therefore a Special Meeting was convened on 12 November to complete the business not closed at the meeting on 20 October.

#### Senate meeting – 12 November 2021

##### *Report from E-Senate*

19. Senate approved the E-Senate minutes, with an amendment that E-Senate approval of item 7, Membership of the Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC), had been rescinded. The decision on KSC membership is reported at para. 30 below.

##### *Senate Standing Committees: Discussion*

20. The Convener noted that the paper recommended that no substantial changes be made to the Senate Standing Committee remits at this time, and that Conveners are encouraged to continue to improve the effectiveness of the committees. An externally-facilitated review of Senate is scheduled to take place in 2023/24.

21. In discussion of the paper, the following points were made:

- A proposal was made that there needs to be work on how to effectively review the function and organisation of the Standing Committees, and that work on this now could usefully feed into the upcoming externally-facilitated review. Senate is a very large body, so thought is required on how it can effectively contribute to such a discussion. Senate includes individuals with expert knowledge on governance issues, and this expert knowledge should be put to good use. Could a task group be created, including Senate members, to develop an informed view on the challenges of and solutions to Senate governance, informed by the views of Senate members and the Executive?
- Should some smaller-scale change be put into effect in the short term, to address the risk that change is continually delayed? Some Senate members have expressed concerns for some time about lack of dialogue between the Standing Committees and Senate, and lack of representation of 'at large' Senate members on Standing Committees. Could one 'at large' Senate member be added to each Standing Committee, to act as a member of the committee and to report back to Senate on the work of the committee?
- Senate is given opportunities to comment on proposals and projects via Standing Committee reports and as part of the Senate presentation and discussion sessions, but it is not clear where these comments go or what impact they have: the discussion of the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Action Plan at the 20 October 2021 meeting was noted as an example: Senate provided detailed comments. Will there be information on how these have been implemented or otherwise?

- An issue is that Senate should not be seen as ‘rubber stamping’ proposals that arise elsewhere, and it is not clear where proposals for new University initiatives and policies come from. These initiatives may lose legitimacy unless they are seen to have been considered under the academic governance structure.
- The previous review of Senate Standing Committees was focused on matching individual relevant expertise to the committee remits, which has resulted in the Standing Committee membership being largely ex-officio, and members of Senate who are members of Standing Committees are often ex-officio members of Senate. Has this focus on expertise been to the detriment of the academic governance role of Senate? Senate is composed of set proportions of elected academic staff, elected professorial staff, ex-officio roles, and student members. This composition is set out in the relevant legislation. To ensure academic governance, should Senate Standing Committees have the same compositional structure?

22. The points below were raised in response:

- It could be useful to create a group to reflect on the current structure and provide advice on continuously improving effectiveness, and this could also feed into the upcoming externally-facilitated review.
- Before any short-term change is made, it is important to understand what the specific issues are, and to ensure that any changes made will resolve these issues. This includes allowing time to identify and consider risks and benefits, and any Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues.
- Is one short-term answer to look at how to strengthen communication between Senate and the Standing Committees?
- The Senate Standing Committees are part of the academic governance structure, because they act under delegated authority from Senate. The committees include members of Senate, key professional services colleagues, and representatives from related College committees.

23. The paper recommended that Senate Standing Committee Conveners are encouraged to continue to improve the effectiveness of the committees. In this meeting, the Conveners committed to work to improve communications between Senate and their committees, and committed to putting together a group, including members of Senate, to review what future improvements to the structure / function of Senate Standing Committees may be required. Professor Colm Harmon (Convener of the Senate Education Committee) stated that he and the other Conveners will consult, including with Senate members, on how best to proceed and the Standing Committee Conveners will bring a paper forward to Senate at a future date. Senate voted to support the recommendations in the paper.

### *E-Senate Process*

24. The paper and a response were briefly presented. It was noted that the key issues were

- a) whether treating a nil response from members as approval of an item is an appropriate standard for approval of business by e-Senate
- b) whether e-Senate should take decisions on contentious business.

25. The paper proposed that in future the only business to be approved by e-Senate should be the appointment of Emeritus Professors. This would represent a significant change to current e-Senate business. An alternative proposal in response had also been tabled by a Senate member that would mean e-Senate could not approve any business. It was noted that if Senate were to conclude that *no* business can be approved via E-Senate, the main impact will be on the timely approval of nominations for the award of Emeritus status.

26. Senate voted on whether to accept the recommendations in the original paper, including an amendment to extend e-Senate deadlines to two weeks instead of one. The recommendations, as amended, were supported.

27. Senate also voted on the response proposal, including the amendment to two weeks. The response proposal was also supported.

28. The Convener noted that Senate had now approved two contradictory proposals. This will be minuted and the next steps will be considered outside this meeting.

#### *Knowledge Strategy Committee Membership*

29. Senate members were invited to make comments on the nominations for a new Senate member of Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC) and the nomination of an interim Chair. Senate members considered the paper previously circulated to members via e-Senate. The points below were made:

- Objections to this paper do not reflect opinions on the individuals concerned, but are about the process for nominating new members to this committee.
- New Senate members of KSC are nominated by KSC. The Convener of KSC is nominated by the Court Nominations Committee, and approved by Court and Senate, because KSC is a joint Court and Senate committee. Therefore, it is not in Senate's gift to propose alternative individuals for nomination. If Senate does not approve these nominations, this will be reported to KSC and further nominations from KSC and Court will be presented to Senate at a future date.
- The arrangements for nomination of KSC members are set out in the KSC Terms of Reference.
- There are 5 Senate positions on KSC, and these are usually filled by the three Conveners of the main Senate Standing Committees, and two Assistant Principals with specific remits that overlap with the work of KSC. This is intended to ensure useful links with Senate Standing Committees.
- Some concerns were raised that all of the Senate members on KSC are ex-officio members of Senate, rather than elected members.

30. Senate voted to approve the nominations. 5 members asked for abstentions to be noted.

#### *Senate Effectiveness Review 2020/21*

31. Senate received the report and did not make any specific comments.

#### *Senate Elections 2021*

32. The proposed election dates were noted.

*Library Committee membership*

33. Senate approved the proposed Library Committee membership.

**Full Agenda and Papers**

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

**Equality & Diversity**

35. 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**

36. Author

Kathryn Nicol  
Academic Policy Officer  
Academic Services

Presenter

Peter Mathieson  
Principal & Vice-Chancellor

**Freedom of Information**

37. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Student Experience Update**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper updates Court on progress with student experience initiatives since the last update.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. Court is asked to comment on and note the update.

*Paragraphs 3-29: Closed section*

**Next steps/implications**

30. Work will continue on the above initiatives. There will be a further update on both short- and medium-term actions at February's Court meeting.

**Consultation**

31. N/A

**Further information**

32. Author  
Gavin Douglas  
Deputy Secretary, Student  
Experience

Presenter  
Professor Colm Harmon  
Vice Principal, Students

**Freedom of Information**

33. Closed paper



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Edinburgh University Students' Association President's Report**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper is to note developments at 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:

- i) '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**

*Impact report*

5. We are pleased to present, alongside this report, our Impact Report from April 2020 to September 2021 for Court Members to review (Appendix 2). Whilst this has been a challenging time, the Association has worked hard to deliver services, support, and experiences for our members, and to represent their concerns throughout this time.

*Sabbatical Officer updates*

*Ellen MacRae, President*

6. I have continued to work with other Russell Group student leaders on nation-wide issues including spiking by injection in nightclubs across the UK and the potential disruption of industrial action on students' teaching and learning experience. Unlike in previous years, we feel there has been little student awareness about potential University & College Union (UCU) industrial action. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, we anticipate that industrial action will be significantly disruptive to students and look to the University to minimise this disruption and duration of industrial action. It should not be a normal or regular part of a students' degree to experience strike action on their teaching and learning.

7. In October, I was very fortunate to take part in the Una Europa Student Congress in Madrid, along with five other Edinburgh students. It's aims were to strengthen student networks and highlight sustainability as a major topic for the future of higher



education. I feel this is a valuable partnership for Edinburgh to be a part of and I look forward to more opportunities for our students moving forwards.

8. I also got to share the student voice during a globally attended Edinburgh Futures Conversations event about the [Future of Economy](#). I'd previously been involved in the event for the Future for Health and selecting [ECA graduates](#) who submitted art to illustrate the [Future of Health manifesto](#) created by students!

9. At the start of November, the University marked the start of COP26 with the launch of the [Edinburgh Earth Initiative](#). I had previously been involved in the student and staff workshops in January and February this year and look forward to seeing continued student engagement with this initiative.

*Réka Siró, Vice President Activities and Services*

10. Since the last Court meeting, Réka has been focusing on identifying key wins for enhancing the student experience delivered by the Students' Association and working out how these key wins could be implemented as soon as possible. Some of these include: space provision for student groups; the reintroduction of the Participation Grant; and improving safety for students on a night out in EUSA venues as the most pressing issues. While much of this work is still ongoing, some quick wins have already been delivered in these areas, such as the installation of tamper-proof water dispensers in our night club venues and the reintroduction of student group bookings of spaces that were previously unavailable, such as the Venue in Potterrow.

11. Réka has also been engaging with other Sabbatical Officers from all over the UK and with representatives of the National Union of Students to better understand what EUSA is doing well, what they could do better and how the Students' Association could better engage with other unions. Collaboration, both in Scotland and the rest of the country, will help us better leverage the student voice in national governmental decision making. She has met with Sabbatical Officers from St Andrews, the other three Edinburgh universities, as well as from our peer universities in the Russell Group. They have exchanged ideas and expertise around delivering hospitality services during a global pandemic, creating a welcoming social space for students in a time of hybrid teaching, and ensuring that all students feel safe on a night out, both in student union venues and in the wider city. Réka has also met with Larissa Kennedy, the current NUS President, and Matt Crilly, the NUS Scotland President, to discuss issues such as the rising cost of living for students, the lack of adequate bursaries and loans for many students and the acute shortage of suitable accommodation for students both in Edinburgh, and across much of Scotland.

*Beth Simpson, Vice President Community*

12. A primary focus of Beth's since the last Court meeting has been the student housing crisis in the city. The Students' Association continues, even now, to hear worrying reports from students who are unable to find affordable accommodation in the city. As students compete to find suitable housing, they have been struggling with their academic and extra-curricular pursuits, and a lack of permanent address means that some students have been unable to secure employment. Beth and the other Sabbatical Officers have been consistently pursuing avenues to address this issue internally, within the University, and with local charities and organisations. We

anticipate that student housing issues will persist and worsen with the new influx of students in January. At the Students' Association we are troubled by how these ongoing issues will negatively affect the student experience, and hope this subject will be a priority for the University.

13. Beth was delighted to have joined the recruitment panel for the Director and Deputy Director roles for the new Edinburgh Earth Initiative. She enjoyed the launch of this alongside the Welcome Reception for COP26 and hopes that students will continue to be able to contribute to this exciting new initiative. Beth was also incredibly grateful to have been given one of the University's COP26 observer passes for the conference's first week in Glasgow, where she joined other staff and students in the Blue Zone. In particular, Beth found the youth activism on climate action particularly inspiring, and hopes to bring messages back to the student body through EUSA and University communications and events.

14. On the note of youth activism in climate action, Beth has been meeting with students from our sustainability-oriented societies to discuss the prospect of a physical space on campus for the Green Hub. This space would enable the strengthened operation of sustainability and social enterprise activity by students at the University. She hopes to deliver on the aspirations of this project to realise this.

*Tara Gold, Vice President Education*

15. Since Court's last meeting, much of Tara's time has been spent with newly elected Academic Representatives from across the University. The Students' Association had its Postgraduate Elections this October, which saw the election of separate Postgraduate Taught and Research School Reps for the first time. Along with chairing the first School Rep Forums of the year, she has also been delighted to chair both the College of Science & Engineering and the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences Student-Staff Liaison Committees, which provide a valuable forum for communication in Colleges.

16. Tara has also continued to sit on several Curriculum Transformation Programme Groups and Work-streams, and has agreed to co-chair the Student Engagement Group along with Cathy Bovill. She is particularly interested in the work of the Assessment and Feedback Group, and its potential to enact tangible changes to improve student experiences of assessment in line with ELIR (Enhancement-Led Institutional Review) recommendations. Some ongoing areas of concern surrounding current student experiences; particularly continued levels of online teaching, the impact of increased student numbers on student systems and staff capacity, and the current threat of Industrial Action, have continued to be raised to Tara by students and Student Representatives. She has met with a number of students about these concerns, has raised them with relevant members of University Executive and hopes to address some of them, such as concerns about further increases in student numbers, at committees such as the Student Recruitment & Fees Strategy Group.

17. As planning looks ahead to Semester 2, a key priority for Tara will be supporting the implementation of the 'Evolved Model of Student Support' ahead of the first wave of introduction in Schools in September '22. She is hopeful that, along with the upcoming updates to the Student Mental Health Strategy and the Accessible and

Inclusive Learning Policy, these pieces of work will substantially improve the navigability and accessibility of student support services.

*Aisha Janki Akinola, Vice President Welfare*

18. Aisha has been engaging with some of the ongoing campaigns and activism on campus. She attended the University's COP26 Welcome Reception and Earth Initiative launch event and the UK-Africa Partnership for Climate Action. Here she had high level discussions with key stakeholders within the UK and abroad and stressed the need to forge lasting partnerships on the education, skills and jobs required to realize the climate goals.

19. Another key focus of Aisha's is to ensure that mental health and wellbeing support is centered across the University. With the different strategic change projects ongoing, Aisha has continued to advocate for more preventative mental health support, culturally competent and sensitive support and diversity and inclusion at the Student Mental Health Strategy meetings and the Student Support and Personal Tutor project board. Aisha was delighted to represent the Student's Association at the Universities UK Mental Health in Higher Education conference as a delegate and chaired the event on "Leading a Mentally Healthy University" in conversation with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kent, Middlesex University and University of West of England where she stressed the need for senior leadership to champion and prioritize student support services.

20. In addition, Aisha has been working on reaffirming safety on campus and advocating for equality, diversity, and inclusion. She was part of the recruitment panel for a student trustee and an external trustee which was insightful and rewarding. Alongside the other Officers, she completed the Antisemitism Training organized by Union of Jewish Students as well as the Islamophobia Training organized by Federation of Student Islamic Societies, both of which has helped her gain more insights into the needs of faith-based students in universities. She also facilitated the third "Respect" discussions organized by the Rector, Debora Kayembe, around accountability of behavior and discourses on campus. The aim of the session is to promote a culture of tolerance, compassion and understanding. Lastly, the #nohatehere campaign is set to launch this semester with more focused and targeted events and activities in semester 2.

*Housing Crisis in Edinburgh*

21. For the Sabbatical Officers, the housing crisis within Edinburgh remains to be one of our biggest concerns. We're still aware of students who are having to stay with friends, Airbnb's or haven't been able to return to Edinburgh for the lack of unaffordable housing. With the second semester approaching, we worry that another influx of students will mean we have another wave of students who struggle to find accommodation. Increased communications to these students about finding accommodation and avoiding scams would be very welcome.

22. Appendix 1 shows accommodation-themed enquiry figures into our Advice Place over the month of September and October in 2018 – 2021. Over the month of October, unlike in previous years, "accommodation search" and "accommodation scam" enquiries are high. The prevalence of accommodation scams is deeply

concerning and their presence demonstrates the severity within the private housing market.

23. Unsuitable living conditions, whether they be physically unsuitable or a financial pressure, will continue to have a detrimental impact on the student experience, their mental health and wellbeing as well as their ability to get on with their studies.

### *Elections*

24. Our October 2021 Student Elections ran from September 6<sup>th</sup> to October 22<sup>nd</sup>. We elected the following 51 positions:

- Postgraduate Taught School Representatives in every School and Deanery
- Postgraduate Research School Representatives in every School and Deanery
- The University-wide Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Representatives
- Two Undergraduate School Representative positions which were unfilled in March 2021 or have become vacant over the Summer
- Our National Union of Students (NUS) UK and NUS Conference Delegate positions

25. These October elections have a focus on Postgraduate positions. Following a review last year, this year's elections saw the separation of the previous Postgraduate School Representative roles into two roles, one to represent Postgraduate Taught students and one to represent Postgraduate Research students; a move intended to strengthen Postgraduate engagement and representation.

26. At the end of the Voting Period, almost 2400 votes had been cast, representing a 35% increase from October 2020, and only five positions were left vacant, a significant achievement given the almost doubling of positions.

### *Covid-19 recovery and re-opening of services*

#### *First Semester overview*

27. We are pleased to have many of our spaces and facilities back up and running for our members, with some opening for the first time again at the start of Semester 1. Students are using our venues on a regular basis during the day as social and informal study space. We have over 2500 in-person society meetings, workshops, and events taking place this semester. This is less than usual due to the limitations on space use imposed by University ventilation issues, which is now leading to significant pushback from student societies and groups who feel we are unreasonably limiting their ability to engage with members. We are about to launch our student group bookings process for semester 2 which aims to deliver some increase although key performance spaces are still unlikely to be signed off for use.

28. October saw the introduction of the "Scottish Vaccine Passport" written into law as a prerequisite for entry into events including nightclubs. We relaunched our Big Cheese nightclub on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October to coincide with this having undertaken a considerable review of our risk assessments and protocols. Over the first 3 weeks we catered to a full capacity crowd, checking vaccination status on entry and providing guidance for those who were unable to do so during the initial soft

implementation stage. Monday 18<sup>th</sup> saw the new rules become legally enforceable and our Big Cheese on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> saw only 12 people (out of 1,000) refused entry due to failing the vaccine checks, an exceptional level of compliance from students it seems.

### *Looking ahead to the second semester*

29. We are now planning for key activities in early 2022 – including support for visiting students arriving in January, and our Give it A Go week at the start of semester 1 – this being a week to showcase student groups to provide a chance for new and returning student to engage. There will be over 100 events and activities, including an Activities Fair in Potterrow.

30. In addition, we have begun planning for our main elections in March which will provide students with the opportunity to stand for a wide variety of positions, including the five sabbatical officer roles, and will be our first real opportunity to experiment with a possible return to wider on-campus and in person elections promotion.

31. From an organisational perspective we continue to welcome more of our staff to in person working on campus in order to help staff feel connected with each other and our members. All teams have some on-site working, our frontline operational staff have all been back regularly for some time, and teams like the Advice Place, Student Opportunities, Representation and Democracy all have a combination of online and on-site working to be available to the students we work with.

32. We continue to review Scottish Government announcements and guidance to shape our approach to Semester 2, particularly recognising the likely increase in Covid cases in the winter months, and the early ‘mood-music’ from Scottish Government regarding possibly additional restrictions. We will also be reviewing agreed hybrid working arrangements and experiences early in the new year to help build a more strategic approach to flexible working going forward.

### *Financial update*

33. Whilst we are currently performing better than expected, the Association is still expecting to make a significant deficit by the end of our financial year on 31 March. An April to March financial year brings with it a first half of the year with significant Covid restrictions.

## Summary to end of Period 6 (30 September)

£ 000's	YTD			Current Month		
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance
Commercial net income	(331)	(626)	296	(24)	(86)	61
Block Grant	1,522	1,522	0	254	254	-
<b>Total net income</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>61</b>
Membership Engagement & People Development	(478)	(621)	142	(85)	(111)	27
Corporate Services	(572)	(613)	41	(92)	(101)	9
Marketing & Communications	(144)	(173)	29	(26)	(43)	16
Central Overheads	(139)	(111)	(29)	(41)	(30)	(11)
<b>Total non-commercial expenditure</b>	<b>(1,334)</b>	<b>(1,517)</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>(244)</b>	<b>(285)</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Surplus / (deficit)</b>	<b>(143)</b>	<b>(622)</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>(15)</b>	<b>(117)</b>	<b>102</b>

Numbers shown in red & brackets denote a net expense or an adverse variance

Central overheads includes income from CJRS government scheme

34. Footfall on campus, as expected, is still much lower than 'normal' due, primarily we'd assume, to the reduced number of in-person lectures. Covid restrictions and mitigations are also continuing to limit footfall and activity in some of our spaces. The poor ventilation in key spaces in Teviot, Pleasance, Bedlam Theatre and the Wee Red Bar and resultant restriction of use for student activity, and/or for income generation, remains a concern.

35. Some of the financial 'improvement' is unintended, in fact unsustainable, as a result of staff turnover and challenges in filling vacancies – the hospitality sector is particularly challenging in this respect. Other support vacancies are also challenging to fill in a timely way.

36. Following cost savings and due to pressures on capacity we have undertaken an internal exercise to review planned activity for the remainder of this academic year and re-focus resources, accepting some reductions of service as a result. As an example we have paused our annual Mental Health and Wellbeing Week, our Advice Service is currently having to prioritise urgent and serious casework, and has had to deprioritise more routine requests for advice. We have also paused our Participation Grant scheme partly as a result of time-limited University funding coming to an end and this was not a cost we could simply absorb, and partly due to staff resource pressures on managing the scheme and developing proposals for its continuance.

37. Services that we 'hibernated' as a result of last year's University planning round constraints are under review; this includes various services at the King's Buildings campus (Advice, Sport, Common Room and some catering) and the Wee Red Bar, the latter closed regardless currently due to poor ventilation issues.

### *Planning for 22-23*

38. Our annual planning process is underway, with all teams considering objectives using a balanced scorecard approach, and developing budgets accordingly. This will help to shape our own planning round submission to the University. Clearly even

now there is uncertainty in the future impact of Covid and the planning and financial environment, particularly inflation, remain challenging.

**Resource implications**

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

**Risk Management**

40. Financial risks are highlighted in the report.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

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

**Equality & Diversity**

42. 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**

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

**Consultation**

44. Consultation on this paper was not required.

**Further information**

45. Author & Presenter  
Ellen MacRae, President 21-22

**Freedom of Information**

46. Open paper.

## Appendix 1

1<sup>st</sup> September – 30<sup>th</sup> September data

Topics Name	Number of advice interactions recorded on this topic by year			
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Admin fees	0	1	0	0
Deposits	19	11	5	10
<b>Lease Check</b>	18	16	13	<b>25</b>
<b>Accommodation search</b>	281	320	28	<b>324</b>
<b>Uni Accommodation</b>	112	118	61	<b>151</b>
Tenancy	59	66	70	59
Rent guarantors	2	26	8	7
Council tax	38	47	19	25
Accommodation scam	5	13	14	10
Problems with flatmates	9	5	1	3
<b>Accommodation Total</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>614</b>

The comparison of enquiries in August about searching for accommodation shows that this year is similar in numbers of enquiries about looking for accommodation to September in 2019 and higher than in 2018 and much higher than 2020. In 2020, lots of students were studying remotely so this is why that number is much reduced.

The nature of these enquiries this year has been different. In previous years there have been plenty of students asking about how and where to look and for advice about getting good deals as well as some about not finding anywhere suitable or that will accept pets or that are within budget. This year most have been to say they can't find anywhere and have been making many applications. There have also been many enquiries from returning students including final year students which we wouldn't normally see as in previous years they would mostly have their accommodation sorted before September.

The number of enquiries about university accommodation is also higher this year compared to the 3 previous years, this is because so many students are having to consider University accommodation as an option who wouldn't have usually contacted us about that.



1<sup>st</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> October data

Topics Name	Number of advice interactions recorded on this topic by year			
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Admin fees	0	2	0	0
Deposits	3	23	5	10
Lease Check	9	9	6	7
<b>Accommodation search</b>	35	30	11	<b>82</b>
Uni Accommodation	61	81	59	59
Tenancy	73	94	57	48
Rent guarantors	4	13	7	5
Council tax	43	36	13	16
<b>Accommodation scam</b>	0	0	0	<b>23</b>
Problems with flatmates	16	15	6	0
<b>Accommodation Total</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>250</b>

These numbers for October show that we are seeing elevated levels of students still talking to us about accommodation search in October in a pattern that we haven't seen in the previous 3 years.

In the previous 3 years we also hadn't recorded any accommodation scams in October whereas this year we have recorded 10 in the first 2 weeks of the month. This reflects the numbers of students still looking and the demand on the market, we always see more scams when demand is high.

# \*IMPACT report\*

APR

SEP



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Edinburgh  
University  
Students'  
Association



PRESIDENT'S

Welcome



This report conveys **our value and impact over a period of 18 months**. Despite the challenges we have faced in this time-frame, as an organisation, as a community and as individuals, we have achieved a great deal for and with our members.

**We exist to enhance student life at Edinburgh** and to deliver outstanding support and services to our membership; enabling a vibrant and well-rounded time at university. This ambition has fueled the hard work undertaken by our Trustees, Staff and student volunteers to try to conquer the challenges of the pandemic, and to recover from its blows as an organisation.

We are **extremely proud of the significant successes in engagement with students** we have achieved over the last 18 months. From Awards and Elections nominations and voter numbers, to our Welcome Week 2021 community building events attendance figures, we have reached, and appealed to, our membership. We continue to deliver projects which lift up and celebrate the student community and generating new connections within it.

As we tentatively enter a period of recovery, we will maintain our **flexible and responsive approach to providing key services and support**. We have learned a great deal during the pandemic and intend to play these lessons forward to aid the delivery of our Strategic Plan 2019-25.

*Ellen*

**Ellen MacRae**

Students' Association President 2020/21 and 2021/22

# Achievements

## ADVICE & SUPPORT

As part of our business continuity planning we had in place a call forwarding system which we were able to activate last March. We were able to offer immediate synchronous telephone support and have **maintained, throughout the pandemic, a suite of online, phone and email advice for students and video appointments.** Student feedback on this service has been extremely positive.

In the lead up to the 2021/22 academic year, we transitioned back to also offering in-person appointments, whilst maintaining our video, email and telephone services.

In the last 18 months, our advisors had **over 17,000 interactions with students**, many of these involved complex casework.

During the last 18 months we have loaned **almost £19,500 in Emergency Loans**, helping to ensure students can meet their essential living costs.

## OVER 17,000 ADVICE INTERACTIONS



# REPRESENTATION

**60,000 INDIVIDUAL  
VOTES CAST IN OUR  
STUDENT ELECTIONS**



In October 2020, we successfully delivered a **fully online Postgraduate Election**, with a **36% increase in total votes** from 2019, and all Postgraduate School Representative positions filled.

Our March 2021 Student Elections saw us open over **50 student representative positions** including full-time Sabbatical Officers, Liberation Officers, and School, Section and Activities Representatives, to **almost 200 candidates**. Almost **60,000 individual votes** were cast.

**17 motions were raised by students at their six Student Council meetings** in 2020-21. Meetings were moved online and attendance continues to increase.

Supporting all our Student Representatives to fulfil their roles as best they can in representing their constituents, in a variety of ways, at this challenging time has been a key focus for us. We have a Teams forum for our **c.1,300 Programme Reps, with 92% being active participants**. 900 attended one of our regular live Teams events in the 2020/21 academic year. Our monthly online School Rep forums provide a good route for student feedback via our 43 School Representatives.

We delivered **key awareness-raising and wellbeing campaigns** online including Black History Month, Disability History Month, International Women's Day and our Mental Health & Wellbeing Week (which featured 37 events and a range of asynchronous activities for students and staff to engage with in their own time). In 2021-22, we're delivering hybrid versions of these campaigns, featuring valuable in-person activity including film screenings, vigils and exhibitions.

# Community building

## STUDENT GROUPS

We currently have **317 registered student Societies, run by 2,376 office bearers**. We supported these groups through the pandemic and into their current recovery phase. The majority of societies ran some form of online events in the 2020-21 academic year, we promoted over 200, and have now transitioned back to in-person events, or a mix of in-person and online events. Although space in our estate is limited (due to ventilation and capacity) we have supported as many student groups as we can with space on campus for their activity,

In September 2020 we delivered a **large-scale Societies Fair online** via a new platform . **1,500 students attended and made a total of nearly 8,000 Society stall visits**. This was repeated in January 2021 for the 'refreshers fair'. We carried the use of the online fairs platform through to our Welcome Week 2021, running it alongside our in-person fairs.



## 2,376 STUDENT LEADERS RUNNING SOCIETIES

During one of the Covid-19 lockdowns, we ran our **Give It A Go initiative online** in January 2021 - Students were able to sign up to try something new and make new friends at a series of online events hosted by our Societies and us. There were **70 societies' events**, with a further 50 groups hosting at our virtual activities fair.

We continued to manage the student **Participation Grant**; processing over **240 applications and issuing over £33,700** in 2020-21. These small grants were critical to ensure access to extracurricular activity for students who may otherwise miss out on student life experiences. Unfortunately this scheme is a victim of funding cuts going forward, both the core funding (from the University) and the management of the scheme (from the Association). It's hoped we can re-introduce it in the future.

# 4,000 STUDENTS ATTENDED PEER LEARNING & SUPPORT SESSIONS

We have 57 **Peer Learning and Support Groups**, running almost **600 events** over two Semesters. Our team have been supporting the **580 leaders** of these groups to enable positive peer-peer academic and pastoral experiences for almost **4,000 attendees**. A leader in this field, our peer support scheme was very much commended in the Enhancement-led Institutional review (ELIR).

Between the 2020 and 2021 intakes, **425 student leaders met 3,690 new international students** through our Global Buddies peer support initiative for welcoming new international students. This was a mix of in person (when restrictions allowed for students who were in Edinburgh) and online interactions.

In 2020/21 **over 2,700 students received HEAR recognition** for their voluntary roles undertaken via the Students' Association, and **490 students achieved the Edinburgh Award**.

## WELCOME WEEK 2021

In September 2021, we partnered with the University, the Sports Union and Sport & Exercise to deliver large-scale, in-person activity on the central campus to help new students find their people, and join and build vibrant communities. It has long been our ambition to deliver this scene-setting activity on campus, and conversely Covid-19 removed some of the barriers to enabling this work that we've encountered in the past.

Across our **Bristo Square Gem and Wellbeing Hub**, we hosted **over 50 events and welcomed almost 21,000 attendees**. These included attendees to fairs which showcased sports, society and other student groups.

In our hybrid Welcome Week programme overall, we had **600 events, including student-led activity**. Events were over-subscribed and we received feedback from non-1st year Undergraduates that they 'wished we'd done the Bristo Square Gem for them'.

Of the event attendees we surveyed, **96% of respondents felt welcomed to Edinburgh** and **79% have become involved with a society/student group, sports club, volunteering or other activity** since attending.



# 79% OF EVENT ATTENDEES JOINED A STUDENT GROUP

# VENUES AND SPACES

Following a period of Covid-related closure, we reopened some hospitality operations in August 2020, **maximising the outdoor spaces that we have access to, and introduced an online table booking system and an order and pay mobile app.** These proved highly popular with students.

Students' home on campus, Teviot Row House, has been at full capacity (to its reduced capacity) since re-opening. Communal spaces on campus will be key to covid recovery community building, therefore investment in enhancing Teviot Row House is vital in enabling it to be accessible, functional and attractive to students.

Between summer 2020 and September 2021, **the Garden at Teviot welcomed over 50,000 guests, providing a well-loved covid-safe social space on campus.**

Now, in autumn 2021 we have opened the majority of our spaces and are working on resolving some ventilation and operational issues on the remaining spaces. These issues currently limit the amount of spaces in our estate we are able to provide student access to, which is impacting on the amount of peer-led events which can take place on campus.

# EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

2020-21 saw us move our events and entertainments programme online to keep communities connected and support student groups to gather in safe ways.

We trialed successfully a varied programme of events from online quizzes to yoga and wine to panel discussions and awards ceremonies.

In the 2021-22 academic year, following on from a successful Welcome Week, we are **relaunching in-person our weekly, one-off and annual landmark events**, including our weekly Potterrow club-night and our Halloween and Winter festivities. Our members have shown huge appetite for these unique events on campus. We have overcome challenges including the implementation of the Covid-19 Vaccine Passport to ensure we can provide safe, community building events for our members.



**OVER  
50,000  
GUESTS IN  
TEVIOT  
GARDEN**





# recognition & feedback

## TEACHING AWARDS 2021



Our annual Teaching Awards is a **key piece of representative work** as students reflect back to the University the things they value on their courses, in their teaching, supervision and support. The nominations signal things students want to see more of and highlight best, and extra ordinary University staff practices.

In 2020/21, our 12th awards, we received **2,845 nominations** (a 53% increase from 2019/20). Working with the Institute of Academic Development, we utilised digital platforms to celebrate staff and their accomplishments. Our awards ceremony, which was online due to Covid restrictions, received **over 20,000 combined views**.

## STUDENT AWARDS 2021



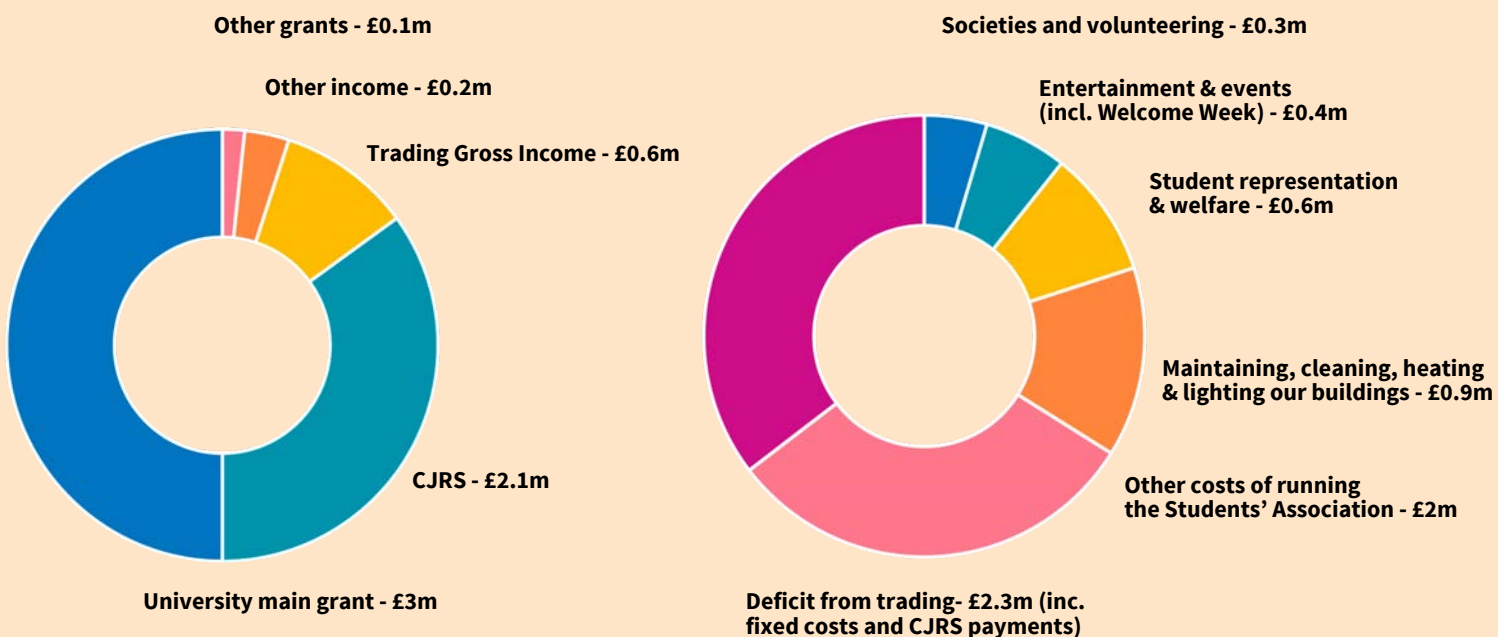
To reflect these unprecedented times we ran our annual Student Award nominations without any categories. We want to **celebrate students' achievements** and give them a chance to put the spotlight on their friends, course-mates, or anyone else who deserves recognition for all their hard work this year. We received **527 nominations** which were reviewed by a staff-student panel. There were winners: 14 (8 individuals and 6 pairs/groups). 132 attendees enjoyed an online ceremony with entertainment from student groups. **X watched the video.**

# Our finances

Our **income for 2020/21 totalled £6m and our expenditure totalled £6.5m.**

The University supported us confirming our grant at previous levels, and we instigated a pay freeze to minimise the inflationary impacts. Our Trading income during the pandemic was significantly impacted; Hospitality saw limited trading and the cancellation of the 2020 Festival was a significant impact. Some retail stores stayed open as a service, but campus footfall was obviously very low.

The furlough scheme, whilst active, contributed to preventing cash reserves from running out. Unable to secure additional University financial support, in January 2021 we agreed both a £1m bank loan and a £0.5m overdraft to ensure our cash-flow is adequate to fund our operations.



We recovered £2.1m of staff costs from the Furlough scheme (CJRS), of this around £900k mitigated salary costs and £1.2m was direct funding for hourly staff.

**We have cut staff costs by about £750,000 per annum since 2019** through two rounds of cost-cutting. The first was a strategic scheme focused on efficiencies and effectiveness, the second was a straightforward unplanned cost reduction as a result of the pandemic impact.

The first half of the 2021/22 financial year has seen us **reopen on-campus student-facing services** (from April). Footfall on campuses is around 50% lower than pre-covid, and we are seeing this in our trading figures.

In August, we supported our two Festival partners by opening our venues to them. University building restrictions made this not financially advantageous, however the activity was strategically important to build for a stronger Festival 2022 and aid our recovery.



# Looking forward

Last year our Trustee Board oversaw the development of a Reshaping Plan which outlines some key projects which we believe will enable us to deliver on our Strategic Plan 2019-25 and **maintain our focus on delivering great services and support for students**. The projects are:

## **Transformation projects 2021-22:**

- New level of financial robustness and sustainability
- Digital transformation accelerated
- Improved and affinity from, and relationships with, student groups
- Changes to how we work

## **Continuous improvement work streams 2021-25:**

- Sharpened focus on representation and advocacy
- Increase on work on sustainability
- Commercial reshape
- Festival
- University relationship
- Communications



Our members face many challenges as we begin to recover from the pandemic. Social, health, and financial impacts internationally are coupled with challenges including accessing accommodation and GP services here in Edinburgh.

**We remain driven to ensure our members' have the best possible experience whilst at Edinburgh; delivering students' support and ensuring their satisfaction.** We have many challenges to overcome to deliver on this, but we believe we can achieve great things for and with our members; supported by dedicated staff and volunteers, and in partnership with the University.

**WE ARE DRIVEN TO  
ENSURE OUR MEMBERS'  
HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE  
EXPERIENCE**

[WWW.EUSA.ED.AC.UK](http://WWW.EUSA.ED.AC.UK)

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EDINBURGH EH8 9AL

Edinburgh  
University  
Students'  
Association





UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Edinburgh University Sports Union Report**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper is to note developments at Edinburgh University Sports Union (EUSU) 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 achievements of EUSU, alongside strategic developments for the future. It is a recent standalone item on the Court agenda, previously an appendix of the Edinburgh University Students' Association President's report.

**Discussion**

*Memberships*

5. We have well surpassed our previous record number of EUSU memberships purchased during semester one. Over 10,800 club memberships have been purchased from Badminton to Boxing and Weightlifting to Wakeboarding; making over 7500 unique student members of EUSU. The number of memberships purchased this semester alone reached levels often achieved in full pre-pandemic years, never mind single semesters. This shows how successful and pivotal the return to activity and sport has been for many students. Our intramural programme has over 1500 students involved from all Colleges, this shows the appetite for recreational sporting offerings as well as competitive club sport. The intramural fixtures are almost finished for the semester and have involved more than 175 teams across nine sports. We hope that the programme will be as big, if not bigger, in semester two and beyond.

Some clubs have had to freeze membership sales as they are unable to accommodate larger numbers of students in facilities due to Covid-19 restrictions. These have forced clubs to turn away potential new members much to their dismay. (see point 16 below.)

### *BUCS Update*

6. British University and College Sport (BUCS) fixtures have been up and running for the past six weeks or so and Edinburgh has seen great success across the length of the country.

7. Women's Fencing are currently undefeated in the North Premier league after five fixtures and the men are currently sat in third in the same league. Ladies Rugby are in third place in the Women's National League, the highest ranking BUCS league. Externally to BUCS, the club recently played an invitational match against Leicester Tigers' newly formed Women's Professional team and came out on top. The men's rugby club are holding strong mid-table against some really strong competition from the North of England in the Premier League. Both the hockey clubs are sitting comfortable in their respective leagues; the women in National League, and the men in Premier North.

8. Beyond the leagues, Snowsports hosted British Universities Dry Slope championships at Hillend Ski Centre and the event ran without fault. Many club members took part and performed well including a third place in the Women's Big Air competition. The cycle club attending BUCS Cycling Hill Climb in Loughborough and had success with top 20 finishes in both the male and female events. Finally, the Triathlon club recently travelled to Leicester for the BUCS Duathlon Champs and had over 15 competitors compete over the 5k run, 20k cycle, and 2.5k run event. Full leaderboards, results and fixtures can be found at [www.bucs.org.uk](http://www.bucs.org.uk)

### *Charity Work*

9. Throughout the month of November, many of our clubs have been taking part in charity work especially focused through Movember. American football, Shinty and Cricket to name a few have been attempting to flesh out their top lips in the name of charity. Engineers Rugby Intramural team have raised over £3000 (and counting) for Movember through physical challenges and social events. Two members of the cycling club are also attempting their own physical challenge of endurance in riding 100 laps of Queens Drive each (over 550km with 10,000m climbing), expecting to take over 24hrs of constant cycling.

### *Sustainability*

10. In partnership with the Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability, we have launched a three tiered sustainability achievement award which our clubs can engage with. It gives up to 30 activities, events and personal development options for clubs and their members to take part in. In the first two weeks of launch we have had nearly 20% of our sports clubs sign up to be involved. It is hoped that this award will promote the work many students are doing in the everyday life to be more sustainable, much of which has previously gone unnoticed due to the nature of the sustainability awards.

### *Social Partnership*

11. Following the rise in visibility of “spiking” incidents in venues across the country as well as within Edinburgh, we met with our social partner Caledonian Heritable to outline their policy and steps to keep clients safe in their venues. From these discussions they have implemented further industry leading safety procedures to assure safety for students at all Edinburgh institutions.

### *Mental Health*

12. The first student specific sessions of the Mental Health First Aid course have been run allowing student volunteers to access resources to upskill their work within club settings. These follow on from sessions ran with staff members at both EUSU and the University’s Sport & Exercise department, which have been highly successful in empowering Mental Health First Aiders within the sporting community. It is hoped that this opportunity will be able to continue and tie into the University wide student mental health strategy.

### *Gender Based Violence – That Guy Scotland*

13. The Men’s Hockey club recently undertook work with the That Guy Scotland campaign against Gender Based Violence along Police Scotland. There is a video piece with club members having open and frank conversations about male sexual entitlement. The club aim to do more with That Guy Scotland, and hopefully can expand the work across other clubs and groups within the University.

#DontBeThatGuy. The That Guy Scotland campaign can be found here: <https://that-guy.co.uk/>

### **Resource implications**

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

### **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. We work closely with Scottish Student Sport (SSS) and British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) to offer our student volunteers the best opportunities to further their learning through educational seminars and workshops.

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

Our two elected Women in Sport Officers on our Inclusion Committee will continue to work this year to ensure females (and anyone who identifies as female) are empowered across our Sports Union, through various initiatives and fundraisers.

Similarly, our Volunteer Zambia programme has restarted this year after a two year hiatus due to COVID-19. This sees our volunteers work with female coaches in Lusaka to upskill these individuals and empower them to become better leaders. We have six students and a staff member on the programme this year, which is our full capacity.

*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 last 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 throughout this year to all clubs and members.

*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 are working with the Department of Social Responsibility & Sustainability on a clubs and societies programme to celebrate and promote achievable sustainability for students; along with reviewing our transport to attempt to offset our carbon emissions through various projects.

### **Equality & Diversity**

15. 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**

16. An implication of this paper which Court are asked to consider is the consideration of increasing capacities for sporting facilities, and venues where sporting activity takes place, be included in other re-evaluations for areas such as academic spaces. We understand that academic spaces are of highest priority; but in terms of student satisfaction and wellbeing non-academic spaces are arguably even more important in nurturing a sense of belonging within the student community.

17. 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 on [sports.president@ed.ac.uk](mailto:sports.president@ed.ac.uk).



**Consultation**

18. Consultation on this paper was not required.

**Further information**

19. Author

Gregor Malcolm

Sports Union President

November 2021

**Freedom of Information**

20. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Audit & Risk Committee Report to Court for Year Ended 31 July 2021**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides a summary of the Audit & Risk Committee's considerations at its meeting on 18 November. The primary purpose of the meeting was to review the Annual Report and Accounts. Details of the matters considered by the Audit & Risk Committee throughout the year ended 31 July 2021 have been presented to Court following each meeting and are summarised below. These papers together with this Report cover the matters to be reported to Court annually.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. Court is invited to note the report.

**Background and context**

*Audit & Risk Committee Membership and Frequency of Meetings 2020/21*

3. Membership of the Committee for 2020/21 was as follows:

Caroline Gardner (Convener) (Co-opted member of Court)  
Claire Reid (Co-opted member of Court)  
Perdita Fraser (Co-opted member of Court)  
Sarah Wolffe (Co-opted member of Court)  
Grant Macrae (External member)  
Bindesh Savjani (External member)

4. The Deputy Secretary Governance and Legal/Director of Legal Services is Secretary to the Committee and during 2020/21 the clerking was provided by Court Services. Routinely in attendance at meetings of the Committee during 2020/21 were: the Principal, the Deputy Secretary Governance and Legal, the Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance/University Secretary, the Vice-Principal Corporate Services, the Director of Finance, the Deputy Director of Finance, the Head of Internal Audit, the clerk to the Committee and representatives of the University's External Auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). From 1 August 2021, the membership of Audit & Risk Committee is:

David Law (Convener) (Co-opted member of Court)  
Perdita Fraser (Co-opted member of Court)  
Ruth Girardet (Co-opted member of Court)  
Alastair Dunlop (Chancellor's Assessor)  
Grant Macrae (External member)  
Ross Millar (External member)

5. The Audit & Risk Committee is a Standing Committee reporting directly to Court, with an executive Risk Management Committee reporting directly into it. The Audit & Risk Committee met on four occasions during the course of 2020/21 and participated in a joint workshop with Risk Management Committee on 16 February 2021. All

members of the Committee were invited to attend private meetings with External Audit and with Internal Audit without the presence of officers of the University.

### **Discussion**

*Paragraphs 6-17: Closed section*

### **Resource implications**

18. There are no resource implications associated with this paper. The Audit & Risk Committee is a central part of the University's governance arrangements and is comprised of voluntary members from the University Court or from professionals in the field: this will continue during 2021/22.

### **Risk Management**

19. The University has a low appetite for risks in the areas of compliance and finance.

### **Equality & Diversity**

20. No major equality impacts have been identified.

### **Next steps/implications**

21. This paper is part of the year-end report to Court for approval of the Annual Report and Accounts.

### **Consultation**

22. This Report was reviewed and approved by Audit & Risk Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2021.

### **Further information**

23. Author

Kirstie Graham  
Deputy Head of Court Services  
October 2021

Presenter

David Law  
Convener of Audit & Risk Committee

### **Freedom of Information**

24. This paper is closed.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Risk Management Post Year End Assurance Statement**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper reports on Risk Management Post Year End Assurances in support of the Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. Court is invited to note the information presented.

*Paragraphs 3-6: Closed section*

**Resource implications**

7. There are no specific resource implications.

**Risk Management**

8. The University continues to manage the major risks as set out in the Strategic Risk Register and to monitor emerging issues.

**Equality & Diversity**

9. No specific Equality and Diversity issues are identified.

**Next steps/implications**

10. The paper provides assurances to Court as part of the process to enable it to sign off the Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21.

**Consultation**

11. Each College and Professional Services Group was contacted to obtain updates.

**Further information**

12. Author & Presenter

Catherine Martin

Vice-Principal Corporate Services

November 2021

**Freedom of Information**

13. Closed paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

Director of Finance's Report

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides an update on the latest finance related issues and seeks approval from Court to award the contract to act as our travel management supplier for business and student group travel to Diversity Travel.
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. University Court are asked to approve, in accordance with the Delegated Authority Schedule, the award of the contract to act as our travel management supplier for business and student group travel to Diversity Travel.

**Background and context**

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

*Paragraphs 5-13: Closed section*

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

14. 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**

15. 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**

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

**Consultation**

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

**Further information**

- |                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 18. <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)

15 November 2021

**Freedom of Information**

19. Closed paper – commercially confidential



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21**

**Description of paper**

1. The draft Annual Report and Accounts are attached as Appendix 1. Appendix 1 includes the financial results for the University Group for the year ended 31 July 2021 and drafts of the main reports.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. Court is asked to review the Annual Report and Accounts to 31 July 2021 with a view to its approval.

3. At its meeting on 18 November, Audit & Risk Committee recommended the approval of the draft Annual Report and Accounts by Court.

**Background and context**

4. The Annual Report and Accounts were presented to Audit & Risk Committee for comment on 18 November. PwC, the external auditors, presented the audit report to Audit & Risk Committee. This outlined key matters arising from the external audit of the University of Edinburgh Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2021 and any significant findings that PwC believed to be relevant to those charged with governance. PwC confirmed that they have issued an unqualified audit opinion.

*Paragraphs 5-10: Closed section*

**Resource implications**

11. There are no specific requests for resource in the paper.

**Risk Management**

12. A report, Understanding Our Risks, is included in the Annual Report and Accounts to 31 July 2021.

**Equality & Diversity**

13. University funds are managed in accordance with its policies on equality and diversity. The Operational Review in the Annual Report and Accounts includes sections on social responsibility and sustainability and equality and widening participation.

**Next steps/implications**

14. The Annual Report and Accounts will be lodged with the Scottish Funding Council. A copy will be filed in due course, along with the annual return for 2020-21, with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

**Consultation**

15. The key reports have been drafted in consultation with stakeholders and the figures have been prepared and reviewed by our external auditors, PwC. The Annual

Report and Accounts 2020-21 were presented to Policy & Resources Committee on 8 November 2021 and Audit & Risk Committee on 18 November 2021.

**Further information**

16. <u>Author</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
Rachael Robertson	Lee Hamill
Deputy Director of Finance	Director of Finance
15 November 2021	

**Freedom of Information**

17. Closed paper. The release of the Annual Reports and Accounts is covered by the University publication schedule.





UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Letter of Representation – University of Edinburgh  
Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21**

**Description of paper**

1. The draft letter of representation from PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), in respect of the Annual Report and Accounts for the University Group for 2020/21, is attached as Appendix 1.

**Action requested/ Recommendation**

2. The Court is invited to approve the letter of representation and its signing by the Principal and Senior Lay Member, noting the back to back Letter of Representation, provided by the Director of Finance to Court, attached as Appendix 2.

**Background and context**

3. The letter of representation will provide PwC with a written declaration that the Annual Report and Accounts are sufficient and appropriate and without omission of material facts.

4. In making the statements in the letter the Principal acknowledges the responsibilities placed on him and on the Court, by various statutes, standards and memoranda for the effective stewardship of the resources and proper conduct of affairs. To make such statements the Principal and Court must rely on a number of checks and balances incorporated into the processes and procedures (internal control systems) necessary to effectively manage resources. They must rely on the advice of professional advisors and on the professional ethics of the academic, research and support staff.

*Paragraph 5: Closed section*

**Resource implications**

6. There are no specific requests for resource in the paper.

**Risk Management**

7. A report, Understanding Our Risks, is included in the Annual Report and Accounts to 31 July 2021.

**Equality & Diversity**

8. University funds are managed in accordance with its policies on equality and diversity. The Operational Review in the Annual Report and Accounts includes sections on social responsibility and sustainability, equality and widening participation.

**Next steps/implications**

9. The University’s letter of representation will be signed by the Principal and Senior Lay Member after the Court meeting. It will then be sent to PwC so that they have the assurances in place to allow them to sign the audit certificate for the University’s Annual Report and Accounts for 2020/21.

**Consultation**

10. The letter of representation has been drafted by PwC and reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee on 18 November 2021 who have recommended its approval by the Court.

**Further information**

11. <u>Author</u> Rachael Robertson Deputy Director of Finance 15 November 2021	<u>Presenter</u> Lee Hamill Director of Finance
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**Freedom of Information**

12. Closed paper.



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

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UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 – US GAAP**

**To note: this is a restatement of the accounts in the US accounting format. It will now be considered by Exception Committee after the Court meeting.**



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Outcome Agreement 2021-22**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides Court with the final draft of the University's Outcome Agreement 2021-22 and Self-evaluation Report for 2020-21 for the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

2. The 2021-22 Outcome Agreement is framed by Strategy 2030, and therefore the actions in our Outcome Agreement are aligned with the aspirations articulated in Strategy 2030.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

3. Court is asked to review and approve the content of the University's Outcome Agreement for 2021-22 and the Self-evaluation Report for 2020-21 (and associated documentation). Court is asked to delegate authority to the Director of Strategic Planning & Insight to make final amendments in light of discussion at Court and to submit the suite of information to the SFC at the end of November 2021.

*Paragraphs 4-16: Closed section*

**Resource implications**

17. There are resource implications in producing the Outcome Agreement and Self-evaluation Report, principally within Strategic Planning. Information from across the University is required to allow us to produce these reports, and therefore there is a wider contribution resource implication. A key purpose of the Outcome Agreement process is to demonstrate accountability for University funding from the SFC; in theory, failing to produce an agreement considered acceptable by SFC could come with financial implications.

**Risk Management**

18. Our Outcome Agreement document is a public statement and thus failure to provide SFC with an acceptable document could potentially impact on our reputation with the Scottish Government, stakeholders and staff and potentially undermine funding arrangements.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

19. The production of our Outcome Agreement fulfils an external regulatory requirement, and the Outcome Agreement itself contributes to all of the SDG goals. Whilst we will not articulate these goals in our Outcome Agreement, the narrative of how we aim to fulfil the requirements of SFC's Outcome and Impact Framework touch upon all aspects of the SDGs. Our Outcome Agreement is aligned to Strategy 2030, and the SDGs are an integral part of this. We also specifically address the Climate emergency in the final section of the Outcome Agreement.

### **Equality & Diversity**

20. Equality and diversity objectives are positively targeted in the Outcome Agreement process, which includes the statutory requirement for a widening participation agreement, and an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

### **Next steps/implications**

21. To confirm that the Outcome Agreement for 2021-22 and associated documentation be presented to the Scottish Funding Council.

### **Consultation**

22. This paper and the accompanying documents have been reviewed by Rona Smith, Director of Strategic Planning and Insight and Pauline Manchester, Deputy Director of Planning and Policy. Consultation for contributions to the Outcome Agreement and Self-evaluation Report has taken place with the wider University community.

### **Further information**

23. Author

Jennifer McGregor  
Strategic Planning  
November 2021

Presenter

Rona Smith  
Director of Strategic Planning & Insight

### **Freedom of Information**

24. Closed until publication of the Outcome Agreements by the Scottish Funding Council.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement across Campus**

**(Development & Alumni Annual Report and progress update for year 2020/21)**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper summarises progress made across campus in taking forward philanthropic fundraising and alumni relations programmes for the 2020/21 year.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. Court members are asked to note the report and comment on the focus and overall direction of the University's philanthropic and alumni programming.

*Paragraphs 3-11: Closed section*

**Equality & Diversity**

12. D&A seeks to be at the forefront of positive action on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) issues, whether that is scholarship fund-raising for widening participation (and more recently Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic specific scholarship programmes), engagement of alumni as participants and champions for specific University EDI programmes, and through positive EDI-influenced decisions regarding which alumni we seek to spotlight and celebrate through our communications. As for so many parts of the University, we have significant work still to do to attract, recruit and support a more ethnically diverse workforce, and are mid-way through a project to look at this, drawing on global expertise through CASE (the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education) and other sources.

**Next steps/implications**

13. No formal next steps or communications are anticipated, but feedback from Court members, following those received recently by the University Executive, on the future direction of travel and the action plan summary above will be embedded in detailed work plans, alongside feedback from the Colleges on our separate but connected College-specific plans.

**Further information**

14. Author & Presenter

Chris Cox, Vice Principal (Philanthropy & Advancement)

**Freedom of Information**

15. Closed paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Queen's Medical Research Institute (QMRI) & Chancellor's Building  
Co-location and Bioresearch and Veterinary Services (BVS) Estates Strategy**



Reid and Hill Architects (Stage 3 Report September 2019)

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**Description of paper**

1. This paper presents an overview of the joint College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) and Bioresearch and Veterinary Services (BVS) Estates Strategy for the relocation of Centre for Discovery Brain Sciences (CDBS) at the Queen's Medical Research Institute (QMRI) and the linked Chancellor's Building located at the BioQuarter campus. This project will create a world-class strategic Brain-Body Research Institute striving to understand brain disorders and the impact of whole body processes across the lifespan. This paper recommends approval for funding to progress the project to completion.

2. The project supports the following outcomes set out in Strategy 2030:

- We will see our research having a greater impact as a result of partnership, international reach and investment in emergent disciplines.
- Our estate will be fit for purpose, sustainable and accessible. We will support learning, research and collaboration with our neighbours, businesses and partners.

*Paragraphs 3-34: Closed section*

**Equality & Diversity**

35. No issues were identified that may require highlighting in an equality and diversity context.

*Paragraphs 36-37: Closed section*

**Further information**

Authors

Moira Whyte  
Vice-Principal and Head of the College of  
Medicine and Veterinary Medicine Lesley  
Penny, Director of BVS  
Peter Kind, Director of SIDB  
Katharine Isherwood,  
Estates Development Manager

Presenter

Professor Jonathan Seckl  
Senior Vice-Principal and Convener,  
Estates Committee

22 November 2021

**Freedom of Information**

38. The paper is closed as disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of the University and potential contracting parties.





UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Court Internal Effectiveness Review**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides the internal review of Court's effectiveness for the 2020/21 academic year. This is part of our compliance with external requirements and general good governance practice. 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:
  - i) the annual internal effectiveness review for 2020/21; and,
  - ii) a minor update to Court's Standing Orders to reflect a new Ordinance and Resolution approved last year regarding the process for removal of Court members.

**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**

*Contents*

4. The review consists of the following sections:
  - 1) Compliance with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016
  - 2) Compliance with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance
  - 3) Summary of annual discussions with Court members
  - 4) External effectiveness review update
  - 5) Senate annual internal effectiveness review

*Compliance with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 ('the Governance Act')*

5. The deadline for achieving full compliance with the Governance Act was 31 December 2020. Full compliance was achieved at Edinburgh from 1 August 2020 when the new compositions of Court and Senate came into full effect along with consequential changes to the Standing Orders and other documentation to take into account the new categories of Court member created by the legislation. The one connected area of work which continued into the 2020/21 year was the implementation of a new Ordinance and a new Resolution extending and updating a pre-existing procedure for removal of Court members. These came into force on 16

December 2020 following approval of the Ordinance by the Privy Council. It is recommended that a consequential change to the Standing Orders now be made to reflect the new Ordinance and Resolution, set out below:

*Extract from the Standing Orders of the University Court, with recommended changes marked up*

#### 4. Resignation and removal of members

4.1 On joining Court, all members require to confirm that they are familiar with the University's agreed Code of Conduct and understand their obligations under it. This includes:

- acting in accordance with the Nine Principles of Public Life in Scotland;
- understand their obligations in respect of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002;
- declaring any potential conflicts of interest;
- as a trustee of a charity they require to declare that they are not disqualified from acting in this capacity in terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005; and
- compliance with the University's Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy.

~~4.2 Court will expect an appointed or elected member of Court who is in gross or persistent breach of the Code of Conduct to resign and reserves the right to draw such a situation to the attention to the individual or the body electing/nominating the individual.~~

~~4.3 Such a breach may occur through persistent absenteeism, medical or legal impediment such as a criminal conviction or and behaviour deemed to be opposed to the good standing of the University and its values.~~

~~4.4~~ 4.2 In respect of co-opted members, the University of Edinburgh Ordinance No. 21600 grants Court specific powers to remove a co-opted member in accordance with the process set out in Resolution No. 7428/20020. The Nominations Committee on the request of a member of Court or the University Secretary will consider any such matter in the first instance prior to consideration by Court. The criteria for the Court to remove a member is as set out in Resolution No. 74/2020, namely: inability to exercise the functions of membership generally; or misconduct (whether or not in the capacity as a Court member), to include gross or persistent breach of the Code of Conduct for Members of the University Court; or such other behaviour as the University Court may deem inimical to the good standing of the University Court.

*[Drafting note: this simply restates the criteria included in the new Resolution approved by Court on 30 November 2020]*

*Compliance with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance ('the Governance Code')*

6. A review of compliance with the Governance Code over 2020/21 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.

*Summary of annual discussions with Court members*

7. The Senior Lay Member and University Secretary had individual discussions over the course of the summer with all Court members who have had a year or more of experience on Court.

8. These meetings were an opportunity for individual Court members to reflect on where they felt they were contributing most effectively; what challenges, if any, they had encountered; role; values; induction; understanding; where relevant, experience of Committees; relationships with senior team, staff, students and external stakeholders; individual interactions; and how Court is currently supported and run.

9. The following main points were made:

- Positive appreciation and recognition of the way in which the Principal and senior team had led the University effectively through unprecedented and challenging times;
- Positive feedback on the support provided by the Court services team;
- Significant reflection on the implications of working virtually as a Court. While this had enabled the core business to be done, the lack of face to face interaction was seen as sub-optimal as it made it more difficult to build the important relationships that underpin the best governance, have informal discussions on individual issues and get the best of everyone's potential engagement. While some found it easier to contribute through a virtual environment, most felt that it could act as a barrier to the natural flow and depth of discussion.
- The informal one-off briefing sessions, Court seminars and update notes were all seen as very helpful - particularly given the virtual environment. In particular the seminars/briefing sessions were seen as invaluable opportunities for Court members to have more in-depth discussions and greater engagement with each other and senior colleagues. The Finance Director's briefings were particularly valued given the varied level of experience that Court members had in this area. It was important to ensure timely information flow on key issues.
- It was recognised that this was a transitional year in terms of bedding in the final changes made as a result of the Governance Act; and with several longstanding members of Court finishing their terms of office. The changes were still work-in-progress. While there was good recognition of the role of all Court members as trustees it was still challenging as some Court members who had been elected by a particular constituency were navigating their way through these differing responsibilities and accountabilities. Steps taken to increase transparency of Court business more generally (e.g. in terms of bringing in financial briefings with the joint unions following each Court meeting) were seen as helpful in this regard. It was also welcomed that we had discussed with AdvanceHE and agreed that this should be a particular focus for their next Scottish-focused development training for Court members in the autumn.
- There was a strong appetite for membership of the various Committees as it was found that this was a particularly effective way of adding greater value. It

was suggested that we could do more in induction to explain how Nominations Committee reaches a view on proposed Committee membership and how Court members can contribute their understanding of their own skills and expertise to inform that process. This would help ensure expectations were aligned with opportunities likely to become available.

- Individual one to one interactions with senior colleagues in the University (who were seen as very approachable) were welcomed and seen as a particularly effective way of contributing. Several Court members reflected on the value that they were particularly able to add in informal interactions with senior executive colleagues outside the formal Court and Committee meeting structure. It was seen as important that Court members took responsibility for being proactive in having conversations and building relationships to support them in their roles.
- It was recognised that, given the size of Court membership and the range of complex issues that each Court has for consideration, it was important to ensure that there was effective engagement and discussion. The virtual world made this much more challenging – see comments above. It was recognised that we had recently had a new Rector coming into the role of presiding over Court who would naturally be developing her understanding and expertise in that role. Having the overview from Committee Conveners early on in the agenda was seen as helpful in terms of giving Court a considered view of overall context – it also helped assure Court on the role of Committees in carrying out a core part of the overall governance function. The Court-approved statement which gives clarity around understanding of the respective roles of Rector and Senior Lay Member was important to ensure effective governance.
- There was a desire for Court be kept appropriately informed of potentially challenging reputational issues so that they were in the picture, understood different sides to the debate, and able to respond to external queries appropriately. It would be helpful to be clearer on the respective roles of Court and the Executive in this regard.
- On Court membership going forward, several members emphasised the importance of ensuring that we continued to have some Court members with a strong financial background and expertise to bear.
- There was generally positive feedback on induction. Emphasis was laid on the importance of this being done well to accelerate the ability of new members to be able to get to grips with the way in which the University worked. Circulation of relevant background by Court services on this had been helpful.
- It was important to find ways to make sure Court's role and business was well-understood across the University. There were some helpful suggestions around building on the annual 'meet the Court' session, perhaps through some blogs or articles on Bulletin on what it is like playing the role of Court member.
- It was important to allocate sufficient time to the bigger strategic questions despite the large amount of other business that rightly needed to come to Court for final decision. The seminars were welcomed in this regard. Having this strategic oversight helped Court members have a better contextual understanding when they were addressing individual issues.
- Fully recognising the extraordinary nature of the past 18 months, it would be helpful to get back to earlier circulation of papers in advance of Court meetings.

10. Other, more individual comments, were:

- Themes were proposed that might merit more strategic-level Court discussion such as the implications of a continuation of expenditure-focused strategy and the extent to which there was scope for strategic investment.
- It would be helpful if Court papers and presentations could always give a clear picture of when things were not working as well as we would want, as well as of the positive achievements and opportunities. It was welcomed when senior team members responded openly and constructively to challenges made or issues raised. There had been some (a very few) individual examples of responses from senior team members other than the Principal where this had not been felt to be the case.
- It was important that Court was agile enough to reach important strategic decisions in a timely way. The role of Exception Committee was seen as important in this regard.
- We do still have a large amount of paperwork for each Court meeting. Could we consider doing more to provide a succinct free-standing short paper and make better use of links to the more detailed supporting papers?
- Staff assessors welcomed the opportunity for a meeting with the Principal before each full Court.
- It might be helpful for Court members to reflect on an annual basis on how they can best fulfil their duties as charity trustees.
- It could be helpful to give a forward look on an annual basis to help provide the context for key decisions likely to be coming to Court
- The interaction with EUSA was very much welcomed and there was an appetite for a broader engagement with students in addition to that.
- Court members contribute connections through their own networks to support the broader understanding of the University's impact and contribution but could find themselves drawn into time consuming work that could more properly be carried out at executive function.
- It was important that induction and the first few months in role supported new Court members in understanding the informal rules – the norms on how Court business is transacted – and how they can best raise issues for discussion or of concern. This would complement their understanding of the formal duties and responsibilities. The organograms and other briefings were helpful and it would be good if they could be updated regularly.

#### *External Effectiveness Review Update*

11. 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 in 2018/19. The report was approved by Court in February 2019 and is published in full on the University [website](#). The overall position of the report states: 'In my view, the University's approach to governance is impressive. There are many areas of excellent practice, the relevant legal requirements are satisfactorily addressed, and the University complies with the guidance provided in the Governance Code.'

12. The report covered five themes with areas of strength and points to consider for each theme. The themes are: People; Structures and Processes; Conduct of Business; Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement; and, Openness and

Accountability. The People theme was highlighted as the most significant. Court agreed with the priority of the People theme and initial work has concentrated on this area. The points to consider and action taken or suggested in response to each are as follows:

People theme – points to consider

*i) Court has some highly-skilled and experienced members. Succession planning for these key positions is something that should be addressed soon.*

*ii) A general point I would make is that the quality of governance is affected first and foremost by the calibre of the people involved. It is important to apply the same rigour in filling lay Court positions as is done in making a senior executive appointment. Be specific about the skills and experience that are sought, make sure the interview panel includes specialists who can assess these skills, and make an appointment only if there is a suitably qualified candidate.*

*iii) Given the scale of the University's estate and of the resources invested in it, I think it would be appropriate, when the opportunity arises, to appoint a Court member with expertise at a senior level in property management.*

Action taken: succession planning has been a key focus for Nominations Committee since the report, with the Senior Lay Member, 5 new Co-opted members and 3 new General Council Assessors all since appointed or elected following recruitment exercises overseen by Nomination Committee. This has included the use of professional search agencies for the first time for Court positions, as is common practice for senior executive appointments, and the recruitment of a new Court member, Alistair Smith, with senior property management and investment experience. Succession planning for the key committee convener positions has also been an important consideration for Nominations Committee and action taken has included new committee conveners shadowing/observing meetings before appointment when there were anticipated vacancies.

Structures and Processes theme – points to consider

*i) Court might commit to review its committees' terms of reference on a regular timescale, perhaps once every three years.*

Action taken: all committee terms of reference were reviewed in 2019/20 for two purposes: to reflect the new categories of membership for Court with the new composition from 1 August 2020 and also, at the onset of the pandemic, to explicitly reference the ability for committees to meet virtually by videoconference, teleconference or other means. Audit & Risk Committee also reviewed its terms of reference more fully in May 2021 and reported this to Court in June 2021 with an amendment arising to hold annual committee reviews approved. The Knowledge Strategy Committee terms of reference are also currently under review and the recommendations will be submitted to Court later this year.

Action suggested: Court may wish to request that its standing committees undertake to review their terms of reference on a regular basis, with those aside from Audit & Risk Committee and Knowledge Strategy Committee to begin doing so this year. Setting a fixed interval of three years for all committees is not suggested as it is may

be more appropriate for some to do so more regularly than others (e.g. Audit & Risk Committee have agreed to undertake an annual performance review) given the wide diversity in the work of the committees.

*ii) Some parameters in the scheme of delegated authority could be revisited to reduce the number of items that require approval at a full meeting of Court. For example:*

*- Court approves a capital plan, but Court's approval is then required for expenditure on all projects within that plan that cost more than £10M. In the context of the capital plan, the figure of £10M is in fact quite small (the corresponding figure at Glasgow University, which is two-thirds the size of Edinburgh, is £25M).*

*- All capital expenditure that is not anticipated in the capital plan requires Court approval. Court might agree to give Policy & Resources Committee delegated authority to sign off commitments up to an agreed threshold.*

*- Expenditure commitments of a non-capital nature require Court approval where they exceed £2M. Again, Court might agree to delegate authority to Policy & Resources Committee up to an agreed threshold.*

Action underway: the delegated authority schedule is currently under review with the intention of submitting a revised version to the February Court meeting. This is partly to ensure that it will dovetail with the finance component of the People & Money system and partly to consider improvements from Court's perspective to reduce relatively small and more routine approval requests.

#### Conduct of Business theme – points to consider

*i) Court is large and is therefore not an easy forum in which to explore a complex issue, argue different viewpoints and come to a decision. As a result, it tends to be invited simply to note or to approve business. This can be frustrating for Court members, who want to add value and are afforded little scope to do so. It may sometimes be helpful to take major decisions to Court at an early formative stage, allowing governors input well before they are asked for final sign-off. Also, depending on the item of business, it may be possible to present Court with options from which it can make a choice.*

Action taken: there has been additional focus on informally raising major items for decision at an earlier stage. The most recent example is the Edinburgh BioQuarter Health Innovation District Joint Venture where, ahead of a Court decision at the October meeting, tours of the site and a briefing on the project were offered to Court members during the summer along with early circulation of the draft paper to members of the Commercialisation Sub-Group for comment. Other examples include the Curriculum Transformation Programme, which was a seminar subject in February 2021 and has been raised at an early stage on a regular basis at Court meetings, as well as pre-Court briefings on the Annual Report and Accounts, which have been held for the last four years.

*ii) Court members should expect that, when an important matter is brought to them for decision, it will have first been considered by the executive management team. In looking at some items of Court business, I was concerned that the executive input was not visible. I think this reflects a former way of working and that the Principal is now insisting on executive input to all major Court decisions.*

Action taken: this has changed significantly and major items for Court decision now have initial consideration and recommendation by the University Executive in almost all cases or have input through other means if not.

*iii) My sense is that Court members could be more effective in the role of critical friends who ask tough questions of the executive. At Court on 3 December [2018], there were several items (for example; the financial statements, the staff survey and the Remuneration Committee report) on which Court might have been more challenging.*

Comment: this is for Court members to take a view but from my (Lewis) experience of clerking Court meetings since 2015 I think the level of constructive challenge is considerably greater now than in 2018, even with the December 2018 meeting being unusually quiet and not representative of that period.

#### Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement theme – points to consider

*i) The Annual Effectiveness Review feels like an act of compliance: something that has to be done each year, but with no expectation that it will lead to change. Court might decide to expand the remit of a re-named 'Governance and Nominations Committee' to give it a responsibility for promoting continuous improvement of governance. Each year, the Committee could consider what shape the effectiveness review might have. It might involve questionnaires as in the recent past. Or it might consider lessons learned from a recent item of Court business. Or it might focus on an aspect of governance (such as the Appointments process, the Committee structure, or the suite of KPIs) and compare Edinburgh's practice with that of other universities. The important point would be to use the exercise in a constructive way.*

Comment: this is something that Court may wish to consider further. It is worth noting that Court has already effectively agreed that the Nominations Committee take on a governance role by tasking it in previous years to consider work to achieve compliance with different versions of the Governance Code and this could be formalised. It is also worth noting that the annual effectiveness review is indeed an act of compliance as Court is expected to undertake an annual effectiveness review to comply with the Governance Code and part of such a review is an assessment of compliance with the Governance Code, which will necessarily be somewhat formulaic. However, the annual effectiveness review can and does go beyond this, as shown by the summary of the annual review discussions in this year's review and Court could agree to include additional elements in future years.



*ii) A high proportion of Court members are current students or staff, or former students. For many of them, Edinburgh will be the only university that they know well. In future recruitment Court might aim to appoint someone who has experience of governance in another high-performing university, in the UK or the US.*

Action taken: while this has not been an explicit focus of the recruitment of new members, two of the new appointments made since 2020 served on the governing bodies of other high-performing UK universities and other new members have significant experience of other universities, including US universities such as Harvard University and New York University.

*iii) I think Chairs (i.e. the Rector and the Committee Chairs) will appreciate receiving feedback on their effectiveness in chairing meetings. To some extent this may happen already as part of the annual discussion that takes place with each Court member. It may be helpful though if, in each case, the person meeting with the Chair is provided in advance with inputs from members of the relevant committee.*

Action taken/suggested: this does feature as part of the annual discussion but not with feedback sought on this aspect from committee members or Court members – this could be done in future if Court is content to do so.

#### Openness and Accountability – point to consider

*i) Court might reflect on how information on Court business is made public. The HE Governance Code (para 45), while acknowledging there is sometimes a need for confidentiality, nevertheless encourages universities to make Court papers widely available, in particular to staff and students. In reviewing the university website as a member of the public, I found it was often difficult to understand just what Court had been discussing. Minutes are provided in full, but they are concise rather than expansive. And the associated agenda papers are often made available in such an abbreviated state that they convey little information.*

Action taken: the Court minutes are now deliberately more expansive for this reason than in 2018. For example, the October 2018 minute is 6 pages long while the draft October 2021 minute runs to 12 pages. The proportion of text within Court papers that is made available to all students, staff and the wider public is comparable now to 2018, with around 40% of the page count published shortly after Court meetings plus later publication of finalised documents after this, e.g. the Annual Report and Accounts, Equality Monitoring Reports, Outcome Agreements, which mean that the majority of the page count is usually published within a month or two of the meeting.

Comment: our understanding is that our level of publication of Court papers is comparable or favourable with peer institutions in Scotland and is highly favourable with peer institutions in England, most of which do not publish any governing body papers. An important element to consider is that those drafting and presenting Court papers are encouraged to give a full and frank assessment of the topic in the paper and in their presentation. This is vital for Court members to be able to discharge their duties effectively as governors and trustees with a responsibility for stewardship of the University's assets, including its greatest asset, its reputation. For topics that are commercially or reputationally sensitive, knowing that there would be full publication of papers dealing with these matters would inevitably inhibit paper authors in giving a

full and frank assessment and this would be to the detriment of Court's effectiveness. Other means of sharing more sensitive information with key stakeholders might be preferable to further publication of Court papers.

#### *Senate's effectiveness*

13. Senate has also undertaken an internal review of its effectiveness for 2020/21 and the paper is available on the Court [site](#) under the 'Additional Information' column. No issues have been identified that require escalation or reporting to Court.

#### **Resource implications**

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

#### **Risk Management**

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

#### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

16. 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**

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

#### **Next steps/implications**

18. If approved, the paper will be published and any agreed actions followed-up. A table summarising action taken or planned in response to the external effectiveness review will also be published, as recommended by Internal Audit.

#### **Consultation**

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

#### **Further information**

##### 20. Authors

Lewis Allan and Kirstie Graham  
Court Services Office  
November 2021

##### Presenter

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

#### **Freedom of Information**

21. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Updating the criteria for General Council Membership and Registration**

**Description of paper**

1. University of Edinburgh Ordinance No 186 (Appendix 1) defines the criteria for membership of the General Council (GC). The current arrangements, approved by Court in 1991, have a number of unsatisfactory clauses i.e. variously causing confusion in implementation; making anomalous provision and containing an anachronism.

*Paragraph 2: Closed section*

**Action requested/Recommendation**

3. Court is asked to approve the initiation of a process of review of Ordinance No. 186 with a view to amending the criteria for GC membership to resolve the identified issues.

*Paragraphs 4-14: Closed section*

**Freedom of Information**

15. Closed paper

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH ORDINANCE No 186**

**GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION**

At Edinburgh, the Eighth day of July, Nineteen hundred and ninety-one years.

WHEREAS the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, Section 10(1), provides that the University Court shall cause to be maintained a register of members of the General Council in accordance with provisions to be prescribed by Ordinance:

AND WHEREAS in terms of Sections 3 of the said Act and of paragraphs 1 and 5- of Part I of Schedule 2 thereto, the University Court has power to amend by Ordinance the composition, powers, and functions of, 'inter alia', the General Council, and to prescribe the conditions under which the register of members of the General Council is to be maintained:

AND WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to amend the composition of the General Council and to amend the conditions under which the register of members of the General Council is to be maintained:

THEREFORE the University Court of the University of Edinburgh, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, and with particular reference to paragraphs 1 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby statutes and ordains:

1. The General Council of the University of Edinburgh shall consist of :

(a) all persons on whom the University has conferred degrees other than Honorary Degrees, whose names shall be recorded in the Register of Graduates referred to in Section 3 of this Ordinance, in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance:

(b) all persons on whom the University has conferred an Honorary Degree or on whom it has conferred the title of Honorary Fellow of the University.

(c) during their tenure of office -

(i) the Chancellor of the University;

(ii) the members of the University Court;

(iii) the Professors of the University;

(iv) all Readers, Senior Lecturers, and Lecturers in the University who have held any such office for a period of one year:

(d) former members of the University Court and former Professors who have elected to pay the statutory registration fee, if any.

(e) former Readers, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers who have retired after holding any such office in the University for a period of three years and who have elected to pay the statutory registration fee, if any.

2. The University Court shall from time to time appoint a Registrar of the General Council, upon such conditions as the Court may determine, and the Court shall provide such assistance for the performance of the Registrar's duties as it may consider necessary. The office of Registrar may be held in conjunction with any other office in the University

3. The Registrar shall ensure that a Register of Graduates is maintained, recording the full names of all persons on whom the University has conferred a degree other than an Honorary Degree, the address of each graduand at the time of registration for graduation, the date of graduation, and the degree conferred.

4. The Registrar shall also ensure that a Register of Members of the General Council is maintained, recording

(a) the full names in alphabetical order and addresses (where known) of all graduates whose names are recorded in the Register of Graduates and who are not known to be dead, or presumed dead failing contrary information after eighty years from the date of graduation, together with, in each case, the first degree recorded in the Register of Graduates, and the year of graduation in that degree;

(b) the full names, in alphabetical order, and addresses (where known) of all other members of the General Council not known to be dead and the offices in virtue of which they qualify for membership.

5. <sup>1</sup> .....

6. If any person whose name is not included in the Register of Members - shall consider that it should be so included, it shall be competent for him or her to appeal to the University Court if the Court considers that such person's name should be included in the Register of Members - in terms of this Ordinance, it shall direct the Registrar to amend the Register accordingly. The decision of the Court shall be final.

7. The University Court shall have power to decide whether a fee shall be required as a condition of graduation in any degree or as a condition of membership of the General Council for those categories of persons mentioned in Section 1(d) and (e) of this Ordinance, and to fix the amount of any such fee. Those categories of persons mentioned in Section 1(b) of this Ordinance shall not be required to pay such a fee.

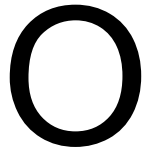
8. Ordinance No 174 (General Council Membership and Registration) is hereby revoked.

9. This Ordinance shall come into force after its approval by Her Majesty in Council on a date to be determined by the University Court.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF .....

Approved by Order in Council, dated 11 February 1992.

<sup>1</sup> Omitted by Ordinance No. 202, now superseded by Ordinance No. 213



UNIVERSITY COURT

29 November 2021

**Donations and Legacies; Alumni Events**

**Description of paper**

1. A report sets on legacies and donations received by the University of Edinburgh Development Trust or directly by the University of Edinburgh from 13 September 2021 to 5 November 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 5-18: Closed section*

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

19. 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**

20. 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**

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

**Consultation**

22. This paper has been reviewed and approved by Chris Cox, Vice-Principal Philanthropy & Advancement and Executive Director of Development & Alumni.

**Further information**

23. Authors

Gregor Hall

Finance Manager

Natalie Fergusson

Global Alumni Clubs and Groups

Manager

Development & Alumni

Presenter

Chris Cox

Vice-Principal Philanthropy &  
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**Freedom of Information**  
24. Closed paper