



University Court
Edinburgh Climate Change Institute, High School Yards, Edinburgh EH1 1LZ
Monday, 26 February 2024

AGENDA

OPENING ITEMS

- 1 **Minute** A1
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2023
- 2 **Matters Arising & Review of Action Log** A2
To raise any matters arising and review the Action Log
- 3 **Principal's Report** B
To note a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal
- 4 **Committee Business**
 - Senior Lay Member's Overview Verbal
 - Policy & Resources Committee C1
 - Nominations Committee C2
 - Audit & Risk Committee C3
 - Knowledge Strategy Committee C4
 - Senate (Senatus Academicus) C5

KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

- 5 **Student Experience**
To consider papers presented by Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students:
 - **Student Experience Update** D1
 - **Quality Enhancement and Standards Review** D2
- 6 **Students' Association and Sports Union Reports**
To consider the reports presented by Sharan Atwal, Students' Association President
 - **Students' Association Report** E1
 - **Sports Union Report** E2
- 7 **Finance**
 - **Director of Finance's Report** F1
To consider a paper presented by Lee Hamill, Director of Finance
 - **Revolving Credit Facilities Renewal** F2
To approve actions and delegate authority as appropriate to renew the University's Revolving Credit Facilities
- 8 **People and Money System and Roadmap Update** G
To consider a paper presented by Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services

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| 9 | Forests and Peatlands Programme First Annual Report 2022-23
To <u>consider</u> a paper presented by Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability | H |
| 10 | Development & Alumni Annual Report
To <u>consider</u> a paper presented by Chris Cox, Vice-Principal Philanthropy & Advancement and Executive Director of Development & Alumni | I |

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

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| 11 | Small Works Programme and Statutory Compliance Budget Allocation
To <u>approve</u> | J |
| 12 | Proposed Multiyear Energy Efficiency Programme
To <u>approve</u> | K |
| 13 | Senate Election Regulations
To <u>approve</u> | L |
| 14 | Professional Services Staff Member Election Regulations 2024
To <u>approve</u> | M |
| 15 | General Council Ordinance: Membership & Registration
To <u>approve</u> | N |
| 16 | Donations & Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity
To <u>note</u> | O |
| 17 | Court Meeting Dates 2024/25 and 2025/26
To <u>approve</u> | P |
| 18 | Resolutions
To <u>approve</u> | Q |
| 19 | Any Other Business
To <u>consider</u> any other matters | |
| 20 | Date of Next Meeting
Monday 22 April 2024, 14.00-17.00 | |



UNIVERSITY COURT

4 December 2023, West Court, Edinburgh College of Art Main Building

Minutes

- Members Present:** Debora Kayembe, Rector
Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member
Rushad Abadan, Co-opted Member
Robert Aldridge, City of Edinburgh Council Assessor
Douglas Alexander, General Council Assessor
Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member
Sharan Atwal, Students' Association President
Shereen Benjamin, Senatus Assessor
Richard Blythe, Senatus Assessor
Lauren Byrne, Students' Association Vice-President Welfare
Alastair Dunlop, Chancellor's Assessor
Ruth Girardet, Co-opted Member
Tobias Kelly, Academic Staff Member
Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor
Sarah McAllister, Professional Services Staff Member
Douglas Millican, Co-opted Member
Hugh Mitchell, Co-opted Member
Kathryn Nash, Trade Union Academic Staff Member
Mark Patrizio, Trade Union Professional Services Staff Member
Alistair Smith, Co-opted Member
Kavi Thakrar, Co-opted Member
Sarah Wolffe, General Council Assessor
- Member Apologies:** Jock Millican, General Council Assessor
- In Attendance:** Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary
Sophia Lycouris, Rector's Assessor
- Presenters & Observers:** Lewis Allan, Senior Governance Advisor to the Vice-Principal & University Secretary
David Argyle, Vice-Principal & Head of College
Christina Boswell, Vice-Principal Research & Enterprise
Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students
Iain Gordon, Vice-Principal & Head of College
Kim Graham, Provost
Lee Hamill, Director of Finance
Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students
Gary Jebb, Director of Place
Louise Kelso, General Counsel & Director of Legal Services
Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services
Theresa Merrick, Director of Communications & Marketing
Sarah Prescott, Vice-Principal & Head of College
James Saville, Director of Human Resources
Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning
Dan Wedgwood, Head of Court Services

OPENING ITEMS

1 Minute

**Papers
A1, A2**

Debora Kayembe, Rector, noted apologies and welcomed members and attendees, extending a particular welcome to Kavi Thakrar, Co-opted Member, who was attending his first meeting of Court.

The minute of the meeting held on 9 October 2023 was approved and a note of the Court seminar on the same date was noted.

2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log

Paper A3

There were no matters arising. The Action Log was noted.

3 Principal's Report

Paper B

Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, commented on:

- the UK government's announcement of twelve new doctoral training centres in different aspects of Artificial Intelligence research, Edinburgh being the only university to be awarded more than one (two outright and one jointly with Heriot-Watt University);
- the award to Professor Jane Hillston of the Lovelace Medal, making her the first person to have won all three of the British Computer Society's three top awards (having previously won the Needham Award and the Distinguished Dissertation Award);
- a wide-ranging Student Voice Forum on 14 November in which the Principal had participated, along with the Deputy Secretary Students and Vice-Principal Corporate Services;
- a successful recent visit to the United States, which had advanced numerous objectives, including engagement with alumni, development of philanthropic activity and strategic university partnership development;
- the presentation in October of the Chancellor's Awards for outstanding achievements by members of staff across the range of the University's activity;
- winter graduation ceremonies and the receipt of awards by the vast majority of those affected by the UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott earlier in the year;
- communications with staff and students in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict, which focused on supporting any members of the University community who were affected and making clear that anti-Semitism and Islamophobia have no place in the University;
- the screening on campus of the film Adult Human Female, which had required significant security measures.

Further discussion focused on the impact of security staff and police presence at the screening of the film Adult Human Female on those attending the screening or in the area to protest and the conditions leading to the need for such security measures.

4 Committee Business

• Senior Lay Member's Overview

Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member, noted:

- The University had hosted a meeting of the Committee of Scottish Chairs (comprising the Senior Lay Members of Scottish Higher Education Institutions).
- The University's economic impact report had been the subject of an event at the Palace of Westminster Court, which had helped to strengthen the University's profile and raise awareness of its contributions.
- The Vice-Principal & University Secretary had been asked to develop guidance on the handling of correspondence directed at members of Court, for consideration by Nominations Committee.

• Court Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) Sub-Group **Paper C1**

The report was noted. Court was informed that the University had now responded to a consultation mentioned in the paper: the University had indicated its support for a Schedule of Contributions proposed by the USS Trustee.

• Policy & Resources Committee **Paper C2**

The report was noted.

• Nominations Committee **Paper C3**

The report was noted and Court approved:

- the appointment of Sarah McAllister as the Court representative on the Scrutinising Committee for the Rectorial election scheduled for February/March 2024;
- the re-appointment of Hugh Mitchell for a second term of office as a co-opted member of Court for four years from 1 August 2024;
- the re-appointment of Ross Millar for a second term of office on Audit & Risk Committee for three years from 1 January 2024; and
- amendments to the Codes of Conduct for Court Members and Attendees to reflect the latest version of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

• Audit & Risk Committee **Paper C4**

The report was noted.

The Convener of Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) highlighted the following:

- Work had been carried out, having been commissioned by the Principal, in agreement with ARC, to provide additional assurances in relation to the implementation of the People & Money system. Testing carried out by external consultants had found reductions in two categories of transactions

occurring outside of standard processes. Measures were in place to address a third category.

- Following discussion at ARC, and in line with national guidance, a report on Health & Safety was to be provided to Court on an annual basis, the first of these being in the agenda for the present meeting.

- **Remuneration Committee Annual Report**

Paper C5

The report was noted.

- **Knowledge Strategy Committee**

Paper C6

The report was noted.

Potential and current uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the University were discussed. It was noted that the University was developing an overall AI strategy and prototype AI applications in a number of areas. Appropriate governance was in place for these initiatives, including scrutiny by the AI & Data Ethics Board.

- **Senate**

Paper C7

The report was noted.

It was noted that an independent external review of Senate's effectiveness had been completed and that this provided an opportunity to develop and support the approach and focus of Senate.

KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

5 People and Money – External Review Report

Paper D

Court considered an independent report into the implementation of the People & Money (P&M) system. The purpose of the review had been to help inform future decision-making and oversight for major change projects and system procurement and implementation.

The Senior Lay Member reflected on the highly constructive nature of an informal discussion earlier in the day between Court and the authors of the independent report. The Senior Leadership Team's response to the report had also been considered, noting work that had already been carried out to improve the P&M system and associated processes, in addition to planned improvements to wider University procedures and the governance of major University initiatives.

Court agreed that the independent report should be published in full. It was noted that the Senior Leadership Team had given a commitment to implement all of the report's recommendations and Court agreed that this commitment should be communicated publicly, with details of implementation to be released in due course.

6 Performance Measures to Support Strategy 2030: 2022-23 Year-End Report

Paper E

Court noted a report on the University's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to the institutional strategic plan. Recent performance against each KPI was noted, including positive movement in measures relating to widening participation, international student diversification and research funding.

Proposals were noted for the development of three KPIs which had not been finalised at the previous reporting point: KPI4 (Efficient Systems), KPI10 (Curriculum Transformation) and KPI12 (Student Experience).

In discussion relating to the proposals for KPI10, it was noted that clarity was required regarding the elements of the Curriculum Transformation Project that were reserved for approval by Senate, rather than one of its committees.

Court agreed the proposed approach to KPI12, in the context that the National Student Survey had changed in 2023, noting that other complementary student experience measures would continue to be tracked to complement the Strategic Performance Framework.

7 Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report

Paper F

The Convener of Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) highlighted the following points from the annual report, one purpose of which was to help provide assurance to Court before considering the Annual Report and Accounts:

- ARC had noted that the Annual Internal Audit Statement had reported that aspects of the University's system of internal financial control had not operated adequately during the year, but also that the University's system of governance, risk management and internal control had remained adequate overall. ARC concurred with this assessment, following detailed discussion.
- ARC would continue to monitor fulfilment of actions stemming from internal audit reports. While many overdue actions had been dealt with, others had become overdue in the same period.
- ARC had noted improvements in arrangements for risk management and identified areas for further work.

8 Risk Management Post Year-End Assurance Statement

Paper G

Court noted the statement, which provided an update on the annual risk questionnaire, in order to account for any relevant events following the reporting date of that questionnaire, 31 July 2023. Material issues reported since this date included:

- business interruption and costs of remediation caused by the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) issue that was affecting organisations across the country; and
- the impacts of changes made by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) on the consistency and comparability of student data submitted to HESA by different Higher Education institutions.

Court was provided with an outline summary of requirements to address the presence of RAAC in certain University buildings. Some work would need to be carried out urgently, in order to make vital teaching spaces available for use. Some of the required work carried significant cost, owing to the nature and scale of the necessary structural changes and scale of the risk. A comprehensive report was to be provided to the December meeting of Estates Committee and it was proposed that Court delegate authority to Estates Committee to allocate initial funding to progress remedial projects as required. Court delegated authority to Estates Committee as proposed.

9 Finance

• Director of Finance's Report

Paper H1

Court noted the report. Discussion focused on the nature and level of the KPI based on earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA), as an indication of underlying financial strength. It was noted that the University had a number of other financial KPIs in addition to the 'headline' EBITDA measure.

A fall in the University's cash reserves in recent years was in line with Court-approved financial strategy, representing the drawing down of cash built up, including through borrowing, for the purposes of fulfilling the Capital Plan.

Forward planning would take into account increased costs brought about by the wider inflationary financial context and costs associated with the University's net zero plans.

• Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23

Paper H2

Court noted a draft Annual Report and Accounts for the year end 31st July 2023. It was noted that it had not been possible to receive the full and final report by the external auditor by the time of the Court meeting and, therefore, the Annual Report and Accounts could not be finalised for and approved at this meeting.

In order to facilitate approval of a finalised Annual Report and Accounts, Court delegated authority to the Convener of Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) to review the final external auditor's report for the year ended 31 July 2023 and, if content, to refer the 2022-23 Annual Report and Accounts to Court Exception Committee for approval.

It was noted that ARC members would also be invited to provide comment on the external auditor's report, to inform the decision of the Convener of ARC.

[Secretary's note: The Annual Report and Accounts were subsequently approved using the process described here, the approval of Exception Committee being confirmed on 18 December 2023.]

- **Letter of Representation**

Paper H3

Court noted

- the draft letter of representation from PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), in respect of the Annual Report and Accounts for the University Group for 2022-23; and
- the back-to-back Letter of Representation, provided by the Director of Finance to Court.

10 Grade Scale Review

Paper I

Court approved proposed revisions to the University's pay grade scale. It was emphasised that this was an underpinning step for a wider set of initiatives to improve the staff experience and drive enhancements in other areas, including the student experience, and that the communications relating to this change should reflect this context.

Recognising the budgetary impact of the proposals, the Senior Leadership Team reaffirmed their collective commitment to plan and deliver performance against budgets (income and expenditure) that would collectively deliver annual EBITDA outcomes in the Court-agreed range of 7-9%.

It was noted that the input of Policy & Resources Committee had contributed significantly to clarifying the proposals. The clearly signalled joint commitment of the Senior Leadership Team to these proposals was also noted and welcomed.

11 Student Experience Update

Paper J

An update was presented, covering three main areas:

- the Student Support Model, where the focus was on ongoing implementation, support for the new model and post-implementation evaluation;
- assessment and feedback, where progress continued to be made in line with discussion at the previous Court meeting; and
- the Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP), in which a Curriculum Framework was under development, ahead of a robust consultation exercise.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- A careful approach to the timing of the CTP may be required, to ensure a consistent response across the University.
- A clear understanding of risk and engagement with critical voices would be essential to the success of the CTP. Levels of engagement, including critical engagement, had been high and consultation processes would be thorough.
- A clear, agreed distinction between the essential elements of the framework and areas with scope for variation would be key to the project's success.
- The post-implementation evaluation of the Student Support Model was welcomed and it was noted that another major change initiative, the migration to the Learn Ultra virtual learning environment, was also to be subject to such evaluation.

- The quality and timing of assessment and feedback had a significant effect on the student experience and on the University's reputation. It was noted that work was in progress to improve the measurement and tracking of performance in this area, alongside work to improve performance directly, although there were complexities to ensuring consistent reporting.

12 Students' Association and Sports Union Reports

• Students' Association Report

Paper K1

Court noted the report. Points particularly highlighted from within the report included the impact on a number of students of the Israel-Palestine conflict and the consequent need for support, and the financial challenges facing some students.

• Sports Union Report

Paper K2

Court noted the report.

13 Edinburgh Futures Institute

Paper L

Court was provided with a detailed overview of the creation of the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) in the former Edinburgh Royal Infirmary building. The complexity of this conversion project was outlined and the impact on costs of unforeseen issues with the fabric of the building was noted. Delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent inflationary economic environment had also contributed to rising costs.

The importance of completing the project was noted. Significant returns to the University were expected even with increased levels of investment, given the high-value activity that EFI would facilitate. Moreover, the renovated building would be recognised as an important asset to the city and a significant achievement in terms of heritage preservation.

It was recognised that the allocation of additional funding would bring opportunity costs in other areas of capital expenditure. Managing this through the formulation of the next Capital Plan would enable the University to prioritise accordingly.

Court

- agreed the allocation of additional funding in the Capital Plan; and
- delegated authority to Estates Committee to approve additional funding up to an agreed limit.

14 Research & Innovation Strategy

Paper M

Court considered a new Research & Innovation Strategy, noting that it had benefitted from extensive consultation, culminating in extended discussion by Senate, Policy & Resources Committee and the University Executive. The strategy had been strengthened in various ways in response to this input, in particular in its discussion of mutual benefits between research and teaching.

The strategy was written for both internal and external audiences. To strengthen and clarify its impact in each case, a concise executive summary would be produced and there would be a distinct communications plan for University staff.

The strategy was commended for its quality and level of ambition.

Court approved the strategy and endorsed the proposed next steps: the development of a communications and engagement plan and oversight of implementation, monitoring and evaluation by the Research Strategy Group.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

15 Externally Facilitated Court Effectiveness Review Paper N

The proposals for the next Externally Facilitated Court Effectiveness Review were approved.

16 General Council Membership & Registration Ordinance Paper O

The General Council Membership & Registration Ordinance was approved to be put forward for statutory consultation.

17 Health and Safety Annual Report Paper P

The Health and Safety Annual Report was noted.

18 Development & Alumni: Granting of Probate Paper Q

The Development & Alumni: Granting of Probate was approved.

19 Donations & Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity Paper R

The Donations & Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity was noted.

20 Resolutions Paper S

The Resolutions were approved.

21 Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

22 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 26 February 2024



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

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. In general, Court is asked to note the information presented. 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. 2024 has begun in full force for the University but also for the Higher Education sector. The often precarious state of Higher Education funding has been firmly on the agenda, initially due to the UUK PWC report on the [Financial Sustainability of the UK Higher Education Sector](#). The Report, published in January, highlighted the increasing financial pressures the sector is facing given the falling value of funding per student in terms of tuition fees and teaching grants. The Report's analysis of the picture in Scotland was particularly concerning, where 36% of participating institutions are expected to fall into a deficit position by 2024/25. The increasing reliance on cross-subsidisation from international and postgraduate fee income is writ large throughout the Report.
6. International students came into further focus in February as media interest fuelled additional, often misconstrued, attention on the issue. There was a specific focal point on suggesting that foundation programme international students were being given a "backdoor" into some top flight UK universities by gaining entry with lower qualifications. A number of Russell Group universities were named, although not Edinburgh (to note that we do not work with any of the commercial providers named in the article), in the inaccurate coverage. There was some additional, more general coverage in Scotland with accusations that international students are displacing those from Scotland, allegations which were strongly refuted and again show a lack of understanding of the realities of HE funding. The Scottish Funding Council have been working with the Sector in Scotland to closely monitor the evident shortfall in international student tuition fee income and we continue to work with them on this.
7. Immigration policy is a key area for the Conservative Party, and in an election year we expect to see continued emphasis on these matters. We continue to work with UUK

and the Russell Group who are both lobbying heavily to counter erroneous claims and promote the strengths of the sector such as the contribution universities make to the economy, quantified at Edinburgh as £7.5 billion per annum for the UK (2022 data).

8. Although in a position of relative strength and financial stability Edinburgh is still operating within the constraints of the current HE funding model both in Scotland and the wider UK and we are subject to the same fluctuating markets and demographics as others. The current position for Edinburgh is covered in detail within the Finance Director's Report which will be presented at Court.

9. I also feel that it is important to state that the current rhetoric, often prevalent in the media and with some of our political leaders, fails to take into account the impact on people and the very positive contribution from international students and staff. We at the University of Edinburgh are immensely proud of both, and our internationalism is something to celebrate as we acknowledge the invaluable contribution that it makes to our University.

10. As part of the work on Senior Leadership Team visibility, recognised before the PA Consulting Report on People & Money but certainly augmented by it, has been to schedule a series of all-staff meetings, including the first held in person since the pandemic. These took place during late February: members of the Senior Team held three sessions across the campus (Central area, Little France and Kings Buildings) and one online meeting. The sessions trialled a new approach with some social time scheduled at the beginning, enabling informal interaction with attendees, before the formal sessions got underway. First impressions were that this worked well: at the initial meeting I was pleased to update staff on progress with the staff and student experience and along with colleagues, Vice-Principal and Head of College Sarah Prescott, Vice-Principal Corporate Services Catherine Martin and Director of Human Resources James Saville, took questions on a range of subjects including: career progression both academic and professional services; increase in student accommodation rent; staff recruitment difficulties and the use of fixed term contracts.

11. People and Money continues to be a focus for the Senior Team with recent discussions looking at research, the 2024 roadmap and the PA Consulting recommendations. The Senior Leadership Team have also recently prioritised time for facilitated team development, identifying priorities and building collective commitment.

12. Looking at our staff experience, the investment we recently made in our staff through work to adjust the grade pay scales has now been agreed. We are very pleased to work with all three of the University trade union branches to agree a [joint statement](#) on partnership working, activities on the grade scale, fixed term contract use and other key priorities for the year ahead. The new scale will come into effect on the 1st April 2024 with some colleagues seeing an increase in pay in their April pay and others in August when the incremental uplift is applied.

13. We continue to operate in a welcome period without an industrial action mandate at the University, notably UCU are focusing on elections of their General Secretary and the National and Scotland committee roles, the votes for which close on the 1st March. It is therefore unlikely that we will see any change to the current industrial action situation in the coming month.

14. The annual update from Development & Alumni for 2022-23 features later on the Court agenda and I wish to highlight that it was a record year for gift income. Philanthropic activity continues to move forward positively, despite, or perhaps because of, so many difficult issues in the world. The fact that so many key donors continue to show their trust and confidence in our work on shared agendas to make the world a better place is never to be taken for granted, but I am sure that Court members will join me in appreciating their generosity and also the hard work of the Development & Alumni team in stewarding existing donors and continually developing relationships with potential new ones.

15. We have had plenty of contact with our Chancellor in recent weeks despite the pressure on her of recent events around the health of other members of the Royal Family. She visited the University to open the Institute for Regeneration and Repair and to visit the School of Informatics to mark the 60th Anniversary of Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence at the University. On the same day I attended an evening event at which she was the guest of honour, celebrating the union between the University Club and the New Club. On 12 February, the Chancellor hosted an evening event for our key current, and potential, philanthropic supporters for our Responsible AI agenda. We were very grateful to the Chancellor and to the King for allowing this to take place in the extraordinary surroundings of Buckingham Palace. 50 guests travelled from across the globe and country to hear updates on our plans from Professors Helen Hastie and Ewa Luger. There is no question from responses on the evening, and in the days since, that the event has moved several conversations and relationships forward very significantly and new agreements and partnerships should follow in due course.

16. A small selection of news from around the University to give a flavour of recent activity:

- The University's Zhejiang University partnership (ZJE), established in 2016, won Educational Partnership of the Year at the recent China-British Business Council awards. ZJE is the University of Edinburgh's flagship overseas partnership for education and scientific research that facilitates an ambitious global biomedical research agenda and is based in Haining, Zhejiang Province in China.
- Scotland Beyond Net Zero (SBNZ), founded jointly by Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, aims to help the country meet – and go beyond – its ambition of achieving net zero by 2045. The collaboration will catalyse action and empower government, policymakers, organisations and industry to make informed change to help Scotland reach its climate targets. While initially launched by Edinburgh and Glasgow, it will bring together world-class expertise from institutions across Scotland. Many other universities have already signed up.
- Dr James Cook has been awarded The Tam Dalyell Prize for Excellence in Engaging the Public with Science. The prize, awarded as part of the Edinburgh Science Festival, recognises and rewards the University's outstanding science communicators. Dr Cook uses immersive technology to recreate historical music performances including allowing the listener to hear exactly how music would have sounded in the now-ruined chapel at Linlithgow Palace.
- The new £14.25m Engineered Genetic Control Systems for Advanced Therapeutics Hub will establish improved gene therapy techniques for patients with serious conditions. It will create new biological tools to improve the effectiveness and safety of gene therapies, testing them in cancers, cardiovascular disease and rare

diseases. The hub will bring together a multidisciplinary team from the Universities of Edinburgh and Oxford, Imperial College London and the CRUK Scotland Institute. The centre is one of six announced as part of a £100m UK-wide investment in engineering biology by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

- Using AI to develop more efficient semiconductors, design more complex microchips, and improve the early prediction of debilitating diseases are some of the potential outcomes of the £24m funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). Of the nine centres announced as part of EPSRC's £80m UK-wide investment in applying AI to real world data and research, Edinburgh will lead or be involved in more than half, further cementing our place as a driving force in the development of AI in the UK.

Selected meetings and events from the start of December to end of February

17. University

- Welcomed the Chancellor to a visit to Informatics to mark the 60th Anniversary of Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence at the University and also to officially open the Institute for Regeneration and Repair at the BioQuarter.
- Delighted to participate in a dinner celebrating the University's contribution to Artificial Intelligence over the last 60 years, hosted by the Chancellor, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, at Buckingham Place.
- Welcomed attendees of the inaugural lecture of Professor Lisa Boden, Head of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, which was also the closing event to the School's bicentenary celebrations.
- Hosted one of a series of festive lunches for students at Pollock Halls.
- The Provost and I presented the awards at the Technicians Award Reception.
- Hosted an end of year reception at Regent Terrace to recognise and thank staff for their contribution over 2023.
- Welcomed UK Minister of State, Andrew Stephenson to the Chancellors' Building as part of a tour and a meeting of the UK Dementia Research Institute at their Edinburgh centre.
- Participated in a meeting with Childlight partners; the Human Dignity Foundation.
- Welcomed attendees of the United Nations University Centre for Education for Sustainable Development celebration.
- The Provost and I met with Neil Rennick, the Scottish Government's Director-General Education and Justice and gave him a tour of the Central campus.
- Participated in the new Widening Participation Strategy launch.
- Hosted a reception at Regent Terrace for the City Region Deal Executive Governance Group to mark the first 5 years of the Data-Driven Innovation Programme.
- Participated in a meeting on the challenges within Academic Medicine in Scotland, hosted by Edinburgh and which included representatives from Scotland's medical schools and the key Research Councils.
- Spoke to c.150 staff about priorities and challenges at a joint University Secretary's Group – Corporate Services Group Forum.
- Welcomed attendees to the launch event for 'Education Beyond Borders'.
- Participated in a podcast interview for 'The Student'.
- Provided a review of the year 2022-23 to General Council members at their Half-yearly meeting.
- Participated in several all-staff meetings at various locations and online.

- Participated in an online teaching session with students on the MSc Clinical Education students for their Policy, Leadership, & Management course.

18. *Edinburgh and Scotland*

- Participated in a meeting of the Chief Medical Officer's Senior Medical & Public Health Advisory Forum.
- Participated in a meeting of the Scottish Taskforce for Green and Sustainable Services.
- Participated in the Edinburgh Rugby Partnership launch at Murrayfield Stadium.
- The Provost and I participated in a working dinner, hosted by the University of Dundee, with Director of Wellcome, Dr John-Arne Røttingen, the Chair of Wellcome, Julia Gillard, and the COO of Wellcome, Dr Paul Shreier.
- Participated in a reception to mark the 70th Anniversary of the amalgamation of the New and University Clubs.
- Participated in a Scottish Financial Enterprise meeting.

19. *Sector and Public Affairs*

- Participated in the Annual Conversation meeting for the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal, attended by representatives from both governments and the partner institutions.
- Participated in City of Edinburgh Council's Edinburgh Award reception.
- Participated in various Universities UK meetings: chaired a session on 'Managing security-related issues in university research teams' at Universities UK Research and Innovation Conference; several roundtable meetings on the Israel-Gaza conflict; an International Policy Network meeting.
- Represented the University at the Lord Provost of Edinburgh's Christmas event.
- Held an introductory meeting with Jenny Gilruth MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.
- Participated in a meeting of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology Research Security Independent Advisory Board.
- Co-hosted the launch event for 'Scotland Beyond Net Zero' held at Dynamic Earth alongside Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glasgow, and Hermione Cockburn, Scientific Director at Dynamic Earth. The event was attended by members of the academic community around Scotland, people from industry and third sector organisations, and several members of the Scottish Parliament. Màiri McAllan MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy, provided the main speech.
- Attended the Lord Mayor's Dinner in honour of the First Minister at Mansion House, London.
- Participated in a Universities Scotland Board meeting.
- Participated in a Russell Group Board meeting and dinner with Professor Patrick Chinnery, Executive Chair, MRC.
- Took part in a Scottish Funding Council Board meeting
- Participated in a reception marking the birthday of His Majesty The Emperor of Japan.
- Chaired a meeting of the Higher Education/Further Education Strategy Group which feeds into the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal meetings.

20. *International*

- Participated in various meetings at the Una Europa assembly in Dublin.
- Participated in several meetings of the Universitas21 Executive Committee.
- Welcomed Zhejiang University Morningside Scholars as part of their study visit to Edinburgh and the UK.
- Participated in a Una Lecture panel discussion following the keynote address by Dr Thomas Estermann on 'The State of Play of University Autonomy' at the University of Zurich.
- Welcomed a delegation from the German-British Parliamentary Group to the University.
- Welcomed Professor Henrik Wegener, Rector, University of Copenhagen, and his senior team on a visit to Edinburgh.

Resource implications

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

Risk Management

22. 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

23. 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

24. No specific Equality and Diversity issues are identified.

Next steps/implications

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

Consultation

26. As the content is a summary of recent news no consultation is required.

Further information

27. Peter will take questions on any item at Court.

28. Author & Presenter

Professor Sir Peter Mathieson
Principal and Vice-Chancellor
February 2024

Freedom of Information

29. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Policy & Resources Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Policy & Resources Committee

Date of Meeting

2. 12 February 2024

The minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 12 February 2024 can be viewed at

<https://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Governance/PolicyandResources/2023-2024/20240212-PRC-Minute-Web.pdf>

Further information

29. Author

Daniel Wedgwood
Head of Court Services

Presenter

Janet Legrand
Convener, Policy & Resources Committee

Freedom of Information

30. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2024

Nominations Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Nominations Committee

Date of Meeting

2. 25 January 2024

Action Required

3. To note the key points from the meeting and to approve the recommendations as set out below.

Key points

Committee Memberships

4. A limited number of committee positions were being presented to the meeting for approval or recommendation to Court, with other proposals to follow at the next meeting of Nominations Committee.

5. Members noted the value of balancing the contributions of experienced committee members with regular turnover in committee membership, to introduce fresh perspectives and ensure a sense of independence. Ways to enhance the induction of new committee members were also discussed and it was agreed that potential approaches to this should be investigated.

6. The Committee

- approved the extension of Richard Terry's membership of Estates Committee until 31 July 2026;
- re-appointed Doreen Davidson as a member of Investment Committee for a term of one year, to run until 31 July 2025;
- re-appointed Jim Roth as a member of Investment Committee for a further term of two years, to run until 31 July 2026;
- recommended to Court that Julia Miller be re-appointed as a Trustee of the Staff Benefits Scheme for a two-year term to 31 July 2026 and that Doreen Davidson be re-appointed for a four-year term to 31 July 2028; and
- noted that the Principal would recommend to Court that Ashley Shannon be re-appointed as a Trustee of the Staff Benefits Scheme for a four-year term, to 31 July 2028, the relevant position being reserved for the Principal to make a recommendation for Court's approval.

7. The Committee also discussed the need to appoint a new Convener of Investment Committee. It was agreed that a process for recruitment to this position would be developed, such that a competitive process could be run in case multiple candidates were to come forward. It was noted that the incoming Convener might wish to take a view on the future membership of Investment Committee and that the durations of the above re-appointments might be reviewed in this context.

Contingency Deputising Arrangements for the Principal

8. It was noted that the 2023 revision of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance required that universities should have in place “a plan to address any discontinuity” in the highest leadership roles, including that of Principal. The University had such arrangements in place from the time of Covid-19 pandemic. These had been reviewed in the light of the new Code provision and the changed context. Some amendments were proposed, the majority of which reflected recent changes to the structure of the University’s Senior Leadership Team. (See Annex 1)

9. Nominations Committee recommended the revised document for Court’s approval, subject to the addition of material indicating arrangements to be followed in the event that multiple members of the University’s leadership (whether executive or non-executive) were unable to fulfil their roles at the same time. The Committee delegated authority to the Senior Lay Member to agree this additional material for transmission to Court.

Handling of Correspondence Addressed to Court

10. It was noted that the University had received an increasing volume of correspondence directed at members of Court and that, in this context, the Senior Lay Member had given an undertaking to Court that arrangements for handling such correspondence would be proposed through Nominations Committee.

11. A framework for handling different kinds of correspondence was considered. (See Annex 2) In line with current practice, this would place responsibility for relevant decisions primarily on the Vice-Principal & University Secretary, working in consultation with the Senior Lay Member. It was noted that the intention was to strike a balance between ensuring that Court members were fully informed of significant matters that were being raised to their attention and avoiding excessive calls on Court members’ time, in particular in the case of any inappropriate (for example, vexatious or commercially motivated) correspondence. In discussion, it was emphasised that both sides of this balance were important and that, while the proposals in many ways reflected current practice, the existence of an explicit framework would help to demonstrate consistency and fairness. The importance of directing correspondents to other processes, where appropriate, was also stressed.

12. Nominations Committee recommended the proposed approach and framework to Court.

Equality & Diversity

13. The equality and diversity of Court and its committees is considered when making recommendations or approvals.

Further information

14. Author

Daniel Wedgwood
Head of Court Services

Presenter

Janet Legrand
Convener, Nominations Committee

Freedom of Information

15. Open version



Nominations Committee Report: Annex 1

Contingency Deputising Arrangements for the Principal

Description of paper

1. This paper proposes updates to the previously agreed contingency deputising arrangements for the Principal.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. To review and approve the proposed updates.

Background and context

3. The current contingency deputising arrangements for the Principal were developed during the first period of the Covid-19 pandemic and approved in May 2020. Nearly four years on it is timely to review these given the changed context, including changes to the senior leadership in the intervening period and a new provision in the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance that governing bodies should ensure that plans are in place for any discontinuity in appointment at the top of the institution.

4. The current arrangements are set out below.

Prolonged temporary absence

5. Should the Principal be temporarily (for a period of more than a few days or weeks but with the confident expectation that they would be able to resume duties in the foreseeable future) unable to continue in role the Senior Vice-Principal (a position that has since been superseded by the different role of Provost) would be asked to temporarily take on the responsibilities and accountabilities of the Principal subject to enhanced Court assurance and support mechanisms. The enhanced assurance and support would include the Senior Vice-Principal consulting with a new committee of Court on a weekly basis on key issues and proposed decisions, including those impacting on the financial sustainability or reputation of the University. Discussions would be documented to provide an audit trail. The new committee would consist of the Senior Lay Member (chair), Convener of Policy & Resources Committee (if not the Senior Lay Member), Convener of Audit & Risk Committee and the University Secretary. In addition, changes in the structure of the University, the membership of governance or senior management groups and any proposals for recruitment and retention of key staff would not be progressed without the explicit agreement of the Senior Lay Member. The Senior Lay Member would consider on a weekly basis during the Principal's absence whether the expectation of return within a foreseeable period remains realistic.

Permanent absence/departure from office

6. Should the Principal be permanently unable to continue in the role, the procedures above would be followed while at the same time the Nominations Committee would immediately begin a search for an interim Principal using an abbreviated version of the agreed process for appointing a permanent Principal. This would include a Selection Panel considering both internal and external candidates. Once an interim Principal is in place, the usual full procedure for the appointment of a permanent Principal would then begin.

Discussion

7. Nominations Committee reviewed the current arrangements at its meeting on 25 January 2024 and agreed to recommend to Court that the following changes be made:

- It would be helpful to specify arrangements for temporary absences that are not prolonged, e.g. periods of leave, overseas travel and visits etc. The Principal has already specified his intention that the Provost 'will also deputise for me when required' (Court, 6 October 2021, Paper C 'Senior Leadership Recruitment') and this is added to the document, while making clear that the Principal has discretion to nominate other colleagues depending on the circumstances. It is also added to the document that any deputy for the Principal must act within the parameters of the Principal's authority delegated by Court (set out [here](#) – a document which is also due for review and could be updated once any changes to the deputising arrangements have been agreed).
- The arrangements should be changed to reflect the changes in the senior leadership, particularly the appointment of the Provost. The current arrangements were put in place at a time when the then Senior Vice-Principal was not likely to continue in office beyond a few years and the senior leadership team as a whole would be refreshed, which has now taken place. Two changes are recommended:
 - i) Slightly lengthening the period of time before the enhanced oversight arrangements are triggered from 'a period of more than a few days or weeks' to 'a period of around four weeks or more'. This is also a more feasible timeframe to assess whether an absence will be prolonged and to set up weekly meetings involving two or more Court members.
 - ii) In the event of a permanent absence/departure from office, rather than undertake an abbreviated recruitment process open to external and internal candidates to appoint an interim Principal followed by a full recruitment process to appoint a permanent Principal, it is recommended that the Provost be invited for consideration by a Selection Panel, followed by a full recruitment process to appoint a permanent Principal if they are appointed as interim Principal. If the Provost declines the invitation or is not recommended by the Selection Panel, the Selection Panel could invite expressions of interest from other internal candidates, to be followed by a full recruitment process to appoint a permanent Principal once an interim Principal has been appointed. The rationale for this change is in recognition that the Provost has been appointed in part to deputise for the Principal as required and that an abbreviated recruitment process including external candidates would not necessarily be particularly abbreviated and an external candidate if appointed may have a lengthy notice period, with a commensurate impact on the period of time before a permanent Principal is appointed.
- Add reference to arrangements should multiple members of the University's leadership (whether executive or non-executive) be unable to fulfil their roles at the same time.

8. Nominations Committee also noted that the document is not intended to catalogue every eventuality and responses to these but to provide a framework for decision-making under a number of scenarios. Should circumstances that had not been anticipated arise, or should the view of Court change over time, Court remains empowered to make new or differing decisions on the delegation of authority and its oversight.

Resource implications

9. None as a result of this paper.

Risk Management

10. The proposed arrangements are intended to bolster the University's risk management in this area.

Equality & Diversity

11. Any appointment process for an interim or permanent Principal appointment would be undertaken with full regard of equality and diversity aspects.

Next steps/implications

12. If approved the revised document will be finalised and circulated to the Senior Leadership Team for their information.

Consultation

13. The current arrangements were discussed verbally at the April 2020 Court meeting then subsequently drafted and approved by Exception Committee in May 2020. Proposed updates were considered by Nominations Committee on 25 January and the recommendations in this paper agreed for submission to Court.

Further information

14. Authors

Lewis Allan
Senior Governance Advisor to the
Vice-Principal & University Secretary

Leigh Chalmers
Vice-Principal & University Secretary

Presenter

Leigh Chalmers
Vice-Principal & University Secretary

Freedom of Information

15. Open following approval



Nominations Committee Report: Annex 2

Handling of Correspondence Addressed to Court

Description of paper

1. In line with discussions at the 4 December meeting of Court, this paper proposes a new protocol for handling correspondence addressed to members of Court.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. To approve the proposal, as recommended by Nominations Committee

Background and context

3. In recent years, the University has received an increasing number of letters addressed to, or with the request that they be shared with, members of Court. The content of these letters has varied, from merely raising awareness of some issue to making allegations of misconduct. In the past, correspondence with commercial motivations has also been directed at Court members.

4. This paper relates primarily to external correspondence received from third parties. In some instances, such correspondence has been sent from members of the University community. However, in such cases, there will usually be a clear alternative route through which members of the University community can raise concerns. For example, staff members may be referred to grievance procedures, the Whistleblowing Policy or other appropriate procedures, while the University's Complaints Handling Procedure will usually be the most appropriate route for students to raise significant concerns and there are specific guidelines for handling any complaints about Court members.

5. While it is reasonable to suggest that external correspondents might raise matters of crucial importance to the attention of Court, as the body ultimately responsible for stewardship of the University and trustees of the University as a charitable organisation, there is also a risk that Court members could find correspondence to be an unjustified demand on their time or, in some cases, simply inappropriate. It is also possible that vexatious correspondence could be received.

6. To date, the University has no set protocol for dealing with such correspondence. Instead, the Vice-Principal & University Secretary has had to make judgments, in consultation with the Senior Lay Member, as to whether it is appropriate to share a given piece of correspondence with Court members.

7. Different approaches have been taken in different cases. Most commonly relevant letters have been made available to Court members on request, but in some cases the correspondence has been shared with the Senior Lay Member only, having been judged (through discussion with the Senior Lay Member) not to justify a call on Court members' time and attention.

8. This relatively informal approach risks putting the Vice-Principal & University Secretary and any others involved in a difficult position. The desire to communicate directly with Court typically reflects significant strength of feeling on the part of the correspondent. Indeed, the majority of letters recently directed at Court relate to

matters of notable controversy, in relation to which different members of Court and constituencies within the wider University may hold strongly contrasting views. It is therefore important that the handling of such correspondence should proceed in a demonstrably principled fashion, without favour to any given individual or group. Establishing a clear framework for this would help to give confidence to all concerned.

9. This issue was noted by the Senior Lay Member at the 4 December meeting of Court and it was agreed that a proposal should be brought to Nominations Committee.

Discussion

10. Nominations Committee discussed this issue at its meeting of 25 January 2024 and considered a number of potential approaches.

11. The approach recommended to Court by Nominations Committee is to some degree a formalisation of current practices. Recognising that an element of judgment is inevitably a part of the process, it is proposed that accountability for relevant decisions continues to reside with the Vice-Principal & University Secretary and that the Senior Lay Member should, as now, be kept informed of all incoming correspondence and consulted as appropriate on its handling.

12. To provide a consistent framework for these decisions, it is further proposed that there be an agreed set of criteria for assessing whether a given piece of correspondence should be shared with Court and, if so, by what means. Suggested criteria and relevant actions, as recommended by Nominations Committee, are provided in the Appendix to this paper.

Resource implications

13. The proposals in this paper require no additional resource. Implementing the proposals may lead to more efficient use of resources, in terms of staff and Court members' time.

Risk Management

14. The proposals set out above contribute to management of reputational risk by clarifying reasonable expectations and demonstrating a consistent approach to all correspondents.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

15. The current proposals have no impact in relation to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & Diversity

16. Ensuring and demonstrating equal treatment of correspondents from any background and with different beliefs or opinions is a key motivation for the introduction of a clear protocol in this area.

Next steps/implications

17. The proposed protocol has been adopted informally with the support of Nominations Committee and will be used for all relevant future correspondence if agreed by Court.

Consultation

18. The paper follows discussions at the last meeting of Court. It was reviewed by the Vice-Principal & University Secretary and by Legal Services prior to presentation to Nominations Committee.

Further information19. Author

Daniel Wedgwood
Head of Court Services
January 2024

Presenter

Leigh Chalmers
Vice-Principal & University Secretary

Freedom of Information

20. Open following approval.

Appendix – proposed framework for decision

<i>Type of correspondence</i>	<i>Usual action</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Significant, novel concerns or accusations from external parties regarding the running of the University, which do not identifiably relate to any commercial interests (see below).	Share with Senior Lay Member. Subject to the Senior Lay Member's agreement, make available to Court members via the Court wiki. Alert Court members to the correspondence received through a digest provided ahead of each Court meeting, to avoid repeated alerts when multiple letters are received. The Senior Lay Member retains the discretion to advise other courses of action, depending on the nature of the correspondence.	Such concerns or accusations would need to have merit, in the sense of not being plainly vexatious or based on demonstrable falsehoods. Correspondence that repeats even a serious concern or allegation will not necessarily be forwarded to Court: once Court's awareness has been raised, further correspondence might be seen as campaigning (see below).
Significant, specific concerns or accusations from external parties regarding the running of the University, which do not identifiably relate to any commercial interests (see below), but which may have been dealt with previously, may be addressed by an existing policy, and/or may in effect require a technical response.	Share with Senior Lay Member. Subject to the Senior Lay Member's agreement, request a management response to the correspondent, rather than distribution to Court.	Not all correspondence, even on serious matters, needs to be raised to Court members' attention. The Vice-Principal & University Secretary and the Senior Lay Member may agree that some matters are best dealt with through a management response, especially where known circumstances, the legal context or pre-existing policy point to a straightforward, predictable and/or required response.
General campaigning on any issue, including attempts to put pressure on the University's senior management to take a particular action (includes open letters).	Acknowledge receipt, share with Senior Lay Member; do not pass on to Court.	Correspondence with Court should not be seen as an open route to push any agenda, whatever its perceived merits or importance.
Communications with a commercial motivation (whether overtly or covertly)	Acknowledge receipt, share with Senior Lay Member; do not pass on to Court.	There may be an element of judgment in attributing commercial motivations, but this kind of communication should be strongly deterred: it is clearly inappropriate to attempt to gain any commercial advantage by influencing Court in any way. Any accusations of wrong-doing that related to commercial activity would in the first instance be a matter for Legal Services, rather than Court.



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Audit and Risk Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Audit & Risk Committee.

Date of Meeting

2. Virtual meeting held on 30 November 2023 and meetings by correspondence on 12-14 December 2023 and 23-26 January 2024.

Action Required

3. To note the key points from the meetings.

Key points

Annual Report and Accounts

4. At its virtual meeting on 30 November 2023, the Committee reviewed the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2023 and a document setting out the key changes since these were reviewed at the meeting on 20 November. It was noted that Court would be asked at its meeting on 4 December 2023 to approve delegating authority to the Convener of ARC to review the final external auditor's report for the year ended 31 July 2023 and, if content, to refer the 2022-23 Annual Report and Accounts to Court Exception Committee for approval. It was agreed that Audit and Risk Committee members would have the opportunity to review the Annual Report and Accounts and provide comments to the Convener, prior to his recommendation to Exception Committee.

5. The Committee received by circulation on 12-14 December 2024 the Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23 and the external auditor PwC's report for the year ended 31 July 2023 and agreed to support the Convener in recommending approval of the Annual Report and Accounts to Court Exception Committee.

Paragraphs 6-8: closed section

Equality & Diversity

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

Further information

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 10. <u>Author</u> | <u>Presenter</u> |
| Kirstie Graham | Douglas Millican |
| Deputy Head of Court Services | Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee |

Freedom of Information

11. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Knowledge Strategy Committee

Date of Meeting

2. 25 January 2024

Action Required

3. To note the key points from the meeting.

Key points

Presentation: Internal Adoption of Artificial Intelligence

4. Michael Rovatsos, Professor of Artificial Intelligence, gave a presentation on the internal adoption of artificial intelligence (AI). It was noted a short-life working group had been convened in September 2023, and had been asked for recommendations to address risks and opportunities in AI covering all areas of University activity. The current draft report is close to being finalised and this would be uploaded onto the KSC wiki in due course. The following was covered in the presentation:

- An overview of AI and the University, noting that whilst there are areas that require more immediate attention, a strategic approach is needed to address longer-term issues;
- A summary of AI in the sector, noting we can be sector leading in our approach;
- The use of AI across thematic areas, including teaching and learning (particularly around assessment and concerns of plagiarism), research, operations and governance; and
- The initial 13 recommendations, structured around three areas: managing risks, developing capabilities and creating opportunities.

5. It was concluded that the rise of AI creates both challenges and opportunities for the University, and there was a need to enhance our capability and adapt our ways of working if we want to maximise benefits and minimise risks. How our approach is communicated to staff and students, and how they can engage with AI-related activities, was considered essential.

6. The Committee welcomed the presentation and the following points were raised in discussion:

- The importance of AI training being available for staff and students;
- Access to AI being fair and equal across the staff and student populations;
- The need to work differently across business units depending on requirements;
- The successful adoption of some AI tools already, for example in improving captioning, the process of converting the audio content of media to text;

- The pace of AI cannot be dictated by the University, so we have to innovate and adapt in an agile way; and
- Additional resources are critical so the University has the ability to react and plan accordingly.

7. The Convener thanked Professor Rovatsos for his presentation and noted the Committee's strong endorsement of and support for the draft recommendations.

Presentation: Information Services Group Artificial Intelligence Products

8. Anne Robertson, Interim Director, EDINA, gave a presentation on the internal use of AI. She highlighted three areas where this is being taken forward:

- **EdHelp ChatBot.** This is an automated chat service for EdHelp, accessed behind EASE authentication (the University's sign-on service). It has the aim of increasing self-service resolutions at first line with a virtual assistant, with a 20% deflection from the existing helpdesk. It uses EdHelps's frequently asked questions as its knowledge base, and will be piloted from the start of February 2024.
- **Extreme Learning Machines.** This is a web user interface, which provides free-at-the-point-of-use access to OpenAI's large language models (LLMs). It uses OpenAI's Application Programming Interface (API), paid for centrally, and is also accessed via EASE authentication.
- **Automated Systematic Reviews.** It was noted that systematic literature reviews are a significant element of research in terms of cost and time, and that large studies can fail to progress because of the volume of papers that need to be evaluated. Two examples were given in how AI has helped in this area.

9. The Committee welcomed the presentation and the advances the University was making in this area. On the EdHelp ChatBot, it was confirmed that there would be an option to speak to a member of staff between 09:30 and 16:30, Monday – Friday, using a "Live Chat" button, and that information would be consumed to the knowledge base to assist with future questions. It was noted that communication around the ChatBot and the services it can assist with would be key.

10. The Convener thanked Anne for her presentation, and noted it would be helpful for a similar update to be provided to the Student Lifecycle Management Group, convened by Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students.

Paragraphs 11-14: closed section

Chief Information Officer Update

15. Key activities and updates since the last meeting were reported, including:

- **Microsoft agreement.** A 3-year sector-negotiated agreement had recently been signed to preserve current pricing. Once this 3-year period concludes, the sector was likely to see a reduction in the discounts offered.
- **Large scale cyber incidents.** The British Library had been targeted at the end of October 2023 and was still in the initial stages of its recovery, with

many of its services and systems still down. There was therefore a need to remain vigilant.

- **Technicians group.** Information Services Group is reviewing how it will work with and potentially join the technicians group. The Director of the User Services Division has been assigned as the ISG representative on the group.
- **Open Research Conference.** The University is hosting this event in May 2024 (<https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/open-research/edinburgh-open-research-conference>).

Digital Strategy Implementation Overview

16. A paper describing the key elements of the Digital Strategy Implementation, outlining the links between each element and its purpose within a broader cyclical process, was discussed. The Committee noted a number of points including the proposed key performance indicators and the frequency of their reporting, and the inclusion of tangible benefits to be presented within the paper. Subject to the clarification of these points, the Committee endorsed the implementation approach outlined in the paper.

Paragraphs 17-20: closed section

Other items

21. The Committee noted papers on Information Security (including an Information Security Policy Refresh); the Information Services Group (ISG) IT Assurance Report; the ISG capital envelope 2022-2028; the Library & University Collections Strategy 2020-25 Review; the Library Materials Budget 2023/24 Update; the Heritage Collections Annual Report 2023; the ISG Capital Envelope 2023-2029; a Network Replacement Programme Update; a People & Money Systems Update; and an update on progress of the Timetabling and Exams Replacement Project. Regular reports were received from the IT Committee, Library Committee, Digital Research Services Steering Group, University Collections Advisory Committee and Estates Committee.

22. There was also a discussion on the relationship between the Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC) and the Information Technology Committee (ITC), with a more detailed discussion due to take place at the next KSC meeting.

Paragraph 23: closed section

Further information

24. Author

Jamie Tait
Governance Manager & Clerk to
Knowledge Strategy Committee

Presenter

Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students

Freedom of Information

25. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Senatus Academicus Report

Description of paper

1. A report of business considered by Senatus Academicus ('Senate') at meetings held on:

- 10-24 January 2024 (e-Senate, by correspondence)
- 7 February 2024

Action Required

2. The full agenda, papers and minutes of Senate meetings are published at [Agendas, Papers and Minutes](#). These newly include the minutes of a number of meetings that were approved on 7 February 2024, as noted below. Court members receive email updates when Senate papers, including minutes of previous meetings, are published.

Discussion

E-Senate business conducted between 10-24 January 2024

3. The following provides a summary of e-Senate business conducted between 10-24 January 2024 and, where appropriate, extracts from the approved Report of e-Senate business are provided:

- **Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita (e-S 23/24 2 A)**
Senate agreed to confer the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita on those professors listed in the paper. One member provided comment on this item. One member was critical of the procedural approach to e-Senate stating that they believe it to be poor form to confer the status of Emeritus via a process where nil response equals assent. They stated their hope that the e-Senate process be reviewed now that the external review has concluded. The member indicated a preference that a Special Minute refer to the candidate's intention to remain active within the University and that Schools be recommended to include this information moving forward.
- **Court Resolutions (e-S 23/24 2 B)**
Two members submitted comments on this item. One member expressed a view that a change from European Politics to Neuropolitics required explanation, whilst another member expressed a view that Personal Chairs should be able to determine the appropriate title to correspond with their area of academic expertise.
- **Communications from the University Court (e-S 23/24 2 C)**
Senate formally noted the communications. Comments were received from four members.
19 June 2023
Item 2: Principal's Report
Two members commented on the use and meaning of the terms "freedom of speech" and "academic freedom" expressing opposing views.

One member suggested that the University utilise the expertise within the institution on subject of academic freedom and that the approach be considered by Senate.

Item 3: Student Experience Reviews with Schools/Deaneries 2022-23

One member commented on this item, expressing caution with anecdotal reports of positive feedback regarding the Student Support Model without a defined metric for measuring its success.

9 October 2023

Item 7: Staff Engagement Survey

Two members commented on this item, with one commenter reflecting on there being a lack of time given to the staff survey and another commenter suggesting that the low response rate may be associated with broader institutional matters at the time, including industrial action and confidence in University leadership.

- **Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee (e-S 22/23 2 D)**

Senate noted the report of the Knowledge Strategy Committee. Comments were received from three members.

Item 2: Presentation: Digital Strategy, Digital Estate Update

One member commented on the benefits of SeatEd and encouraged ethical use of anonymised data.

Another member reflected on there being a lack of evidence of the University's looking to learn from other institutions where there IoT/SMART-like systems have been rolled out at scale. The member urged adequate piloting of systems and consideration of data use and robust of opt-out provisions.

Item 3: Chief Information Officer Update

One member sought clarification regarding the reference to updates to the student record (EUCLID) as being linked to the Curriculum Transformation Project.

Another member expressed concern regarding the proposal for a Chatbot within EdHelp, suggesting that investment should be directed toward human-supported alternatives.

Item 4: Data Centre Capacity

One member commented on the absence and delay of carbon accounting in relation to the University's supercomputer facilities as detracting from the University's carbon and sustainability commitments.

Meeting of Senate on 7 February 2024

4. The following provides an overview of the Senate business conducted at the 7 February 2024 meeting. Where appropriate, the approval of any items by Senate is provided. The full report of the 7 February meeting will be provided to a future Court meeting, following approval of the minutes.

5. Approvals:

- **Minutes of Senate meeting held on 29 March 2023, 24 May 2023 and 11 October 2023 and Reports of e-Senate held from 26 April-10 May 2023, 13-27 September 2023 and 10-24 January 2024 - S 23/24 2A:**

Senate approved the minutes of the 29 March 2023, 24 May 2023 and 11 October 2023 meetings.

Senate approved the Reports of e-Senate held from 26 April – 10 May 2023, 13-27 September 2023 and 10-24 January 2024.

- **Senate External Review – formation of a Task and Finish Group - S 23/24**
Senate approved the formation of the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group subject to four amendments.
Amendments 1, 2 and 3 were approved without a vote. Amendment 4 was approved via a majority vote of 82%.
 - **Amendment 1:** Addition of the following to **Membership**:
In view of the scale and complexity of the task, and the importance of identifying effective long-term solutions, members of the Group should be compensated in a manner appropriate to their role in the University for the substantial time commitment.
 - **Amendment 2:** Addition of the following to the **Action Requested**:
The formation of a Senate External Review Task and Finish Group shall not preclude members of Senate from separately raising matters and developing proposals for improving the effectiveness of Senate and its committees.
 - **Amendment 3:** Addition of the following to the **Terms of Reference**:
As part of proposal development, to facilitate discussion and consensus among Senate members so that reforms are based on a shared and inclusive understanding of Senate priorities.
 - **Amendment 4:** Amend the **Composition** as follows:
Increase 4 elected members to 8 elected staff members, with at least two from each College.

- **Senate Elections 2024/25 & Senate Standing Committee Elections 2024/25 – S 23/24 2G** [cf. Court paper L for the present meeting]
Senate approved two revisions to the Senate membership which were presented in response to the Senate External Review recommendations.
 - The first proposal approved via a majority vote of 66% is for a total of nine (9) positions to be prioritised for staff who hold an early career academic position. The nine positions are to be equally split across each College, with a total of three (3) positions in each College.
The Senate Election Regulations have been revised accordingly and are presented to Court for approval at its 26 February 2024 meeting.
 - The second proposal supported by Senate is for a total of four (4) ex officio positions will be reserved for elected professional services staff. The four positions will be comprised of the Professional Services staff member on Court, and three elected Professional Services staff members with one position for each College.

Senate approved the arrangements for the operation of the 2024 elections for academic staff to Senate, including the appointment of the Returning Officers, process, and timelines.

Senate approved the arrangements for the election of elected Senate staff members to Senate Standing Committees for 2024/25, including the appointment of the Returning Officers, process, and timelines.

Senate recommended a further amendment to the Senate Election Regulations to Court form approval. This amendment is to clarify the position of Senate Assessors and the Academic Staff member to Court within the Regulations.

- **Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP) Briefing**

Senate received a briefing and a number of motions were proposed in response. The following motions were approved:

- Agreement of goals

2.1 Senate notes the generally positive reception of the Edinburgh Student Vision (ESV), and in accordance with governance expectations approved in 2023, requests that final approval of the Edinburgh Student Vision (ESV) will be brought to Senate, without delegation to any other body, as soon as possible.

[Senate approved Motion 2.1 without requiring a vote.]

- Separation of UG and PGT Curriculum Transformation Projects

Acknowledging that the PGT proposals attracted many positive comments from members at the January special session, CTP leadership will prepare formal proposals for the PGT Framework and bring these to Senate for approval as a priority action, with separate proposals for the UG Framework to follow at a later date.

[Senate approved Motion 2.1 without requiring a vote.]

- The removal of compulsory elements in the UG Framework

2.3 To promote appropriate subsidiarity of decision-making about degree components and to make space for new curriculum elements to win adoption by proving their worth in practice, and to preserve the importance of student choice, the UG Framework for CTP shall not mandate the introduction of compulsory courses or compulsory credit-bearing elements into degree programmes.

[Senate approved Motion 2.3 by a majority vote of 86%]

- Importance of local decision-making

2.4 We recommend an implementation model of 'accreditation' is adopted for CTP, which will allow Schools to demonstrate how they are meeting the important aspirations promoted by CTP, such as inclusive assessment, experiential learning, addressing key contemporary challenges and improving students' employability. Where Schools resolve to adopt new compulsory elements within programmes, in order to deliver CTP, this will be managed through usual governance structures including subject-area teaching committees and School Boards of Studies.

[Senate approved Motion 2.4 by a majority vote of 86%]

- Successful change management

2.5 As a large-scale strategic change project, we recommend that CTP proceed in accordance with key principles, including that change must have a purpose that can be evaluated, change must have comprehensive risk management, and change must be properly resourced. Accordingly, and in line with the expectations established by the external review into People & Money, all recommendations and proposals emerging from the CTP will be accompanied by

- specific and measurable indicators of success aligned to university strategic priorities;

- a comprehensive risk assessment and risk management plan;
- a detailed costing and demonstration of appropriate resource.
- These documents will be reviewed by appropriate Senate committees and approved by full Senate prior to the adoption of any such changes.

[Senate approved Motion 2.5 by a majority vote of 86%]

- Challenge Courses

2.6 We recommend that optional Challenge Courses are not confined to pre-Honours, and instead propose the development of optional Challenge Courses at Honours as well as pre-Honours, matched to appropriate SQCF criteria, in order to develop the full potential of cross-disciplinary content.

[Senate approved Motion 2.6 by a majority vote of 89%]

- **Curriculum Transformation Project Reflection paper**

Senate approved the following motions in response to this paper:

- Senate notes the generally positive reception of the Edinburgh Student Vision (ESV), and in accordance with governance expectations approved in 2023, requests that final approval of the Edinburgh Student Vision (ESV) will be brought to Senate, without delegation to any other body, as soon as possible.
[Approved without requiring a vote.]
- Acknowledging that the PGT proposals attracted many positive comments from members at the January special session, CTP leadership will prepare formal proposals for the PGT Framework and bring these to Senate for approval as a priority action, with separate proposals for the UG Framework to follow at a later date.
[Approved without requiring a vote.]
- The project team will use the feedback, questions and concerns raised by Senate and SEC as set out in this paper to guide the ongoing development of formal proposals for the PGT Curriculum Framework and UG Curriculum Framework for onward recommendation by the CT Board. Such proposals will be taken to the appropriate School and College governance structures and University committees, to SEC for endorsement, Senate for approval and then APRC to take forward the technical implementation and detail of policies in line with Senate's oversight of the University's academic mission and regulations.
[Approved by a majority vote of 52%]
- As a large-scale strategic change project, we recommend that CTP proceed in accordance with key principles, including that change must have a purpose that can be evaluated, change must have comprehensive risk management, and change must be properly resourced. Accordingly, all proposed changes to curriculum arising from CTP will be brought to Senate for approval following consideration and recommendation where appropriate from the subcommittees of Senate.
[Approved by a majority vote of 58%]

6. Senate discussed a number of other matters, including the following. Where appropriate, details will be conveyed to Court in the Senate Report to the 22 April meeting of Court, subject to the completion of an approved record of the Senate meeting.

- People and Money External Review
- General Council Membership & Registration Ordinance - S 23/24 2C
- Senate Standing Committees - Mid-Year Reflection on Committee Priorities and Upcoming Business - S 23/24 2D
- Senate input to a proposed successor to the University's Climate Strategy - S 23/24 2E

7. Senate received the following items for information / for noting:

- Senate Standing Orders - S 23/24 2L
- Quality Enhancements and Standards Review Report - S 23/24 2M
- Research Strategy Group Report - S 23/24 2N
- A Member-Led Approach to Senate Effectiveness –S 23/24 2O
- Corrections and Qualifications to the External Senate Review Report – S 23/24 2P

Further information

8. Author

Olivia Hayes
Academic Policy Officer

Presenter

Peter Mathieson
Principal & Vice-Chancellor

Freedom of Information

9. Open paper



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Student Experience Update

Description of paper

1. This paper provides an update on actions to improve the student experience, with a particular focus on assessment and feedback. It is comprised of three parts:

- i). Update on Assessment and Feedback priority improvement work
- ii). Update on the Student Support Model
- iii). Update on other student experience improvement activities

The paper should be read in conjunction with the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review paper.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is asked to note the findings presented in this paper and to comment on the proposals for how the University is progressing on our commitment to improve the quality of the student experience.

Paragraph 3: closed section

Background and context

4. In response to our strategic ambition to improve student experience, we have developed a student experience portfolio, based on the student framework, which sets out our priorities. These are:

- Three pieces of work designed to lead to genuinely transformational outcomes for our students: Student Support, Assessment and Feedback, and Curriculum Transformation;
- A suite of continuous improvement initiatives to address pain-points identified by, and impacting our students; and
- Greater focus on alignment, consistency and prioritisation of approach across the University, including ensuring effective resource planning, and communication of and engagement on initiatives to our university community.

5. The impact of the work is measured in various ways, including by student feedback in the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

6. We have also redeveloped our internal Pulse surveys, with academic and student input, so that we can seek to capture early and regular indicators of how our actions are evidencing improvements.

7. We have established structures which will help with the management of this portfolio of prioritised work.

Discussion

8. This section outlines and updates Court on the significant areas of work in Student Experience.

Paragraphs 9-19: closed section

Oversight of Assessment and Feedback improvements

20. The work overseen by the Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Board is demonstrated in activities taking place in Colleges and Schools. As standard, these agreed deliverables are monitored through College Education and College Strategy and Management Committees. Examples of how we are responding to the local challenges facing each College, are outlined below.

21. CSE (College of Science and Engineering) have established a working group to coordinate the activity going forward and are running a series of workshops to address specific aspects of assessment and feedback for their Schools. These will culminate in a student and staff workshop on 27 February with the aim of consensus about common elements of feedback across the College.

22. In CAHSS (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), Assessment and Feedback was the theme of their recent Quality Assurance Forum; it was a focus item for the Directors of Teaching Network; and it formed the basis of a group feedback activity at the College's last Student Staff Liaison Committee. Additionally, CAHSS Schools are actively pursuing significant changes in their assessment strategies in response to the Principles and Priorities, and updates have been provided on how to navigate major programme change approval in a light-touch way to avoid delays. A Deputy Head of College has been appointed to provide additional strategic capacity in support of CAHSS's priority to develop and support a world-class student experience, such as ensuring the delivery of assessment and feedback outcomes.

23. CMVM (College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine) are modernising ways of working across the College. Included in this is a key focus on bringing together all aspects of their approach to teaching and learning, enabling the College to enhance effectiveness and operate more strategically. A workstream on assessment and feedback will be part of this including co-creation of next steps across staff and student communities. Assessment and Feedback is a priority for CMVM quality assurance activities. A focussed discussion will be held at College Executive in February which will enable a more joined-up approach across Schools and Deaneries in order to take a coordinated approach to any changes in assessment strategies required.

24. We have also introduced structures to ensure the management and delivery of this work. At University-level the groups/activities responding to this work are:

- Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Board (SEDaMOB)
Aims to ensure oversight of agreed actions and deliverables aligned to identified interventions designed to enhance the student experience. Initially focused on monitoring delivery of the Assessment and Feedback improvement plans, with the first priorities set as improved feedback turnaround times and provision of

assessment rubrics. This Board receives updates from College Strategy and other relevant groups focused on this area. This group is jointly chaired by the VP Students and the Provost.

To support the work of SEDaMOB, the Deputy Secretary Students has also set up a short-life task group focused on short-term responses to the provision of data to assess delivery of priorities and consideration of longer-term process and systemic solutions.

- Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group
A sub-group of Senate Education Committee (SEC) set up in 2023 to ensure the delivery of the Principles and Priorities and provide strategic oversight needed to do so. The Group is being refreshed to ensure we deliver the long-term ambitions for assessment and feedback and continue to report to SEC and additionally to SEDaMOB. This group is chaired by the Deputy Vice Principal Students.
- Quality Review Oversight Group
A newly convened group focused on delivering the outcomes of the QESR (Quality Enhancement and Standards Review). The Group will report to Senate Education Committee and SEDaMOB, and further report into University Executive. This group is chaired by the Deputy Vice Principal Students.
- Student Lifecycle Management Group (SLMG)
This group's overall remit is to connect the dots between the key areas supporting the student lifecycle, ensure we are operationally aligned to deliver effective support to our student and resolve issues if/as they arise and it has oversight of our task and finish groups to 'get the basics right'. In the case of assessment and feedback, this includes but is not limited to exam diet improvements, demystifying assessments, Extensions and Special Circumstances, etc. The work may take the form of a task and finish group and/or BAU continuous improvement work within service/college/school areas. This group is chaired by the Deputy Secretary Students.
- Digital Estates Prioritisation Group (DEP) and Student Experience and Education, DEP Sub Group
A dedicated sub-group of the overall DEP set up to assess the current issues with marking and assessment and proposed next steps/prioritisation/solutions from both a business process and technology solution perspective, to include but not limited to online exam provision, rationalisation and improvements of marking and assessment platforms and learning analytics. The sub-group is chaired by the Vice Principal Students.
- Curriculum Transformation
The work of this project will dovetail College/School plans for assessment development, particularly programme level and adoption of the Assessment & Feedback Principles & Priorities. This project is sponsored by the Vice Principal Students.

Paragraphs 25-35: closed section

Student service improvements: getting the basics right

36. In response to concerns raised by our students, we are working to ensure we are 'getting the basics right', through a series of task and finish groups overseen by the Student Lifecycle Management Group. The deliverables for each group are for smaller continuous improvement, many leading to a need for policy and process review, systematisation, and organisational redesign. Examples of some of the work underway within these groups are provided below:

Student Voice

37. In collaboration with EUSA, we have undertaken a series of student voice focus groups. With support from academic colleagues in Psychology, we have revised our internal Pulse Survey, focusing questions linked more explicitly to our strategic priorities, this is being finalised for roll-out in February.

Space and Place

38. We have successfully introduced a new space for students at 40 George Square, including 'heat and eat' provision and extended hours for exam times, in response to closure of Teviot; We have convened a new group to consider spaces for students; to assess all spaces for students, and how these are defined and used, noting that the approach to students' use of space extends beyond the traditional 'study space'.

Sense of belonging

39. Three festive lunches took place in mid-December, with 45 staff volunteering to host tables/quizzes for 400 students. Initial student feedback has demonstrated this event fosters a both sense of community and belonging to the University, peers and the city. Five Schools have bid for a small seed fund to create and promote belonging through Community Champions. Plans are underway for greater communications leading up to exam time in the summer, through a communications campaign and merchandise.

Orientation and induction

40. We provided an enhanced January welcome for new students, including through a "Get to know your university" trail. Evaluation and future planning are underway for Good Course Micro Learning for new students on consent and active bystander training. We are seeking to extend Making Transitions Personal to each year of entry to support student integration and focused support throughout the student journey.

Paragraphs 41-42: closed section

Resource implications

43. There are no specific resource requests in this paper. However, proposals to improve the student experience may require investment. This is expected to be either met through current budgets or a case made for additional investment in the planning round.

Risk Management

44. Failure to address student experience would mean we have not met our strategic ambitions as set out in Strategy 2030, nor fulfilled the related QAA QESR recommendations. It also carries significant reputational risk and continues to affect

the University's standing in national league tables which has long term consequences for reputation and recruitment.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

45. This paper supports the SDG "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" as part the strategic objective to improve student experience. The proposals would not hinder the achievement of any other UN SDGs or exacerbate the Climate Emergency.

Equality & Diversity

46. Relevant Equality Impact Assessments will be required as plans are developed. The work undertaken will support greater equality, diversity, and inclusion for students within our community.

Next steps/implications

47. We will continue to prioritise the work outlined above, as part of a series of initiatives to improve the student experience.

Consultation

48. This paper has been discussed with Heads of Colleges.

49. The work outlined above is being undertaken and overseen by a large number of colleagues and EUSA/EUSU student representatives.

Further information

50.	<u>Authors</u> Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students Kim Graham, Provost Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students David Argyle, Vice Principal and Head of College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine Iain Gordon, Vice Principal and Head of College of Science and Engineering Sarah Prescott, Vice Principal and Head of College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	<u>Presenter</u> Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students
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Freedom of Information

51. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Quality Enhancement and Standards Review

Description of paper

1. This paper provides a summary of the outcome of the University's Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) and outlines the approach for addressing the recommendations.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. For information and comment.

Background and context

3. QESR is the current method used by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to review higher education institutions in Scotland for the academic sessions 2022- 23 and 2023-24. It forms Phase 1 of a two-phase approach to external institutional quality review which is being developed within the context of a major Scottish Funding Council (SFC) review, Coherent Provision and Sustainability: A Review of Tertiary Education and Research. The SFC is currently working with the Scottish sector to develop tertiary arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement which will be implemented from the start of academic session 2024-25.

4. On Wednesday 24 January, 2024, QAA Scotland published the [final report](#) from the University's QESR that took place on 16 November, 2023.

Discussion

5. The overall headline outcome of the review is positive, but we still have considerable work to do. Overall, the review team was confident that the University is making effective progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its provision to enable effective arrangements to be in place for managing academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience.

6. The QESR team commended the Institute for Academic Development in establishing a network of secondees and associates embedded within Schools to support developments in learning and teaching.

7. The QESR team assessed our progress with the recommendations from the previous review (ELIR), as well as making additional recommendations.

8. The QESR Report states: "In 2021, the University of Edinburgh received 10 recommendations from Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR 4)." The report states we "made sufficient progress on four of those recommendations but further action is required on the remaining recommendations from ELIR 4."

9. The report does not state explicitly which four recommendations we have made sufficient progress against. The report also states: "The University has initiated actions in all areas but there is still further work to be done to progress a number of these where the impact of the action being undertaken is not yet complete, fully

impacting positively on the student learning experience or being implemented consistently across schools.”

10. The QAA have since responded to confirm that the QESR team confirmed that the University had made sufficient progress on the following four of the recommendations from the ELIR.

- **Recognition and support for academic staff development** – the QESR team recognised the work on staff development and commended the work of the Institute for Academic Development in establishing a network of secondees and associates embedded within the schools to support developments in learning and teaching.
- **Student support** - The QESR team acknowledged that the new student support approach was introduced a year ahead of the time originally communicated at the ELIR visit and is showing early signs of a positive impact. “The QESR team recognises that the University is currently developing an evaluation model to provide ongoing quality assurance for the new Student Support Model arrangement”.
- **Oversight and implementation of policy and practice**
- **Oversight of planning and student numbers**

11. As detailed below, the remaining areas all received some further QESR recommendations, although in all cases the QESR report acknowledged that progress had been taken. Two of these require action within the current academic year.

12. **Assessment and feedback:** “Assessment and feedback was identified as an area for development in both the 2015 and 2021 ELIR reports. The University was therefore asked to make demonstrable progress within the academic year following the 2021 ELIR.”

- **Progress acknowledged:** “As a result, the University's Assessment and Feedback Task Group was established to develop a set of Principles and Priorities. These were approved in May 2022.”
- **QESR recommendations:** “the QESR team recommends that the University **should take immediate action, within the current academic year**, to ensure that the new Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities (developed in response to ELIR 4) are fully implemented in all schools, that feedback turnaround times and quality are monitored effectively, and that prompt action is taken to address any shortcomings.

13. **Training for PGR students who teach** – “The ELIR 4 team recommended that the University should ensure effective implementation of its policy for the training and support for postgraduate students who teach.”

- **Progress acknowledged:** “This ... has resulted in guidance being developed for the implementation of the policy to ensure consistency across schools.
- **QESR recommendation:** “QESR team recommends that the University **should take prompt action, within the current academic year**, to consistently implement its updated policy and to ensure that training for PGRs who teach is required at university and school-level, and that this action is

monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that all PGRs are fully supported in undertaking their teaching duties.”

14. **Strategic approach to enhancement of learning and teaching-** The ELIR 4 team recommended that the University provided institutional oversight and ensured clarity for staff on the strategic approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching.

- **Progress acknowledged:** “the University has built on key strategic projects, including: the Curriculum Transformation Programme; the Continuous Service Improvement Programme (CSIP) assessment; and feedback, training and support for PGR tutors and academic staff development; some of these being addressed as specific responsive actions set out below. Work is focused on developing approaches to institutional consistency and establishment of methods for monitoring across schools.”
- **QESR recommendation:** “Given the delays in developing the Learning and Teaching Strategy and the associated direction for schools, the QESR team recommends that the University expedites the final drafting, approval and implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy to help staff and students understand how major strategic projects work together and provide clarity on the strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching”.

15. **Pace of change** – “More effective management of the pace of change was recommended by the ELIR 4 team”

- **Progress acknowledged:** “This was taken on board as a series of recommendations by the Senior Leadership Team in September 2022, intended to take the form of the series of identified strategic change projects which are linked to Strategy 2030, and which provide clarity regarding the intended outcomes.
- **QESR recommendation:** “There is recognition that the University still needs to develop effective ways of managing strategic projects and the QESR team was informed that a University Initiatives Portfolio Board has been established to maintain oversight of these projects and manage prioritisation along with an oversight group, chaired by the Provost, with the Heads of Colleges to ensure effective line management of project implementation. **The QESR team recommends that the University makes progress on and accelerates its actions in response to the recommendations from the previous ELIR - ensuring effective and consistent implementation by all schools - and monitors the outcomes, in order to evidence significant progress within the next academic year.**

16. **Promotion of academic staff based on teaching:** “The ELIR 4 team asked the University to progress with work to improve the recognition of teaching excellence across all aspects of the University.”

- **Progress acknowledged:** “The University provided the team with data on promotions but was unable to disaggregate them in terms of the different promotion routes. As such, it was not possible to determine the scale of improvement in recognition for leadership in teaching.
- **QESR recommendation:** “The University should prioritise and complete the recommendation on promotion of academic staff based on teaching from ELIR 4, expediting progress to ensure that the work being undertaken is

effective. In addition, the QESR team recommends that the University should clearly and accurately record data on promotion routes based on teaching excellence so it can effectively evidence the implementation of its goal to achieve parity between teaching and research, and take action to ensure this aim is met.”

17. **Attainment gap monitoring** – The QESR team recommends that the University should prioritise and complete the recommendation on attainment gap oversight, coordination and monitoring from ELIR 4, expediting progress to ensure that the work being undertaken is effective.

18. We are in the process of establishing an oversight group (joint between Senate Education Committee and Senate Quality Assurance Committee) to take the recommendations forward and ensure they are all addressed within the timelines indicated.

19. In our paper to Court on 3 October 2023, Student Experience Update: Student Surveys 2023 Results and actions, and in our December update, we outlined the criticality of a deep commitment to reform of the culture, practices and approaches to assessment and feedback. This was informed by student feedback received through national and internal student surveys over recent years, the findings of the previous ELIR, and this criticality is further informed by the latest QESR recommendations and their urgency.

20. Although there was recognition of positive change, and resolution of some previous recommendations, the reputational risk is now acute if we do not act quickly to put in place plans to address the outstanding and new recommendations. Senior leadership had already recognised these risks, and the work below provides a mechanism, alongside the joint Senate Education Committee and Senate Quality Assurance Committee oversight group, to accelerate progress accordingly.

Resource implications

21. Consideration of resource implications will be integral to the work overseeing the review recommendations undertaken by the oversight group, Senate Education Committee and Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

Risk Management

22. Failure to fully address the recommendations carries significant reputational risk and the runs the risk that we may receive a judgement of limited effectiveness (or equivalent) in the next review method.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

23. This paper does not contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a regulatory requirement.

Equality & Diversity

24. Quality assurance policies and processes are subject to Equality Impact Assessment.

Next steps/implications

25. Court is invited to comment on the proposed approach. The oversight group will begin to meet shortly and will meet monthly for the remainder of this academic year.

Consultation

26. The outcomes of the review have been communicated to key stakeholders across the University and presented to University Senate and University Executive.

27. The oversight group will report to Senate Education Committee and Senate Quality Assurance Committee to allow the Standing Committees to monitor progress against recommendations and ensure that appropriate action is being taken.

28. The oversight group will also advise and update the Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Board and the University Executive and Court on progress against the recommendations and on any areas of concern.

Further information

29. Author

Professor Tina Harrison
Deputy Vice Principal Students
(Enhancement)

Lucy Evans
Deputy Secretary Students

Presenter

Colm Harmon
Vice Principal Students

Freedom of Information

30. Open



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

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: '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, notes current issues for students being worked on by our student representatives, and also outlines the organisation's financial and strategic developments. It is a regular standing item on the Court agenda.

Discussion

5. As well as our regular updates on Association matters, we are taking the opportunity to focus in the Sabbatical reports section on bringing to Court's attention our work and progress on some key student experience issues creating challenges for our student body. These are deeply felt, and students are sharing their frustrations at this, most recently through a motion submitted to our student council.
6. In November, we received a motion to our Student Council highlighting continued and increasing student dissatisfaction with the University based on several key issues. I have also written a letter to Court members providing some detail on these and inviting further discussion, which is attached as an annex to this paper.
7. The motion symbolised a breakdown in trust and lack of progress and, whilst some dissatisfaction can be attributed to sector-wide issues including the long running HE industrial dispute and hybrid/online learning, these impacts are now compounded by other on-campus issues. The motion symbolically strengthens our mandate as Sabbatical Officers emphasizing our ongoing work, and the urgency to lobby for more ambitious and decisive action to resolve these.

Sabbatical Reports

Sharan Atwal, President 2023/24

8. One of my biggest focuses has been working with colleagues to highlight the student experience risk on the University Executive decision to increase rents of University owned accommodation by up to 8%. We have been in active discussions with colleagues to emphasize pressing student concerns including the cost-of-living crisis, housing precarity in the city, affordability of accommodation available and student homelessness. We are continuing to highlight this particularly given the wider context of inflation projected to be around 4% and student loans increasing below inflation by 2.4% (for English students).

9. Our own annual members' survey (discussed later in this report) has especially highlighted concerns about rising costs with rents being the most significant. As well as worries about whether University and living away from home, particularly for international students, continues to be viable.

10. As elected student leaders, Alma and I discussed our concerns at the point fully developed proposals were being presented but had little opportunity to influence or fully understand the metrics and justification behind the decision. We are continuing to highlight and engage in conversations on the wider impact of this way forward and the consideration of the student experience risk in these decisions.

11. At a time where the housing crisis and cost-of-living are becoming accepted parts of the Edinburgh student experience and the issues facing the squeezed middle continue to go ignored, it seems more important than before to have a wider strategic conversation and a long-term commitment which explicitly outlines key strategic objectives that meaningfully address these issues. As a team we are continuing to investigate how this wider climate is impacting various student groups and how we can work with colleagues to find adequate solutions.

12. I have worked closely with the University to create a survey for students who receive the Access Bursary to better understand their experiences. This will guide how we can make improvements to 'demonstrate our commitment to widening participation and access, at all levels' in line with the aims of the Scholarships and Bursaries sub-group which has been established. I look forward to seeing how this valuable information will guide the group's work.

Alma Kalina Rießler, VP Community 2023/24

13. Alma has worked closely with me and University colleagues to understand the details behind the proposed rent increases and make clear the impact it will have on our incoming student body.

14. Alma has continued to work actively with Edinburgh Council, student groups and Sabbatical Officers at other Edinburgh institutions to discuss an effective city-wide approach to housing. They have consistently highlighted the importance of addressing student specific housing needs and student homelessness. Alma has been working with university colleagues since starting their term to develop a strategy that addresses student homelessness, especially important as recent

research from student groups suggests that at the start of September one in six students were homeless.

15. One of Alma's other focuses this year has been addressing and improving transport links in Edinburgh. They have again been in contact with Sabbatical Officers at other Edinburgh institutions to understand and integrate different work strands. Due to differing conversations with Lothian buses and dropped student focused projects from previous years they have been exploring the most feasible avenues for progress.

16. Alma has been investigating potential improvements including ways to support students required to travel for classes, enhancing the current shuttle bus provision and extending free bus transport for all University students. We have been particularly building our relationship with students studying in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine to understand how we can support their travel costs.

Lauren Byrne, VP Welfare 2023/24

17. In the third annual protest on February 9th, entitled "Am I Next?" student campaigners highlighted concern over the University's process for handling cases of gender-based violence. Continuing her work on gender-based violence, Lauren has been liaising with the students involved to help their campaigning and facilitate more communication from the University on changes in this area.

18. Lauren is continuing to work with colleagues in different institutions to get a better understanding of how we can improve the process. A key concern highlighted for student survivors is that they enter a process wherein only the respondent receives a final report and they (the survivor) do not, and they only have the option to appeal the handling of their case, not the outcome. Lauren is continuing to work with colleagues in different institutions to get a better understanding of how we can improve this

19. The recent motion to Student Council highlighted earlier saw conversation from students who felt ignored and victimised by the University due to their transgender identity. Events on campus in recent years have helped create an environment on campus leaving trans students feeling unsupported and unwelcome and had unfortunately even led to trans students leaving the University on this basis. Lauren has been in conversation with students and representatives impacted by this and continues to advocate for better protections for these students.

Katie Hardwick, VP Activities and Services, 2023/24

20. Katie has been continuing to lobby for students regarding the lack of suitable study space on campus. In the thematic discussion at the November Student Council, feedback received from students acknowledged that many are enjoying the new 40 George Square study space but also that many students find the library and Nucleus too busy, and many are having to sit on the floor. Katie relayed this and other feedback at the Student Spaces working group. In addition, Katie has been increasingly working with student groups who are facing continual problems with booking University spaces, including a lack of clarity regarding room changes, last minute cancellations and rooms getting double-booked.

21. Katie and the team are continuing to work on our collective priority surrounding King's Building Campus and highlight the concerns raised by students which mainly involve students feeling isolated with a poor sense of belonging. She has worked with representatives to raise these at the Nucleus Student Task Group and Nucleus Strategic Oversight Group discussing the key areas including the food costs, social and study spaces, and the need for new exercise facilities. We have made positive progress in trialing and opening Mayfield Bar and Grill, which now serves food to students during the day and has received a lot of positive feedback.

22. Moreover, Katie is continuing to highlight and working to address the issues created due to the cost-of-living crisis to raise awareness of the difficulties in practice of having adequate financial support. With above-inflation rises of major costs like accommodation, in contrast to student funding increasing well below inflation rates, students are then navigating multiple processes and eligibility criteria for applying to different types of financial support in the University. It is leaving some students in incredibly difficult positions, secluded and priced out of the University.

Carl Harper, VP Education 2023/24

23. Carl and Lauren have been involved in discussions about reviewing the University's processes for Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances since starting their terms. Alongside our student representatives, we have opposed these changes and continue to highlight the negative consequences they will have for many students. They have especially been vocal about how proposed changes could disproportionately impact students with mental health conditions, disabilities, children or caring responsibilities as proposed changes include incredibly stringent evidence requirements.

24. Carl has also been working alongside Lauren and I to explore avenues to limit University endowments for investments that students deem controversial or do not align with their values. In these discussions, we have enquired about the possibility of student engagement and open dialogue with the University. Students have been protesting on a weekly basis for the University to divest from companies complicit in the ongoing violence in Palestine, and the University's role in the conflict. Calls and open letters have come from a range of student groups, and we have been working and continuing to work to find feasible avenues to get these views across and meaningfully addressed.

Student elections

25. Nominations are now open (closing 14 February) for students who would like to run for Sabbatical Officer, School Rep, Liberation Officer, Section Rep, Campaign Rep, and Student Opportunities Rep positions. Campaigning will run from Wednesday 28 February, with voting open Monday 4th March until end of day on Thursday 7 March, and results announced at our celebratory results event on Friday 8 March. We continue to have a strategy to increase engagement with elections through both standing for a position, and through voting, and will be following up our October elections incentives pilot with a similar scheme in March to generate interest and particularly to drive students to encourage their friends to vote. As well as being one of Sharan's manifesto objectives, this is also supporting progress towards our

Strategic KPI on elections to achieve a 5% uplift on voter numbers year on year from 2019 to the end of our strategic plan – which requires a step change in voter numbers this year in order to create momentum in the remaining years of the plan.

Give it a Go

26. Our Give it a Go week ran from 15-21 January, and included around 50 events (in addition to the regular programme of weekly society activities) designed to enable new and existing students to try something new and find a society or activity of interest. From the Baking Society offering cupcake decorating, to Artifact Cleaning with Archaeology society, quiz nights, ceilidhs and an introduction to Theatre Tech at Bedlam Theatre, there was something to suit all interests. This also included our Give it a Go fair, with over 100 societies exhibiting in Potterrow on Wednesday 17th which attracted over 1400 students throughout the day. We were pleased that this included several of our brand new societies established during Semester 1, enabling them to build their membership – these include: Australia and New Zealand Society; Chippy Society; Burmese Society, and Nintendo society amongst many others. Give it a Go was a perfect introduction to student life also for the c1000 new visiting exchange students who arrived to study for one semester just the week before and were welcomed to Potterrow on Friday 12 January with us being a key stop on the Induction Trail organised by the University.

Student opportunities and student support

27. This semester also sees Student Volunteering Week, with the Association hosting a Volunteering Fair in February, connecting students with local and national charities providing community volunteering opportunities. We are also hosting our regular annual Housing Fair, to support students as they consider their options for the next academic year. The Fair will enable students to access advice and support from our Advice Place, Shelter Scotland, and connect with a range of housing providers including the University. As the challenges of finding secure and affordable accommodation in the city continue to increase, the fair aims to showcase options, supported by advice and guidance, and to make students aware of their rights as they navigate the rental sector.

28. This semester we have also launched our #LetsTalk series of events supporting student mental health, and wellbeing. The events explore topics and enable students to share their experiences whilst also hearing from others, with some key external support/speakers involved. Events this semester focus on disordered eating, anxiety, and PTSD; Self Harm; Racial equity in mental health; Climate Anxiety. We're also taking the opportunity with our Let's Talk campaign to promote a wide range of university and external services and support students may wish to access, as well as the Let's Talk podcast episodes produced in collaboration with the University.

Annual Members' Survey 2023-24

29. During November, over 2300 students completed our annual members survey. The survey informs our strategic and operational plan delivery cycle (which runs from 1 April), and enables us to track progress on our key strategic Key Performance Indicators.

30. As well as key data about students' experiences and awareness of the Association and our activities, we also take the opportunity to gather feedback on

key student hot topics – this year we focussed on Cost of Living and sourcing insights on future uses of Association spaces, as we plan for the remobilisation of Teviot Row House and consider future Potterrow activity in that context also. In relation to **the Association**, we have been seeing some steady year on year increases:

- 73% of respondents agree they are satisfied overall with their Students' Association (up 4%)
- 68% agree we contribute positively to their time at University (up 4%)
- 76% agree the Association cares about their wellbeing (up 6%)
- 57% agree the Association effectively represents them (up 6%)

31. Satisfaction with various services remains high (over 90% for students using the Advice Place for example, 87% satisfaction for those engaged with societies).

32. On **cost of living** issues:

- **55% of respondents are finding it hard to cover essential living costs** – food, rent, utilities.
- **37% are worried about being able to afford to stay at university** for the duration of their degree.
- Half of respondents do paid work alongside their studies, and 43% of respondents told us **they couldn't afford to do extracurricular or social activities**.

33. Freetext responses reflected home students considering moving out of Edinburgh and commuting, and international students reflected on the additional limits on the ability to make the most of their experience due to higher fees, and barriers to being able to arrange affordable travel. Students are palpably worried and disappointed about expectations of what a university experience should be and how that's starkly impacted by cost of living in practice.

We will be using the data in various ways to inform both internal planning and development, and our student and university-facing work.

Paragraphs 34-46: closed section

Resource implications

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

Risk Management

48. Financial risks and student experience risks are highlighted in the report.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & Diversity

50. 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

51. We invite Court to note the key student experience issues outlined and our high level of concern in relation to these.

Consultation

52. Consultation on this paper was not required.

Further information

53. Author

Sharan Atwal
President 2023-24
February 2024

Presenter

Sharan Atwal
President 2023-24

Freedom of Information

54. Open version



15 February 2024

Dear Court members,

I am writing to you in my role as President of Edinburgh University Students' Association and as a representative of the University of Edinburgh's 49,000 students, to highlight students' ongoing dissatisfaction with key issues which are negatively impacting the student experience at Edinburgh. Our Sabbatical team have been raising these issues in our roles on an ongoing basis. Our report to University Court this month focusses on these, and I wanted to write to you ahead of the meeting to draw attention to that.

At the November meeting of Student Council, the Student Associations democratic decision-making and policy setting body, over 630 students voted in favour of a motion stating that the student body had "no confidence" in the University's Senior Leadership Team to address students' concerns. You can read the full text of the motion [here](#), and our immediate response [here](#).

At that meeting, students discussed three key areas of frustration:

- **the student housing crisis,**
- **the impact of the wider cost-of-living crisis,**
- **and gender-based violence on-campus.**

On all three of these points, students felt the University was failing in its responsibility towards them, and could not see progress, or a sustained senior commitment to address these issues. **We are asking the University, and Court as it's governing body, to take the opportunity to consider an alternative approach to communicating about and resolving these significant student experience issues.**

1. The student housing crisis

Limited supply in the private rental market is driving up rents and resulting in intense competition, forcing many students into properties that are beyond their budget, miles from campus, or poorly maintained, and making them vulnerable to exploitation, from landlords, letting agencies, and scammers. This is particularly challenging as students arrive in the city at the start of each academic year and creates anxiety and uncertainty for our students at a time of transition.

University-owned accommodation should be a safety net for these students, but instead Edinburgh is now raising rents by 8% in 2024/25, at a time when inflation is expected to be just 4% and (English) student loans are increasing by 2.4%. We published this [statement](#) on the decision to our members.

The University brings thousands of students to the city each year, and has a responsibility to ensure that each of them has somewhere suitable to live. Not only should the University be providing affordable accommodation to students, but to proactively find a long-term solution should be using their influence in the city to lobby for policies that benefit students, from rent caps to student housing cooperatives.



2. *The impact of the wider cost-of-living crisis on students*

Housing is the single greatest cost for most of our members, so it is no surprise that increasing rents is putting financial pressure on students, who are having to cut back elsewhere in response.

In March last year, [over 2200 students signed an open letter](#) calling on the University to do more to address financial hardship, highlighting the results of a Russell Group survey on the cost-of-living which showed that 1 in 2 students weren't confident that they could cover their basic living costs, 1 in 4 were regularly skipping meals to save money, and 54% felt that the cost-of-living crisis was negatively impacting their academic performance. That letter included four key asks, none of which have been addressed to-date.

Our report to University Court includes some additional insights from our most recent annual Members' Survey here at Edinburgh – indicating over a third of respondents are concerned they cannot afford to stay at University.

3. *Gender-based violence on-campus*

On 09 February, and for the third consecutive year, [students gathered to call on the University to address the experience of survivors of gender-based violence](#). Many of those who spoke at that protest described feeling abandoned by the University in their time of need and retraumatised by the experience of trying to seek justice. A key concern for student survivors is that they enter a process wherein only the respondent receives a final report and they do not, and they only have the option to appeal the handling of their case, not the outcome. Without any knowledge of how the outcome was reached, due to the process being confidential between the respondent and the Student Code of Conduct, the survivor does not have information to explain why their case wasn't upheld and must submit a new complaint as an appeal.

When there are so many barriers – both social and bureaucratic – to reporting, and reportedly less than half of gender-based violence cases investigated by the University are upheld, it's clear that currently students feel this is not an issue that the University takes seriously. Individual students, student groups, and the Students' Association have consistently given the University feedback on ways in which these processes could be improved, however very little has changed for those who are impacted.

These issues are not new, but the passing of the motion in November has strengthened our resolve to use our positions to lobby for a strategic long-term approach on behalf of our members, to secure tangible commitments from the Senior Leadership Team, and rebuild students' faith in our University.

We hope this is the start of a renewed conversation about the student experience at Edinburgh, and **we welcome engagement from Court members on this subject**, ahead of and at the February meeting of Court. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours,
Sharan Atwal





UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

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. EUSU's activity and direction contribute to these aspects of Strategy 2030:
 - iv) We will be leading Scotland's commitment to widening participation.
 - v) 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.
 - vi) We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.

Action requested/Recommendation

3. Court is invited to note the impact that university sport has on the student experience and sense of belonging as detailed in this report.

Background and context

4. The Sports Union is currently in the busiest period of the year with leagues and knockout competitions coming to their final stages in the middle of March. We are frequently facilitating around 100 fixtures per week in addition to individual events and competitions. AGMs for our 70 clubs are also taking place before the end of February. The Sports Union AGM will take place on 7 March, and our planning round is to be completed by the middle of March. Throughout this busy period, we are focussed on maintaining the highest quality experience and support for our students as well as operating strong governance and effective planning.

Discussion

Student Engagement

5. We are proud to have reached an all-time record number of Sports Union members, with 8,466 so far this academic year.
6. 1,948 students attended our annual Sports Ball and Awards. You can read about our outstanding award winners here: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sport/news/sports-ball-2024>
7. Over 500 University of Edinburgh students ran the Edinburgh Winter Run on the 20th of January. We thank Lucy Evans for securing financial support to help this community initiative.
8. 381 students were financially supported to join a sports club by the Student Participation grant in semester 1. We are incredibly grateful to the support of the Scholarships and Financial support team for expanding the accessibility of our community.

Planning Submission

9. We are currently focussed on our planning submission with its final presentation on 14 March.

10. The key goal of our submission is to create head room over our core activity overheads. This aims to realign our ability to invest in direct student support expenditure with pre-covid levels.

11. In 2017-18, our university grant covered 1.27 times our core activity overheads. In 2023-24 this has dropped to a coverage of 1.05 times. This means we have not been able to increase investment in direct student support and development (as show in figure 1). We would like to see a directional shift in this ratio to help us alleviate the direct student cost and enhance the quality of our offer for the student experience.

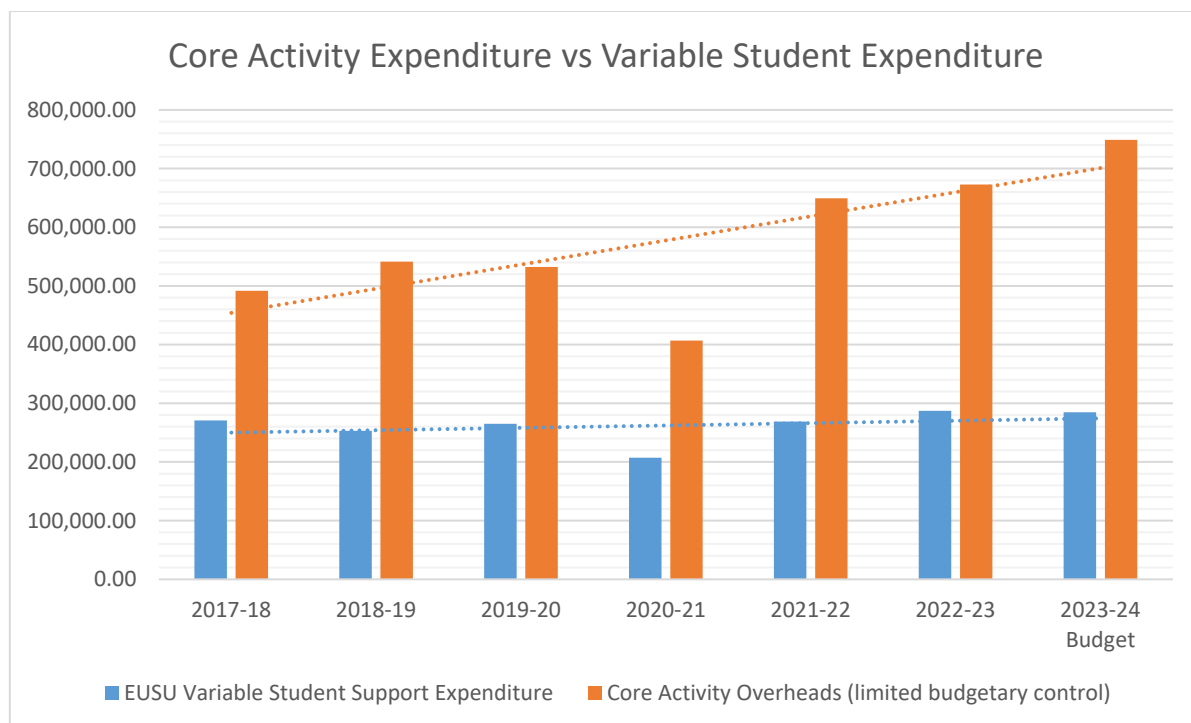


Figure 1: Core Activity Expenditure vs Variable Student Expenditure

2024/25 Planning

12. Club AGMs are currently taking place and the EUSU AGM will take place on 7 March. This will see all new club committees and Sports Union executive elected for 2024/25.

Edinburgh Rugby Partnership

13. The University has signed an 18-month partnership with Edinburgh Rugby. This partnership will seek to enhance our rugby programme as well as providing opportunities for student placements, volunteering, graduate internships, and an allocation of free tickets for widening access and international students.

Constitutional Amendments

14. As per the EUSU constitution, we are informing Court of constitutional changes approved at a Special General Meeting of EUSU on 18/01/2024.

Proposed Changes:

- i. Amendments to Executive Committee Role Titles in point 4.3:
“Wellbeing Officer” to be renamed “Wellbeing and Inclusion Officer”.
“Inclusion Officer” to be renamed “Participation Officer”
- ii. Rationale - to bring the titles in line with the function of the roles and goals of the Sports Union.

15. The constitutional changes were voted on as one item and approved [128 Approve; 13 Reject]

Good News!

16. Diving

Student Grace Reid, claimed silver in the 1m Springboard World Championships in Doha.

17. Winning Students 100

33 talented Edinburgh University athletes have secured scholarships from Scotland's National Sports Scholarship Programme.

18. Rugby Officiating

Hall of Famer and Alum, Hollie Davidson, became the first female to officiate a Men's Six Nations game, overseeing the England vs Wales match on 10th February.

19. Cards for Care Homes

Sports staff and clubs joined together to write and deliver 2,000 Christmas cards for Care Home residents around Edinburgh. This initiative created many smiles and received great exposure in an STV news clip.

20. Broughton High School Potential Programme

We are pleased to welcome the third cohort of students from the Broughton High School potential programme. Our sports clubs deliver this Wednesday afternoon programme for up to 20 underprivileged high school pupils, helping their attainment at school.

21. Winter World University Games

- a. EUSU Sports Coordinator – Volunteering and Participation, Neil Rankin, has been appointed Deputy Chef de Mission for GB students for the 2025 Winter World University Games in Torino.
- b. Head of Sport, Ross Simpson has been appointed Deputy Chef de Mission for GB students for the 2025 Summer World University Games, Rhine-Ruhr.
- c. We are incredibly proud of these world-class external achievements and impacts from our staff team.

Resource implications

22. This paper has no immediate resource implications. As noted in paragraphs 9-11, levels of resource will be considered through a separate planning round process.

Risk Management

23. No major risks.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

24. This paper contributes to the following SDGs:

SDG3 – Good Health and Wellbeing

All the work we do at EUSU is focussed on enhancing the health and wellbeing of our university community.

SDG4 – Quality Education

We believe our student/volunteer development efforts contribute to a more complete and expanded education for students.

Equality & Diversity

25. This paper does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Next steps/implications

26. The sports union president and executive committee oversee the strategic direction of the sports union. Please reach out to sports.president@ed.ac.uk if you have any follow up questions or would like to explore collaborative opportunities.

Consultation

27. Consultation for this paper was sought from Ross Simpson (Head of Sport) and Millie Doherty (Sports Programme Manager).

Further information

28. Author

Peter Sawkins
Sports Union President
sports.president@ed.ac.uk

Presenter

Sharan Atwal
EUSA President

13 February 2024

Freedom of Information

29. Open Paper



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Director of Finance Report

Paragraphs 1-3: closed section

Background and context

4. This paper provides the Director of Finance's regular update on finance related issues for University Court. Court members may find it helpful to cross-reference the Policy & Resources Committee (PRC) Report to Court, which sets out relevant points of discussion at PRC, including sector context and expectations for the remainder of the year, within both the Principal's Communications and Director of Finance's Report sections.

Paragraphs 5-18: closed section

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

19. The Director of Finance and the Finance Team fully support the outcomes of Strategy 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals by working to secure the ongoing financial sustainability of the University. The University's approach to climate change is referenced in the 2022-23 Annual Report and Accounts. This is covered in Strategy 2030 through our commitment to Social and Civic Responsibility.

Equality & Diversity

20. 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

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

Consultation

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

Further information

23.	<u>Author</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
	Ricky O'Kane	Lee Hamill
	Head of Group Finance	Director of Finance
	Stuart Graham	
	Head of FIRST (Financial Information, Reporting & Strategy Team)	

12 February 2024

Freedom of Information

24. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Revolving Credit Facilities Renewal

Description of paper

1. This paper follows on from the October 2023 Director of Finance Update Report where Court authorised the Director of Finance in consultation with the Director of Legal Services to renew the University's Revolving Credit Facilities (RCFs) and provides an update on the renewal process.
2. This paper is aligned with all of the outcomes set out in Strategy 2030 by supporting the University's continued drive towards financial sustainability.

Paragraphs 3-5: closed section

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

6. The 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

7. Specific issues of equality and diversity are not relevant to this paper.

Next steps\implications

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

Consultation

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

Further information

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 10. <u>Author</u> | <u>Presenter</u> |
| Ricky O'Kane | Lee Hamill |
| Head of Group Finance | Director of Finance |
| 12 February 2024 | |

Freedom of Information

11. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

People and Money System and Roadmap Update

Description of paper

1. This paper provides Court with an update on the development of the People and Money Roadmap.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is asked to note the paper.

Background and context

3. Previous papers provide the detailed background and context to this work, noting that the University Executive continues to receive a monthly update on this area of work.

Paragraphs 4-38: closed section

Further information

39. Author

Barry Neilson
Director of Strategic Change

Presenter

Catherine Martin
Vice-Principal Corporate Services
Co-Chair of Enactment Group

Freedom of Information

40. Closed paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Forests and Peatlands Programme First Annual Report 2022-23

Description of paper

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform Court of the significant progress of the Forests and Peatlands Programme and highlight planned next steps.
2. Action on forests and peatlands is a key component of our University climate strategy and in meeting our target to be a net zero University by 2040.

Paragraphs 3-22: closed section

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

23. The University of Edinburgh has made a long-term commitment to capture and store its unavoidable carbon emissions – and benefit nature in the process – by expanding forests and restoring peatlands in Scotland.
24. The University's Forests and Peatland Programme will sequester all unavoidable carbon dioxide from the University's travel emissions over a 50-year period and ensure additional benefits for nature and society. The Programme is a key component of the University's overall climate strategy.
25. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been identified as a key external strategic driver for the Forest and Peatland Programme of work.
26. *SDG 3. Good health and wellbeing:* Sequestration through peatland restoration, woodland creation, and biodiversity action will contribute to preventing the reversal of progress on health outcomes due to increasing climate disturbance, food shortages, disease movements and extreme climatic events. The programme will also increase wellbeing for users of the sites, including communities, staff and students.
27. *SDG 10. Reduced inequalities:* Climate action is at heart a global justice issue with 50% of the world's population responsible for just 7% of emissions - those least responsible bear most of the burden of impacts. Taking an historic and cumulative view, the UK remains one of the largest global emitters since 1750.
28. *SDG 13. Climate action:* As a sector leader, timely climate action contributes both directly and indirectly via leadership on global action on climate change.
29. *SDG 14 & 15. Life below Water, and Life on Land.* The University is a large organisation with an impact on biodiversity via its estate, operations and supply chain. Ensuring we maximise our positive impact on land we own or influence through the Forest and Peatland programme, including mitigating biodiversity impacts, and further supporting researching and teaching through the associated programme learning and teaching and research strategy can result in significant positive impacts on life on water, and on land.

Paragraphs 30-35: closed section

Further information

36. Author

Yvonne Edwards
Forests and Peatlands and Rural
Land Manager
Department for Social Responsibility
and Sustainability

Presenter

Dave Gorman
Department for Social Responsibility
and Sustainability

Freedom of Information

37. Open version



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

UNIVERSITY COURT

February 2024

Development & Alumni Annual Report 2022/23

Description of paper

1. The paper provides a brief overview of the work led by Development & Alumni (D&A) during 2022/23.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court members are asked to note and comment on the overview of the work of D&A, and related philanthropic and alumni engagement across campus in 2022/23.

Paragraphs 3-14: closed section

Further information

15. Author & Presenter

Chris Cox, VP Philanthropy &
Advancement

Freedom of Information

16. Open version



26 February 2024

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Small Works Programme and Statutory Compliance Budget Allocation

Description of paper

1. This paper updates Court on progress with the Small Works Programme and Statutory Compliance Budget Allocation over the previous two financial years and sets out the initial proposal for funding for the 2024/25 programme. It seeks Court's approval for funding to proceed.

2. The paper shows the contribution the Small Works Programme and Statutory Compliance (SWPSC) Budget Allocation makes to the following outcome set out in Strategy 2030:

- Our estate will be fit for purpose, sustainable and accessible. We will support learning, research and collaboration with our neighbours, businesses and partners.
- Improving the quality of our teaching environments, positively impacting staff engagement as well as student experience.
- Supporting Curriculum Transformation Programme and enhancing student experience.

Paragraphs 3-29: closed section

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

30. Individual projects will be taken forward incorporating a sustainable development approach in order to contribute towards the Strategy 2030 outcomes and SDG goals.

31. The accessible and egress elements of the programme will contribute towards goal 4 by making it easier for those of varying physical ability to use buildings and access education more widely.

Equality & Diversity

32. An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this paper.

Next steps/implications

33. On approval of the amounts proposed in this report, if granted, the new Small Works process will begin.

34. Over the next few months, the budgets required under each of the headings will be quantified and reported back to the March 2024 Estates Committee meeting.

Consultation

35. Colleges and Professional Support Groups have been consulted via the recent round of Programme Boards. On 14 December 2023, Estates Committee considered the Small Works Programme and Statutory Compliance Budget Allocation. PRC recommended approval on 12 February 2024.

Further information

36. Author

Damien Toner
Director of Estates

Jane Johnston
Director of Estates Development

Steven Goodall
Interim Head of Small Projects and Minor Works

Tommy Angus
Interim Director of Estates Operations

Presenter

Gary Jebb
Director of Place

Freedom of Information

37. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Proposed Multiyear Energy Efficiency Programme

Description of paper

1. This paper describes proposals to establish a multiyear energy efficiency programme that builds on the success and learnings from the previous Sustainable Campus Fund (SCF) which was established in 2016. It introduces the project evaluation methodology, governance and proposed level of priority investment for consideration.

2. The proposals in the paper contribute to the following outcomes set out in Strategy 2030:

- We will be on track to be a Carbon-Zero University by 2040

Paragraphs 3-38: closed section

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

39. The proposals in this paper directly contribute to supporting the University's Net Zero by 2040 climate strategy and commitments to the SDGs. Proposals particularly contribute to SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

Equality & Diversity

40. An Equality Impact Assessment is not deemed necessary at this stage. Individual projects will be assessed as appropriate.

Paragraphs 41-42: closed section

Further information

43. Author

Grant Ferguson
Director of Estates Net Zero &
Carbon Leadership

Presenter

Gary Jebb
Director of Place

Freedom of Information

44. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Update on arrangements for Senate and Senate Standing Committee Elections, and proposed amendments to Senate Election Regulations

Description of paper

1. The paper updates Court on the arrangements, approved by Senate at its 7 February 2024 meeting, for the operation of the 2024 elections for academic staff to Senate, and for election of elected Senate academic staff members to Senate Standing Committees.
2. The paper also seeks approval from Court of three proposed amendments to the [Senatus Academicus \(Senate\) Election Regulations](#). The first amendment is to incorporate a proposal approved by Senate to ringfence a total of 9 of the non-Professorial category positions, split equally across Colleges, for staff who hold an early career research or teaching position. The second amendment is to clarify the position of Senate Assessors and the Academic Staff Member of Court within the Regulations. The third amendment are references to the Professional Services Staff Member of Court becoming an *ex officio* member of Senate, as part of a response to a recommendation from the recent externally facilitated effectiveness review of Senate.

Action requested/Recommendation

3. Court is invited to note the arrangements for the conduct of Senate and Senate Standing Committee elections (paragraphs 8 to 12, and 13 to 15). Court is invited to note the addition of Professional Services staff to the Senate *ex-officio* membership (paragraphs 28-36)
4. Court is also invited to approve the proposed amendments to the Senate Election Regulations arising from the proposal for the prioritisation of early career academic staff (paragraphs 16 to 27), references to the Professional Services Staff Member of Court becoming an *ex officio* member of Senate and a minor consequential amendment to Court's Standing Orders to reflect this (paragraphs 28-36 and corrections which clarify the status of the Senate Assessor and Academic Staff Member positions (paragraphs 37-42).

Background and context

5. Under Ordinance 212, academic staff elect "from their own number" a total of 200 members of Senate – 100 Professors and 100 non-Professorial academic staff. Senate holds annual elections for these positions. Paragraphs 8 to 12 set out the arrangements that Senate approved for these elections at its meeting on 7 February 2024.
6. At its 12 October 2022 meeting, Senate agreed to add three elected academic staff members of Senate to each of the three [Senate Standing Committees](#). Senate agreed that, from 2023-24, it would fill these positions via an annual electoral process. It is anticipated that the process to fill Standing Committee positions will follow the election arrangements used for the 2023/24 elections. However, these

arrangements are not intended to preclude alternative methods of Committee membership and appointment from being considered.

7. Senate elects from its membership two Senate Assessors to Court. At its 8 February 2023 meeting, Senate agreed to support a proposed amendment to the Senate Election Regulations, to clarify the position of Senate Assessors and the Academic Staff member to Court within the Regulations.

Discussion

Election of academic staff members to Senate – Returning Officer, process, allocation of terms and timelines

8. Senate appointed Lisa Dawson, Academic Registrar as the Returning Officer of the Senate Elections and Olivia Hayes, Academic Policy Officer, as the Deputy Returning Officer.

9. Senate noted the continued allocation of one-, two- and three-year terms to be allocated to successful candidates in the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences and the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine non-professorial categories, and their professorial categories. This will ensure a rebalancing of membership to enable one third of academic staff positions to become available for election each year, and mitigate against the risk that a high number of vacancies will arise in three years' time. Successful candidates in the College of Science & Engineering non-professorial and professorial categories will be allocated a three-year term, as is standard, as both categories are on track for one-third of the positions to be available for election each year.

10. Senate approved the following process for conducting elections:

- In the event there are more than 11 nominees in a cohort with more than 11 vacancies, a method of Staged-Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (WIGM) is utilised to conduct the election.
- An election would take place even if there are enough vacancies for all eligible candidates, to allow the terms of office (1, 2 or 3 years) to be determined for candidates in the categories identified in paragraph 9.

11. Senate approved the following timeline for the nomination and election period:

Wednesday 28 February 2024	Senate formally declares nominations open
Wednesday 27 March 2024 (12 noon)	Nominations close
Wednesday 17 April 2024 (9am) to Wednesday 1 May 2024 (12 noon)	Voting open online
By Friday 17 May	Results announced

12. The dates for the elected were revised in response to feedback received in the 13-27 September e-Senate meeting. The dates for the Senate elections have been extended to allow greater time for staff to engage with election.

Election to a Senate Standing Committees –Returning Officers and timelines

13. Senate appointed Lisa Dawson, Academic Registrar as the Returning Officer of the Senate Elections and Olivia Hayes, Academic Policy Officer, as the Deputy Returning Officer.

14. Senate approved the following timeline for the nomination and election of elected Senate members to Senate Standing Committees:

Wednesday 29 May 2024	Nominations open
Wednesday 12 June 2024	Nominations close
Wednesday 19 June 2024 (9am) to Wednesday 26 June 2024 (12 noon)	Voting open online

15. The dates for the Standing Committee Elections are later in 2023/24. This is to allow the results of the Senate Elections to be confirmed prior to the Standing Committee Elections taking place.

Revisions to Senate membership arising from Senate External Review recommendations

16. The Senate External Review contained two recommendations which relate to the membership of Senate, these are referred to R1 and R2 in the Senate External Review Report and are included in paragraphs 17 and 28 below. A paper presented to the 11 October 2023 meeting of Senate ([Paper S23/24 11](#)) committed to adopting these recommendations with a proposal outlining the practical means to adopt these proposals expected to be presented to Senate for approval at the 7 February 2024 meeting.

Update to the Senate Election Regulations - prioritisation of early career academic staff

17. Recommendation R.1 states: *Given the mission of the University we recommend the addition of a specific membership category in Senate for a Doctoral Student or Junior Research associate.*

18. Senate indicated its support for this recommendation in feedback received prior to the 11 October 2023 meeting and at its 7 February 2024 meeting.

19. [University Ordinance 212](#) (Composition of the Senatus Academicus) stipulates a total of 200 academic elected members of the Senatus Academicus, with a total of 100 whom shall be elected non-Professorial academic staff members. Therefore, any changes to the elected staff composition must fit within the existing 200 elected positions as specified by Ordinance 212. As 100 positions are reserved for Professorial staff, any prioritised early career positions must be drawn from the non-Professorial staff category.

20. Senate received a proposal to adopt this recommendation as follows: *It is proposed that a total of nine (9) positions be reserved for staff who hold a junior research position. The nine positions are to be equally split across each College, with a total of three (3) positions in each College.*

21. In discussion of this proposal, the following points were raised:

- The intention is for early career academic staff to be prioritised for these nine positions. If the nine positions remain unfilled, then these will be opened to the wider pool of nominees in the non-Professorial category. The Election Regulations have been redrafted to reflect these positions as being 'prioritised' rather than reserved as indicated in the original proposal.
- The term 'junior' included in the original proposal should be replaced with early career.
- Senate Support will work with the Vice Principal Research to clarify the positions which are deemed 'early career' for the purposes of the Senate Elections.
- Senate requested an update on how early career is to be defined within the Senate Election Regulations via the Senate Members Portal.
- The proposal does not include any prioritisation for staff who hold early career teaching positions and prioritises those in early career research positions. The proposal and Election Regulations have been redrafted to reflect these positions as including both early career teaching and research staff.
- A University-wide workload allocation for Committee membership would be useful to allow staff in early career positions to discuss their capacity for Senate membership with line managers within local contexts.

The full report of the Senate discussion will be included in the Senate Report for Court's April meeting.

22. Senate considered and approved the proposal. In response to feedback raised by Senate, the proposal has been revised as follows, in consultation with the Vice-Principal Research and College Deans with responsibility for research. Senate have been notified of this revision via the Senate Members Portal:

A total of nine (9) positions are to be prioritised for staff who hold an early career academic position. The nine positions are to be equally split across each College, with a total of three (3) positions in each College.

23. For the purposes of the election, members of staff who are categorised as early career academic staff, includes both early career research and teaching staff who hold a position up to and including Grade 08 on the University Grade Structure. The Senate Election Regulations in Appendix 1 has been revised to reflect this proposal and to stipulate which staff are eligible for this category.

24. To ensure there is an opportunity for early career academic staff to seek election to Senate each year, it is proposed that a term of one, two and three years be allocated to the successful candidates. This will ensure that these positions are filled in a manner consistent with the broader Senate Elections, and that staff in early career academic roles have an opportunity to seek election to Senate in the coming years. Senate Support will review the existing membership to see whether the one and two year terms can be filled from within the existing membership before seeking to fill these reserved places in the upcoming elections.

25. The election of staff to the early career academic staff category would be conducted in line with the normal arrangements for Senate Elections as outlined in paragraphs 8 to 12.

26. Academic Services have consulted with Court Services who confirm that the revisions to the Senate Election Regulations in Appendix 1 are fit for purpose.

27. In line with Ordinance 212, the Students' Association are responsible for determining the composition of student members who serve as members of Senate. Therefore, this recommendation will also be referred to the Students' Association.

Amendment to the Senate membership - Professional Services staff

28. Recommendation R.2 states: *We recommend that Senate has 3 non-executive professional staff members on Senate.*

29. Senate members indicated their support for this recommendation in feedback and indicated a preference for a number higher than the three stated in the recommendation. This change does not require approval from Senate or Court, however as the proposal arises from a recommendation contained within the External Review Senate's support was sought to take this forward and Court's approval is required for changes to the Election Regulations which reference this addition..

30. University Ordinance 212 (Composition of the Senatus Academicus) stipulates a total of 200 academic elected members of the Senatus Academicus. The Ordinance does not allow for any of these 200 positions to be filled by elected professional services staff.

31. Therefore, a total of four (4) ex officio positions will be reserved for elected professional services staff. The four positions will be comprised of the Professional Services staff member on Court, and three elected Professional Services staff members with one position for each College.

32. The four professional services staff must be considered ex officio members to allow professional services staff to join Senate and for the membership to remain compliant with Ordinance 212. The Ordinance allows for a maximum of 80 ex officio members, a total of 69 of these positions are currently filled.

33. The total number of College-level office holders contained within the ex officio category would be increased from 5 to 6 staff, with one position reserved for a professional services staff member elected to that role by their peers. This revision is reflected within Appendix 1 of the Senate Elections Regulations (Appendix 1).

34. A term of three years will be allocated to the successful candidates, with the term of office to commence on 1 August 2024. Academic Services will consult with Colleges for support in taking forward the election and on the appropriate timing of the elections. It is expected that the election of professional services staff will take place on a different timescale to Senate Elections.

35. The election of staff to the College Professional Services category requires specific Professional Service Staff Election Regulations to be drafted. Academic Services will consult with Court Services to draft appropriate Regulations ahead of these being presented to Court for approval at Court's April 2024 meeting. It is anticipated that the Regulations will align with those for the conduct of Senate Elections, with revisions appropriate to allow the conduct of the specific election. The election of the Professional Services Staff Member of Court take place under separate regulations.

36. The Professional Services Staff Member of Court is partly defined in the Standing Orders of Court as being from a category of staff who are not represented on Senate. As Senate support the addition of the Professional Services Member of Court to the Senate ex-officio membership, the Court Standing Orders require a minor revision to align with the Senate membership. Therefore, it is proposed to revise the Court Standing Orders as follows:

2.8 The Professional Services Staff Member will be elected for a period of up to four years by and from among University staff who are professional services staff (i.e. who are not academic or research staff) ~~and therefore includes all members of staff who are not represented on Senate.~~

Senate Election Regulations – Senate Assessor positions

37. Court Services have identified three drafting errors in the current Senate Election Regulations in relation to Senate Assessor and Academic Staff Member positions on the Court and it is proposed to correct these:

- A. The categorisation of two Senate Assessors as *ex officio* members of Senate throughout their term as Senate Assessors. This is only correct under certain circumstances and has caused confusion.
- B. The description in one section of the regulations of the position on the Court held by a member of academic staff elected by all academic staff as the 'Joint Academic and Senate Assessor', when this should be described as the 'Academic Staff Member on the University Court', which is correctly described as such in another section of the regulations.
- C. The Academic Staff Member on the University Court is categorised in the regulations as an *ex officio* member of Senate but this should only apply if they are not otherwise a member of Senate.

Senate Assessor positions – proposed amendments

38. Senate elects two of its members to join the Court in positions known as Senate Assessors. Senate Assessors serve for terms of four years on the University Court (a length of term specified in primary legislation, along with the right to stand for re-election), it is possible that, if the Senate Assessors are themselves elected to Senate, their typically three year term as elected Senate members might end before they complete their four year term on the Court and they would therefore have to demit office early from the Court unless they are re-elected for new terms as Senate members.

39. To avoid this eventuality Senate Assessors can become *ex officio* members of Senate should their term as elected Senate members end before their term on Court (and to enable them to stand for re-election for a second term on Court if they are no longer in the category of elected Senate members).

40. The current version of the Senate Election Regulations does not capture this nuance that a Senate Assessor may be either an elected Senate member or an *ex officio* Senate member depending on their particular term of office as a Senate member and simply categorises them as *ex officio* members of Senate.

41. To rectify this, it is proposed to amend the Election Regulations as follows, the marked up Regulations are also provided in Appendix 1:

8. . . . Assessors are elected for a four-year term on Court; they ~~retain~~ **hold** Senate membership as *ex officio* members for the duration of their term as Court members **if their term as a Senate member would otherwise have concluded**

22. . . . Senate Assessors will be included in the count of College elected members ~~throughout their term of office as a Senate Assessor~~ **if they are continuing a term of office as a College elected member, otherwise they are classed as an *ex officio* member and are not included in the count.**

Appendix 1: Senate *Ex officio* membership: Table

. . . 2 Senate Assessors on the University Court **if not serving a term as an elected member**

42. Separately, a member of academic staff is elected by all academic staff to serve on the University Court in a position known 'Academic Staff Member on the University Court.' The holder of this position also becomes an *ex officio* member of the Senate if they are not already a Senate member. The regulations describe this position incorrectly in one section and states they are an *ex officio* member in another section without adding the caveat that this applies only if they are not otherwise a member of Senate. To rectify this, it is proposed to amend the Election Regulations as follows, the marked up Regulations are also provided in Appendix 1:

8 . . . Senate Assessors on the University Court will comprise ~~one Joint Academic and Senate Assessor~~ and two Senate Assessors

Appendix 1: Senate *Ex officio* membership: Table

. . . 1 Academic Staff member on the University Court **if not already a Senate member**

Resource implications

43. The resourcing required for electing academic staff to Senate, and the arrangements for electing Senate members to the Senate Standing Committees are to be met from existing workload. The addition of a professional services staff member election will increase the resourcing requirements associated with Senate elections due to a further increase in the number of Senate elections to manage. Information Services Group (ISG) have commissioned Civica Election Services to run the University's elections on its behalf, these include Senate-related elections.

The cost of Civica running the Senate elections and the Senate Standing Committee elections will be met from within existing ISG budgets. The coordination and communication of all Senate elections will have resourcing implications for Academic Services' Senate Support team.

Risk Management

44. The University's Risk Policy and Risk Appetite statement refers to the University holding 'no appetite for any breaches in statute, regulation.' Senate elections are mandated by University Ordinance 212.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

45. Not applicable

Equality & Diversity

46. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted on the overall approach to Senate elections and is available on the [Equality and Diversity webpages](#). This assessment assumes a regular rotation/refreshment of members and the filling of most elected vacancies.

47. Senate Election advertising materials highlight the University's commitment to improving the diversity of key University committees, and encourage all academic staff to consider standing. Specific communications will target staff who hold early career academic positions including those on fixed term contracts.

48. The Senate elections will be advertised widely through multiple channels.

Next steps/implications

49. Senate and Senate Standing Committee elections will be coordinated by staff within the Academic Services team and run by Civica. Information on the elections will be published on Senate webpages and communications through multiple channels including the Senate website, all-staff email, and social media.

Consultation

50. Senate approved the Returning Officers, process and timelines for Senate and Senate Standing Committee elections.

51. Senate approved the proposal to prioritise a total of nine (9) positions for early career academic staff within the non-Professorial category. The nine positions are to be equally split across each College, with a total of three (3) positions in each College.

52. Senate supported the proposal that a total of four (4) ex-officio positions be reserved for professional services staff. This will be comprised of the Professional Services staff member on Court, and three elected Professional Services staff members with one drawn from each College.

53. Senate recommended for approval by Court the proposed changes to the Senate Election Regulations to clarify the position of Senate Assessors and the Academic Staff Member on the University Court within the election regulations, as outlined in paragraphs 36-44.

Further information

54. *Authors*

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20 February 2024

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Freedom of Information

55. Open paper

Appendix 1: Senate Academic Staff Election Regulations



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations

Composition of the Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 1-3 and 5)

1. The Principal of the University will preside at any meeting of the Senate.¹
2. The Senate model will comprise the following categories with numbers apportioned as follows²:

Table 1

Position	Membership
Principal	1
Heads of Schools	21
Heads of Colleges	3
Other <i>ex officio</i> appointments	Approximately 50
Total <i>ex officio</i>	Approximately 70 (maximum 80)
Elected academic staff (Professorial)	100
Elected academic staff (Non-professorial)	100
Elected students	30
Total elected	230
Total Senate membership	Approximately 300

3. The elected membership of Senate will be broken down as follows:

Table 2

Position	Membership	Membership Breakdown
Elected academic staff (Professorial)	100 ³	34 Professors from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
		33 Professors from the College of Science and Engineering
		33 Professors from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Elected academic staff	100 ⁴	34 academic staff members from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, <u>with 3 positions prioritised for early career academic staff.</u>

¹ Ordinance 212 Paragraph 1.

² Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 2, 3, and 5.

³ Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3a.

⁴ Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3a.

(Non-professorial)		33 academic staff members from the College of Science and Engineering, <u>with 3 positions prioritised for early career academic staff.</u>
		33 academic staff members from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, <u>with 3 positions prioritised for early career academic staff.</u>
Elected students	30 ⁵	See Appendix 2

4. Staff *ex officio* roles are detailed in Appendix 1. This list may be amended by the University Secretary from time to time, to reflect changes in organisational structures and job titles. Any changes will be notified to Senate at the next meeting of Senate.
5. The Students' Association will determine the office holders whose roles will entitle them to take up Senate membership and will be responsible for appointing these students to Senate.
6. The Students' Association must inform the Senate Support team if it is necessary to make any alteration to the list of office holders in Appendix 2 whose roles entitle them to Senate membership. Any changes will be notified to Senate at the next meeting of Senate.
7. Should a relevant Students' Association position become vacant for a period of time or a relevant student office holder be otherwise unavailable, the Students' Association will identify another appropriate elected student office holder to fill the vacant Senate position.
8. Election of Senate Assessors and Professional Services Staff to the University Court operates under separate regulations relating to election to University Court. Senate Assessors on the University Court will comprise ~~one Joint Academic and Senate Assessor and~~ two Senate Assessors. The Professional Services Staff Member elected to the University Court will also serve on Senate. - Assessors and Professional Services Staff are elected for a four-year term on Court; they hold ~~retain~~ Senate membership as *ex officio* members for the duration of their term as Court members if their term as a Senate member would otherwise have concluded.

Term of Office (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 4 and 6)

Elected academic staff

9. Elected academic staff will stand for a term of office which will not exceed three years from the first day of August of the year of election.⁶ Elected academic staff will demit office on 31 July of their final year in office.
10. There is no cap on the number of terms of office for which academic staff members may stand; academic staff members will be eligible for re-election for the same term of office provided that they demit office on ceasing to hold a contract of employment with the University.⁷

⁵ Ordinance 212 Paragraph 5.

⁶ Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4.

⁷ Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4a.

11. Elected academic staff members may resign membership at any time.⁸ Their membership will remain vacant until the next scheduled Senate election.

Elected students

12. The term of office for undergraduate student members will be one year, starting on the first day of August in the year of election. The terms of office for postgraduate student members will be one year, starting on the first day of November in the year of election. Students will be eligible to stand for multiple terms of office consecutively. There is no cap on the number of terms of office for student members.
13. A student member will demit office on ceasing to be a student at the University. Student members may resign membership at any time.⁹

The Electoral Roll (Ordinance 212 Paragraphs 3 and 5)

Elected academic staff

14. Academic staff members who are eligible to stand for membership of Senate and elect members from their own number will hold appointments from the University Court, as attested by a contract of employment issued by the University.¹⁰ In practice, 'Academic staff' will apply to all members of staff who are categorised as 'academic' in the University's Human Resources records.
15. All members of staff who are categorised as 'academic', and who also hold a personal or established chair, will be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (professorial)' category. All members of staff who are categorised as 'academic,' and who do not hold a personal or established chair, will be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category. Members of staff who are categorised as early career academic staff, including both early career research and teaching staff who hold a position up to and including Grade 08 on the University Grade Structure, will be eligible for election to the reserved early career academic staff positions contained within the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category.
16. Members of the academic staff who hold a personal or established chair will not be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category. Members of the academic staff who do not hold a personal or established chair will not be eligible to stand and vote in the 'elected academic staff (professorial)' category. Members of staff who are categorised as early career academic staff, including both early career research and teaching staff who hold a position up to and including Grade 08 on the University Grade Structure, will be eligible for election to the reserved early career academic staff positions contained within the 'elected academic staff (non-professorial)' category.
17. Academic staff members who hold any of the posts or offices which qualify them for *ex officio* membership will not be eligible to stand for membership of Senate in either of the

⁸ Ordinance 212 Paragraph 4b.

⁹ Ordinance 212 Paragraph 6a, 6b.

¹⁰ Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3

elected academic staff categories,¹¹ but are entitled to vote in the election for the academic staff category relevant to their role.

18. The electoral roll will be compiled from Human Resources' records on 31 January preceding the call for nominations meaning that nominees for the elected academic staff places will need to have been in their posts from this date in order to be eligible for nomination. Academic staff members who are allocated to the University Secretary's Group or Information Services Group will be included in the electoral roll for College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
19. Academic staff in both elected categories will be eligible to stand for the places which have been allocated to the College of which they are a member. If an academic staff member is a member of multiple Colleges, they will stand in the College where they work a greater proportion of their time (based on full-time equivalent). If an academic staff member works for equal amounts of time across multiple Colleges, they will be permitted to select the College in which they intend to stand, on condition that they only stand for election in one College, and that they declare in writing to the Senate Support Team in which College they intend to stand.

Elected students

20. The eligibility for students to stand for offices which can entitle them to Senate membership will be determined according to the eligibility criteria used by the Students' Association to appoint students to official roles. All students who are registered on credit-bearing courses, or who hold sabbatical offices, will be eligible for student membership.

Election of Academic Staff Members to Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraph 7)

21. Elections for academic staff members will be held annually and will be run by the Senate Support team. There will be two elections for each College each year, one for eligible professorial staff vacancies and one for eligible non-professorial academic staff vacancies. Both elections will usually be held on the same day.
22. The Senate Support team will inform Colleges of the number of vacancies in each elected academic staff category and will report on an annual basis the members of each College in each category who will continue in office. Senate Assessors will be included in the count of College elected members if they are continuing a term of office as a College elected member, otherwise they are classed as an *ex officio* member and are not included in the count. ~~throughout their term of office as a Senate Assessor.~~

Election Dates

23. The call for nominations for each election will be made after 31 January each year, normally at the next Senate meeting. No nominations will be accepted before this date. At this meeting, Senate will agree a deadline for the submission of nomination forms.
24. The elections will be conducted on a date which will be determined by the Senate in each year and all elections to Senate will usually take place on the same date in a given year. The

¹¹ Ordinance 212 Paragraph 3b

elections must take place in time to communicate the results to Senate before its final meeting of the academic session, and the results must be communicated to Senate no later than 30 June each year.

Role of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers

25. On an annual basis, Senate will appoint a Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer, who will be responsible for the management of the elections and the declaration of the results of the elections.
26. The Deputy Returning Officer will provide nomination forms calling for nominations and will draw attention to the correct procedure for making nominations. The call for nominations will be published by the Deputy Returning Officer and advertised via agreed channels.

Nomination and Validation of Candidates

27. Only members of the electorate in each category, as defined in paragraph 15, will be eligible to stand for election in that category. Eligible individuals will be entitled to nominate themselves as a candidate using the process specified in the call for nominations.
28. All nominations must be received by the deadline agreed by Senate. No nominations will be accepted after this date and time.
29. If the Deputy Returning Officer receives a nomination from an individual who is not eligible to stand for election under the terms defined in these regulations, the Deputy Returning Officer will contact the individual to inform them that their nomination will not be accepted. Where the individual whose nomination has not been accepted wishes to challenge the rejection of their nomination, they may do so by contacting the Returning Officer. The decision of the Returning Officer is final.
30. In the event of there being only one valid candidate for each vacancy and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer will declare and publicise as soon as practicable the name of the valid candidate elected for each vacancy.

Conduct of election process

31. Each candidate will receive from the Deputy Returning Officer a copy of these Regulations.
32. If the Deputy Returning Officer has reason to believe that a candidate may have breached these Regulations, the Deputy Returning Officer will request a written explanation or clarification from the candidate. If the Deputy Returning Officer concludes that a material breach has occurred, the Deputy Returning Officer will inform the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer has the authority to disqualify a candidate, subject to the right of appeal by the candidate to the University Secretary (or specified delegated authority) within two working days of receiving written notification of the disqualification. The decision of the University Secretary (or delegated authority) will be final.
33. The validity of the elections will not be affected in the event that a candidate is unavailable to continue for any reason prior to the results of the election being announced and, where there is a greater number of candidates remaining than vacancies in any category, the election will proceed as planned. In the event of there being only one remaining candidate for each vacancy in any category and therefore an uncontested election in that category, the

Deputy Returning Officer will declare and publicise as soon as practicable, and no later than two working days after confirmation of the uncontested election status, the names of the valid candidates elected.

34. The Deputy Returning Officer will distribute to each member of the electorate via email a link to the voting system along with a link to the relevant web page to view information about the candidates.

Voting arrangements

35. The elections will be conducted by means of the Single Transferrable Vote, Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (STV WIGM). The candidates with the greatest share of the vote will automatically be elected.
36. Voting will be conducted by staff online. All those on the electoral roll will be permitted access and will be able to vote on the online voting system on the election date(s).
37. Members of staff who are formally employed in more than one College will be entitled to vote in all Colleges in which they are employed.

Counting

38. All votes cast online will be counted together using an electronic counting system.
39. In the event of a tie, the successful candidate or candidates will be determined by the drawing of lots. The Returning Officer will draw lots from the pool of candidates whose votes are tied until the available vacancies are filled.

Declaration

40. The Deputy Returning Officer will ensure that ~~a notice of~~ the result of the election is posted ~~on the Old College Notice Board and posted~~ to the Senate webpages as soon as is practicable after the result or results have been declared. The result of the election will be ~~and~~ communicated to Senate at the first meeting following the elections.

Election of Student Members to Senate (Ordinance 212 Paragraph 8)

41. Elections for student members will be held annually on dates to be determined by the Students' Association. Elections for student members will be conducted by the Students' Association in accordance with election regulations determined by the Students' Association, and with section 16 of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

Document control

Date of approval / amendment	Details
2/10/19	Approved by Senate
2/12/19	Approved by University Court
5/2/20	Amended under section 4 by the University Secretary, Senate informed 5/2/20
27/1/21	Amended under section 6 by the Edinburgh University Students' Association, Senate informed 27/1/21
9/2/22	Amended under sections 4 and 6, Senate informed 9/2/22
8/2/23	Amended Appendix 1, Senate informed 8/2/23
<u>7/2/24</u>	<u>Amended Table 2, Section 8, 15, 16, 22, 40 and Appendix 1</u>

Appendix 1

Senate *Ex Officio* membership

(See regulations 2 and 4)

Position	Membership	Membership Breakdown
Principal	1	(Required under Ordinance 212)
<i>Ex officio</i> appointments	Approximately 70, with a maximum 80 <i>ex officio</i> members in total.	Heads of Schools (Required under Ordinance 212) and Heads (Deans) of the Deaneries of the Edinburgh Medical School.
		Heads of College (Required under Ordinance 212)
		Provost
		Vice-Principals
		Assistant Principals
		Director of Library and University Collections
		Director of the Institute for Academic Development
		University Leads on Climate Responsibility and Sustainability; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
		Up to <u>65</u> College-level office holders per College nominated by that College. <u>5 office holders must who hold academic posts (for example, Deans and Associate Deans)</u> <u>1 office-holder will be a professional services staff member elected to that role by their peers.</u>
		Office-holders who are specifically entitled to Senate membership under the terms of collaborative agreements.
		2 Senate Assessors on the University Court <u>if not serving a term as an elected member.</u>
		1 Academic Staff member on the University Court <u>if not already a Senate member.</u>
		<u>1 Professional Services member on the University Court</u>

Appendix 2

Student membership

(See regulations 5 and 6)

Position	Membership	Membership breakdown
Elected students	30	5 Sabbatical Officers
		8 Section Representatives
		5 Liberation Officers
		6 Undergraduate School Representatives
		6 Postgraduate School Representatives



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Professional Services Staff Member Election Regulations 2024

Description of paper

1. This paper seeks approval for election regulations to fill a Court vacancy for a member appointed by being elected by the members of the professional services staff from among their own number. This is known as the Professional Services Staff Member position and is currently held by Sarah McAllister, who is serving a first term of office from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2024 and is eligible to stand for re-election.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is invited to approve regulations for a Professional Services Staff Member Election, included as Appendix 1.

Background and context

3. The Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 includes a requirement for the Court membership to include one person appointed by being elected by the professional services staff of the institution from among their own number, with the election process to be conducted in accordance with rules made by the Court. There is an equivalent position for an academic staff member, currently held by Toby Kelly, who is serving a first term of office from 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2026. The terms of office for the two positions are not aligned as the previous holder of the academic staff member position opted to demit office in advance of their term ending given other commitments. The most recent set of election regulations for these positions are therefore for the academic staff member position, approved by Court in February 2022.

Discussion

4. The draft regulations in Appendix 1 set out the proposed process and timescale for the election. These closely follow the regulations approved by Court in February 2022 ahead of the equivalent election for the academic staff member position. They also include an element added for the first time in the Rectorial election regulations approved by Court in December 2023: that all members of the University community participating in the election must follow existing policies (such as the Dignity and Respect Policy, the University Computing Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection Policy, Policy on Employee Use of Social Media and any other policies as appropriate). This is to make clear that the usual standards of behaviour and expected adherence to University policies apply and there is no exemption from these in the context of a staff election. In addition, it has been clarified that the successful candidate will be required to acknowledge their obligations under the Code of Conduct for Court members (as all new Court members do) and that their term of office will end should they no longer be a professional services staff member at the University. All changes proposed from the equivalent academic staff member regulations approved in February 2022 are marked up in Appendix 1 for ease of comparison.

5. The proposed timetable is:

Activity	Date
Cut-off point for compilation of electoral roll	Thursday 29 February 2024
Call for nominations open	Monday 4 March 2024
Call for nominations close	Wednesday 3 April 2024
Voting commences at 9am	Thursday 2 May 2024
Voting closes at 12 noon	Wednesday 8 May 2024

Resource implications

6. Election costs will be met from existing budgets.

Risk Management

7. The University has a low appetite for risk in the area of compliance and the election of staff members to the Court is a requirement of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

8. The election regulations have been drafted with risk mitigation in mind, including rules on good conduct and the option of varying the voting period in the event of unforeseen special circumstances.

Equality & Diversity

9. Publicity for the elections will aim to encourage candidates from across the University's professional services staff and will draw on sector body AdvanceHE's Higher Education Board Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit to encourage those from underrepresented groups.

Next steps/implications

10. If agreed by Court, the elections will be organised as per the timetable and regulations. The individual elected, subject to agreement to the Code of Conduct for Court Members and other declarations, will take office with effect from 1 August.

Consultation

11. The draft election regulations have been shared with representatives of the recognised staff unions and any comments received will be reported at the meeting. The Chancellor's Assessor has reviewed an earlier draft of the election regulations, with responses to comments incorporated in this final draft.

Further information

12. Authors

Lewis Allan and Kirstie Graham
Governance & Court Services
Email: court@ed.ac.uk

Presenter

Leigh Chalmers,
Vice-Principal & University Secretary

Freedom of Information

13. Open paper.

University of Edinburgh

Regulations for the Election of an ~~Academic~~ Professional Services Staff Member of the University Court [with proposed deletions in strikethrough and additions in red]

1. The following regulations have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of sections 10 and 11 of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 and Ordinance No. 211 (Composition of the University Court).
2. The ~~Academic~~ Professional Services Staff Member Election shall be held from 9am on ~~26 May 2022~~ **2 May 2024** until 12 noon on ~~1 June 2022~~ **8 May 2024**.

Role of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers

3. The Deputy Secretary Governance and Strategic Planning ~~Legal~~ shall be the Returning Officer. The Head of Court Services shall be Deputy Returning Officer and shall be responsible for the management of the election and the declaration of the result of the election.
4. The Deputy Returning Officer shall publicise the election and voting procedure to staff and make arrangements as appropriate to secure the good conduct of the election.
5. The Deputy Returning Officer shall provide nomination forms, publish the call for nominations and draw attention to the correct form of procedure for making nominations. The call for nominations shall be published by the Deputy Returning Officer via staff email, on **display screens and** notice boards throughout the University, on the University website and on University social networking sites.

Electoral Roll

6. The compilation of the electoral roll for the ~~Academic~~ Professional Services Staff Member Election shall be 12 noon on **29 February 2024** ~~31 January 2022~~.
7. The Electoral Roll will consist of all those staff of the University who are **professional services (i.e. who are not academic or research staff)**, in Grades 1 to 10 or equivalent, who are on the main University Payroll ~~and therefore includes all members of staff who are represented on Senate~~, who hold contracts of employment with the University as at **29 February 2024** ~~31 January 2022~~. Staff may check whether their name appears on the electoral roll by contacting the Deputy Returning Officer from **29 February 2024** ~~31 January 2022~~ during normal working hours by email: court@ed.ac.uk ~~or phone: 0131 650 2097~~. Any person whose name does not appear on the roll but who holds a contract of employment confirming commencement of employment with the University before or at **29 February 2024** ~~31 January 2022~~ may apply to be included in the electoral roll on production of the contract of employment, no later than **28 March 2024** ~~1 March 2022~~.

Nominations and Validation of Candidates

8. The call for nominations shall commence at 9.00 am on **4 March 2024** ~~4 April 2022~~. No nominations shall be accepted before this date and time. The Deputy Returning Officer shall provide nomination forms and publish the call for nominations by email, on the University website and social media. The Deputy Returning Officer will draw

attention to the correct form of procedure for making nominations as well as advising that failure to comply with the procedure shall invalidate a nomination.

9. All nominations must be submitted on the approved form and lodged with the Deputy Returning Officer by 12 noon on ~~16 May 2022~~ **3 April 2024**. A statement giving details of the nominee and a supporting statement should be supplied, in no more than 500 words. This statement will be used for publicity purposes and will be circulated to the electorate for information. Canvassing in the form of poster campaigns is not allowed. Candidates should not seek to influence their colleagues by behaviour that may be perceived to be bullying, harassment or intimidation. If these prohibitions are breached, it may lead to disqualification.
10. Only members of the electorate, as defined in section 7, shall be eligible for nomination.
11. Each nomination must be supported by no fewer than five members of the electorate.
12. Nominations must be received by the Deputy Returning Officer by email.
13. The duty of the ~~Academic~~ **Professional Services** Staff Member is to be a member of the University Court and of the Senate *[to note: it is proposed in the separate Senate Election Regulations paper that the Professional Services Staff Member also be a member of the Senate]*. Members of the Court are “Charity Trustees” under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Candidates must not be disqualified from being Charity Trustees and nominees shall also require to confirm in writing that they are not so disqualified.
14. The ~~Academic~~ **Professional Services** Staff Member is eligible to stand for no more than two consecutive terms of office.
15. The Deputy Returning Officer shall acknowledge receipt of the nomination to each nominee indicating the date and time the nomination was received.
16. If the Deputy Returning Officer believes there is any cause for concern regarding the validity of a nomination, this matter shall be drawn to the attention of the nominee/candidate, who shall be given the opportunity to address the cause for concern.
17. The Returning Officer shall scrutinise nominations and can disqualify any ineligible candidates. As soon as practicable, each candidate shall be notified of the validity of their nomination and the list of candidates for the election shall then be confirmed and published.
18. The Chancellor’s Assessor, ~~Sheriff Principal Alastair Dunlop~~ **KC QC**, shall be appointed by the University Court to hear any appeal against disqualification by the Returning Officer. The decision of the Chancellor’s Assessor is final. If for any reason the Chancellor’s Assessor is unavailable the Nominations Committee will appoint another member of the University Court to hear any appeals.
19. In the event of there being only one valid candidate and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer shall declare and publicise as soon as practicable the name of the one valid candidate elected.

Conduct of election process

20. Each candidate shall receive from the Deputy Returning Officer a copy of these Regulations. In order to assist in the interpretation of these Regulations a meeting with candidates may also be held if required.
21. If the Deputy Returning Officer has reason to believe that a breach of these Regulations may have occurred the Deputy Returning Officer shall request a written explanation or clarification from the candidate. If the Deputy Returning Officer concludes that a material breach has occurred the Deputy Returning Officer shall inform the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer has the authority to disqualify a candidate subject to the right of appeal by the candidate to the Chancellor's Assessor within 48 hours of receiving written notification of the disqualification. The decision of the Chancellor's Assessor shall be final.
22. The validity of the election shall not be affected in the event that a candidate is unavailable to continue for any reason prior to the results of the election being announced and where there are more than two candidates remaining the election shall proceed as planned. In the event of there being only one remaining candidate and therefore an uncontested election, the Deputy Returning Officer shall declare and publicise as soon as practicable and no later than 48 hours after confirmation of the uncontested election status the name of the valid candidate elected.
23. After the declaration of the elected candidate, arrangements to hold a new election shall be undertaken only in the event of that declared elected candidate being unable for whatever reason to continue to hold the position of ~~Academic~~ **Professional Services** Staff Member.
24. The Deputy Returning Officer shall distribute to each member of the electorate via email a link to the voting system along with a link to the relevant web page to view supporting statements, of not more than 500 words, for each candidate for information. The emails shall be required to comply with the University's computing regulations and the Deputy Returning Officer shall reserve the right to require amendments to be made to the content particularly if the text contains inappropriate comments about other candidates.
25. Use of pre-existing e-mail, phone or mailing group/lists by candidates for the purpose of promoting their campaign is not permitted. Harvesting of data from any such lists for campaign purposes is also not permitted.
26. Candidates may canvass individuals known to them. Unsolicited canvassing of other voters by e-mail, mail or phone using University directories or resources is not permitted. As noted at section ~~24~~**25**, the University will ensure that the candidate's statement is made available to voters.
27. **All members of the University community engaging in the election in any form must follow existing University codes, policies and regulations such as the Staff Disciplinary Policy, the Dignity and Respect Policy, the University Computing Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection Policy, Policy on Employee Use of Social Media and any other policies as appropriate.**

Voting arrangements

287. The election shall be conducted by means of the alternative vote.
298. Voting shall be conducted by staff on-line using a secure University portal. *[drafting note: staff will vote using a secure portal provided by external partner and election specialist, Civica Election Services]*
3029. All those on the electoral roll for the ~~Academic~~ **Professional Services** Staff Member Election, shall be permitted access and shall be able to vote on the on-line voting system from 9am on ~~2 May 2024~~ **23 May 2022** until 12 noon on **8 May 2024** ~~1 June 2022~~.
310. Where a change of circumstances occurs which in the opinion of the Returning Officer renders the voting period insufficient to enable a representative vote to be obtained under the special conditions prevailing at the time (for example, severe weather leading the closure of many University buildings and staff not present on campus), the Returning Officer may extend the voting periods as they consider necessary.

Counting

324. All votes cast shall be counted using an electronic counting system. ~~Each candidate shall be permitted to attend and have a representative present at the counting.~~ *[drafting note: this is an outdated reference to when the counting of votes was a manual process conducted within the University. It is now done instantaneously by Civica Election Services and cannot be observed as such.]*
332. Each member of the electorate shall be entitled to have only one vote included at each stage of the electronic counting process.
343. In the event of a tie, the successful candidate shall be determined by the drawing of lots by the Returning Officer. The drawing of lots can be witnessed by the tied candidates or a representative nominated by a tied candidate.

Declaration *and Appointment*

354. The Deputy Returning Officer shall ensure that a notice of the result of the election is posted on the Old College Notice Board, on the University website and on University social networking sites as soon as is practicable after the result has been declared.
365. The successful candidate shall be required to re-confirm in writing that they are not disqualified under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from acting as a Trustee of a charity **and to acknowledge the Code of Conduct for members of the University Court and their obligations under it.** *[drafting note: this mirrors language used in the standard appointment letter for Court members]*
37. **The successful candidate shall take office on 1 August 2024 for a period of four years until 31 July 2028. If the successful candidate ceases to be a member of professional services (i.e. not academic or research staff) staff of the University in Grades 1 to 10 or equivalent on the main University Payroll at any point during their term on the University Court their term will instead end on the date when they ceased to be a member of staff in this category.**



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

General Council Membership & Registration Ordinance

Description of paper

1. Following initial review by Court at the last meeting and a subsequent open consultation, the paper seeks approval for a draft new General Council Membership and Registration Ordinance. The extant Ordinance is included in Appendix 1 and the draft new Ordinance in Appendix 2, with proposed changes in red.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is invited to:

- note the responses received during the statutory consultation;
- approve the final draft Ordinances for submission to the Privy Council Office; and,
- delegate authority to the University Secretary to agree any further non-material changes to the Ordinances if requested by the Scottish Government or Privy Council.

Background and context

3. Court agreed at its previous meeting (4 December 2023, Item 16/Paper O) to undertake a statutory consultation on a replacement for the existing General Council Membership and Registration Ordinance. The draft new Ordinance makes changes in five areas:

(i) Widening the membership of the General Council to include all those graduating with academic awards and not just degrees (e.g. this would include postgraduate diplomas);

(ii) Correcting anomalies (e.g. specifying the *ex officio* membership of the University Chaplain, more consistent treatment of invitations to retain membership made to members demitting various offices);

(iii) Removing the anachronism of reference to a registration fee, discontinued in 2012;

(iv) Administrative simplification (e.g. offering membership for relevant staff on appointment rather than after one year in post); and,

(v) Parity of membership for academic and professional staff, with membership to be offered to all staff in University Grade 8 and above, rather than the current restriction to only academic staff with certain positions that are University Grade 8 or above (Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader, Professor) of the University.

Discussion

4. Following Court's review of the draft new Ordinance and agreement to undertake a public consultation:

- The Secretary to the General Council received notice on 18 December, who in turn publicised the consultation to the General Council membership and sought comments in advance of the General Council's Half-Yearly Meeting on 17 February;
- The Senate membership received notice on 19 December, with a paper submitted to the Senate meeting on 7 February; and,
- The draft new Ordinance and explanatory note was uploaded to the University's [website](#) and posted on the Old College noticeboard, with the public consultation open for a statutory 8 week period from 29 December 2023 to 23 February 2024.

5. While the consultation remains open until 23 February and any responses received after this paper has been issued will be reported on at the Court meeting, at the time of writing (20 February):

- The Secretary of General Council wrote to members in December and January inviting comments. There has been a rather modest response so far - 39 were in favour of the proposed changes and 20 were for retaining the status quo. The Convener, Sir Philip Mawer reported to the Half Yearly Meeting on 17 February that, 'Responses to the consultation received so far reveal that, while some have reservations, a clear majority of respondents favour the proposed changes'. Despite the opportunity being given to members to comment or raise questions on this at the Half Yearly meeting, none were raised, indicating an overall favourable position.
- No comments were made at the Senate meeting or received from Senate members since the meeting;
- The draft Ordinance has also been reviewed by Sarah Wolffe, General Council Assessor, and some textual amendments to improve clarity in places have been incorporated as a result;
- Upon review of equivalent Privy Council-approved Ordinances for the Universities of Glasgow and St Andrews a section has been added replicating text used in their Ordinances to specify that the new composition of the General Council within the Ordinance is in place of some older references to the composition of General Council in primary legislation; and,
- No comments have been received from other individuals or organisations.

Resource implications

6. Any additional resource requirements arising from bringing in new categories of membership would be temporary and manageable through phased implementation of changes to incorporate existing staff or award holders who would become eligible. Potentially the largest group of additional members of the General Council are those who graduated with awards which were not degrees but as they are already in the Development & Alumni Office's database, including them in the General Council Register is straightforward.

Risk Management

7. The General Council Register sits within a database managed by the Development & Alumni Office with close attention to data protection legislation and data security. A detailed Data Protection Impact Assessment of the proposed changes was carried out by the Working Party in its review of implementation and this was approved by the University Data Protection Officer.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

8. A more diverse membership would ensure that the General Council was better equipped to play its part in supporting the University to deliver its Strategy 2030 outcomes and the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. A key issue for ensuring a contemporary database of active General Council members is to align with the University's digital strategy which makes more effective use of digital technology to engage with members sustainably e.g. targeted communication; voting; hybrid events.

Equality & Diversity

10. Current criteria for General Council membership discriminate in favour of academic staff to the exclusion of other staff groups. One aim of the review is to propose a more equitable basis for staff membership and hence a General Council membership which better reflects the diversity of the University's community. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out by the Working Party. This has since been approved by the University Secretary and the proposed changes will contribute to meeting the University's general equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

Next steps/implications

11. If Court is content, the new Ordinance will be submitted to the Privy Council Office for approval by the Scottish Universities Committee and then by His Majesty in Council.

Consultation

12. The draft Ordinance have been subject to consultation with Court, Senate and the General Council and made available on the University website and Old College noticeboard for any other interested party to comment.

Further information

13. Author

Lewis Allan
Senior Governance Advisor to the
Vice-Principal & University Secretary

Presenter

Lady Wolffe
General Council Assessor

Freedom of Information

14. Open 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. ¹

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.

¹ Omitted by Ordinance No. 202, now superseded by Ordinance No. 213

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH ORDINANCE No 217

GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION

At Edinburgh, the [Number] day of [Month], [Year]

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 who **having successfully met the requirements of an academic award, other than an Honorary Degree, and have graduated from the University of Edinburgh and** 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 award of Honorary Fellow of the University. **[Note: this provision does not apply to those appointed or referred to as Honorary Fellows by Colleges or Schools.]**

(c) during their tenure of office -

- (i) the Chancellor of the University;
- (ii) the members of the University Court;
- (iii) **the Chaplain to the University.**

[Drafting note: all Professors, Readers, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers are now included under (d) below]

(d) during the tenure of their appointment: all staff of the University appointed to roles assigned to University Grade 8 or above and their grade equivalent(s).

(e) those 'ex officio' members in Clause 1(c) who accept the invitation to retain their membership of the General Council on demitting office or completion of their period of appointment; *[Drafting note: former Professors are now included under (f) below]*

(f) former staff (admitted previously as per Clause (d) above) who accept the invitation to retain their membership of the General Council after being employed by the University for a period of at least three years in a role assigned to Grade 8 or above or equivalent and who leave University employment except when dismissed or in other similar categories of case as may be determined by the Registrar.

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 an **academic award** other than an Honorary Degree, the address of each graduand at the time of registration for graduation, the date of graduation, and the **award** 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 **academic award** recorded in the Register of Graduates, and the year of graduation in that **academic award**.

(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. [Omitted by Ordinance No. 202, now superseded by Ordinance No. 213]

5. 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 **and** 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.

6. The provisions contained in section 1 of this Ordinance shall be in place of the provisions relating to the composition of the General Council of the University of Edinburgh contained in:

(a) section 6 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858;

(b) section 28 of the Representation of the People (Scotland) Act 1868;

(c) section 2 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1922.

[Drafting note: section 6 above replicates text used in equivalent Ordinances at the Universities of Glasgow and St Andrews, which have been approved by the Privy Council]

7. Ordinance No 186 (General Council Membership and Registration) is hereby revoked.

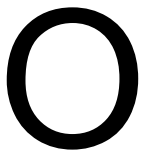
8. This Ordinance shall come into force after its approval by His Majesty in Council on a date to be determined by the University Court.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF these presents are sealed with the Common Seal of the University Court of the University of Edinburgh and subscribed on behalf of the Court in terms of the Requirements of Writing (Scotland) Act 1995

[signature to be added]
Professor Sir Peter Mathieson
Member of the University Court

[signature to be added]
Leigh Chalmers
Vice-Principal & University Secretary

Approved by Order in Council, dated *[insert date when known]*



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Donations and Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity

Description of paper

1. The paper provides:
 - a report on legacies and donations received by the University of Edinburgh Development Trust or directly by the University of Edinburgh from 1 November 2023 to 19 January 2024; and
 - an update on current alumni relations activities.
2. 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

3. Court members are asked to note the legacies and donations received and current alumni relations activities.

Paragraphs 4-6: closed section

Global Alumni Events

7. Upcoming global alumni events:

Toronto, Canada Edinburgh University Club of Toronto virtual talk featuring Prof Shannon Vallor	February 2024
New York, USA New York City Tartan Day parade and post-parade alumni reception	April 2024
Toronto, Canada Edinburgh University Club of Toronto Annual Dinner	April 2024
Hong Kong Alumni event as part of Principal visit to Hong Kong	April 2024

Recent Global Alumni events

8. In November, Professor Colm Harmon hosted a well-received alumni breakfast in Singapore for recent graduates and volunteers. Later in the month, alumni in Shanghai enjoyed a St Andrews Day Ceilidh.
9. In December, the Alumni Club of Washington DC took part in a popular staple in their events calendar, the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade, and the Alumni Club of New York hosted a festive happy hour gathering.
10. We were delighted to see a number of Burns Night events taking place across the globe in January. The alumni clubs of Washington DC, Toronto, and New York

hosted their annual Burns events, with celebrations also taking place in Connecticut, Boston, Chicago and Guangzhou.

11. January also saw a well-attended alumni event in Jakarta, hosted by colleagues in Student Recruitment and Admissions. Other alumni events so far this year include a collaborative wine tasting event co-hosted by the University of Edinburgh Alumni Association of Hong Kong and their counterparts at LSE, and a British Council hosted alumni event at the British Embassy Dublin for UK universities.

Student Engagement

12. Alumni volunteers have supported a number of important activities for current and prospective students, including recruitment events such as Postgraduate Virtual Open Days and Postgraduate Online Learning Essentials, where future students could put their questions directly to our alumni panellists to help them inform their decision-making.

13. In the autumn 2023 round of Student Experience Grants, over £200,830 was awarded across 54 successful grant applications. These funds will support an array of innovative projects and initiatives that will enhance student development and experience. Funded projects include support for 'The Wandering Womb', an art installation that will travel the UK to increase understanding of different menstrual health conditions, and 'ChemPALS', a new peer support programme within the School of Chemistry to offer academic companionship. You can see the full list of awards [here](#).

Being Edinburgh Award 2024

14. Nominations for the Being Edinburgh Award 2024 closed at the beginning of February. Being Edinburgh focuses on shared values and impact, recognising alumni who are making a difference in ways that are not always visible, but whose actions positively affect others. Shortlisting of our finalists is currently taking place and an online vote open to alumni, students and staff to select the winner will go live on Monday 26 February.

Alumni Communications

15. Our alumni communications have continued to involve and profile the diversity of the graduate community.

16. Highlights include our two podcasts: [Multi-Story](#), produced by our Employ.ed on Campus student intern, which has now reached over 8,000 downloads; while the brand new [Enlightened Conversations](#) series has already reached over 1,000 listeners.

17. The Enlightened digital magazine is now on Issue 06 while a new print version was issued to over 30,000 engaged alumni in December.

18. Over 3,000 copies of the Multi Story Edinburgh handbooks were distributed at graduation ceremonies in November while a further 4,000 will be mailed to those who could not attend a ceremony in person. The related monthly newsletter continues to be sent to all new graduates in collaboration with the Careers Service.

Resource implications

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

Risk Management

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

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

21. 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

22. 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

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

Consultation

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

Further information

25. Author

Gregor Hall

Finance Manager

Rachelle Norry

Head of Alumni Engagement

Development & Alumni

Presenter

Chris Cox

Vice-Principal Philanthropy &
Advancement

Freedom of Information

26. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Court Meeting Dates 2024/25 and 2025/26

Description of paper

1. This paper proposes Court meeting dates for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 academic years.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. Court is invited to approve the dates.

Background and context

3. The proposed meeting dates follow a similar pattern to those scheduled in recent years. These are two meetings in Semester 1 and three meetings in Semester 2. Following feedback from a number of Court members, it has been decided to set meeting dates two years in advance to assist with diary scheduling.

Discussion

4. The proposed meeting dates are as follows:

2024/25

Monday 23 September 2024 (Seminar and Meeting)

Note: subsequently changed to Monday 7 October

Monday 2 December 2024 (Meeting)

Monday 24 February 2025 (Seminar and Meeting)

Monday 28 April 2025 (Meeting)

Monday 23 June 2025 (Meeting)

2025/26

Monday 6 October 2025 (Seminar and Meeting)

Monday 1 December 2025 (Meeting)

Monday 23 February 2026 (Seminar and Meeting)

Monday 20 April 2026 (Meeting)

Monday 15 June 2026 (Meeting)

Resource implications

5. Court's servicing costs are met from existing budgets.

Risk Management

6. Regular scheduling of Court meetings contributes to the good governance of the University.

Equality & Diversity

7. No equality and diversity issues are anticipated.

Next steps/implications

8. If agreed, calendar invitations will be issued to Court members and attendees.

Consultation

9. The Senior Lay Member, Principal's Office have been consulted, as have the Conveners of Audit & Risk Committee and Remuneration Committee, to ensure proposed Court dates allow for practicable cycles of prior committee meetings.

Further information

10. Author
Dan Wedgwood
Head of Court Services

Freedom of Information

11. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 February 2024

Resolutions: Chairs

Description of paper

1. This paper invites Court to approve Resolutions to establish Chairs and alter the title of a Chair (i.e. professorial positions), in accordance with agreed arrangements and the requirements set out in the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966. This paper contributes to the Strategy 2030 outcome 'We will be a destination of choice, based on our clear "Edinburgh Offer"'.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. To approve the following Resolutions presented in final format:
- No. 1/2024 Alteration of the title of Personal Chair of Sociology of Emotions and Relationships
 - No. 2/2024 Alteration of the title of Personal Chair of European Politics
 - No. 3/2024 Foundation of a Chair of Generative AI

Background and context

3. The Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 enabled Court to exercise by Resolution a wide range of powers, including the creation and renaming of Chairs. The Act sets out the procedure for making Resolutions. This includes a period of consultation with the Senate, the General Council and any other body or person having an interest.
4. The circumstances leading to the creation of a Chair are typically either:
- i. the creation of a Personal Chair as a result of an individual's promotion, which has been approved by the Central Academic Promotions Committee; or,
 - ii. the creation of a Personal Chair as a result of an approved recruitment exercise at a professorial level, where the new appointment will have input into their appropriate Chair title;
 - iii. the creation of a substantive Chair, where the Chair title is not linked to an individual.
5. As Chair titles are approved by Resolution, they can only be altered by Resolution.

Discussion

6. The draft Resolutions were circulated to General Council and Senate for observations. There was a query raised by a Senate member and by the General Council on Resolution 2/2024 on alteration of the title of Personal Chair of European Politics to Personal Chair of Neuropolitics. In response to these queries, both bodies were informed that during their time at the University, since 2013, the holder of the personal Chair had retrained in Cognitive Neuropsychology and Neuroimaging to develop their work in the nascent area of neuropolitics. As the Neuropolitics Research Laboratory is now firmly established it was timely to rebadge their Chair title to reflect its neuropolitics focus. Another Senate member commented that Personal Chairs should be able to call their Chair anything that reasonably corresponds to their established area of academic pre-eminence.

Resource implications

7. Part of the approval process for new Chairs involved confirmation of the funding in place to support the posts.

Risk Management

8. There are reputational considerations, which are considered as part of the University's approval processes.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

9. This paper does not directly contribute to the climate emergency or SDGs as it is fulfilling a legislative requirement.

Equality & Diversity

10. There are no specific equality and diversity issues associated with this paper. However, equality and diversity best practice and agreed procedures are adopted in appointing individuals to Chairs.

Next steps/implications

11. Senate and the General Council will be informed of the approval of the final Resolutions. The list of approved Resolutions is annually reviewed and published on the University's website.

Consultation

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

Further information

13. Author
Kirstie Graham
Court Services Office
February 2024

Freedom of Information

14. Open paper.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Resolution of the University Court No. 1/2024

Alteration of the title of Personal Chair of Sociology of Emotions and Relationships

At Edinburgh, the Twenty sixth day of February, Two thousand and twenty four.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to alter the title of the Personal Chair of Sociology of Emotions and Relationships founded by Resolution 21/2022;

AND WHEREAS paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, provides that the University Court may, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and with the consent of the incumbent and patrons, if any, alter the title of existing professorships;

AND WHEREAS the Chair dealt with in this Resolution is in the patronage of the University Court itself:

THEREFORE the University Court, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, with special reference to paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby resolves:

1. The Personal Chair of Sociology of Emotions and Relationships shall hereafter be designated the Personal Chair of Sociology.
2. This Resolution shall come into with effect from 1 January 2024.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Resolution of the University Court No. 2/2024

Alteration of the title of Personal Chair of European Politics

At Edinburgh, the Twenty sixth day of February, Two thousand and twenty four.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to alter the title of the Personal Chair of European Politics founded by Resolution 27/2022;

AND WHEREAS paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, provides that the University Court may, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and with the consent of the incumbent and patrons, if any, alter the title of existing professorships;

AND WHEREAS the Chair dealt with in this Resolution is in the patronage of the University Court itself:

THEREFORE the University Court, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, with special reference to paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby resolves:

1. The Personal Chair of European Politics shall hereafter be designated the Personal Chair of Neuropolitics.
2. This Resolution shall come into with effect from 1 January 2024.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Resolution of the University Court No. 3/2024

Foundation of a Chair of Generative AI

At Edinburgh, the Twenty sixth day of February, Two thousand and twenty four.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to found a Chair of Generative AI.

THEREFORE the University Court, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1966, with special reference to paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby resolves:

1. There shall be a Chair of Generative AI in the University of Edinburgh.
2. The patronage of the Chair shall be vested in and exercised by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh.
3. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 January Two thousand and twenty four.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary