



University Court  
Central University Area  
Monday, 2 December 2024

## AGENDA

### OPENING ITEMS

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <b>1 Minutes</b>  | <b>A1, A2</b> |
| To <u>approve</u> the minutes of the meeting and note of the seminar held on 7 October 2024 |               |
| <b>2 Matters Arising &amp; Review of Action Log</b>   | <b>A3</b>     |
| To <u>raise</u> any matters arising and <u>review</u> the Action Log                        |               |
| <b>3 Principal's Report</b>   | <b>B</b>      |
| To <u>note</u> a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal                                     |               |
| <b>4 Committee Business</b>   |               |
| • Policy & Resources Committee  | <b>C1</b>     |
| • Nominations Committee   | <b>C2</b>     |
| To <u>approve</u> amendments to the committee's Terms of Reference                          |               |
| • Audit & Risk Committee  | <b>C3</b>     |
| • Knowledge Strategy Committee  | <b>C4</b>     |
| • Remuneration Committee Annual Report  | <b>C5</b>     |
| • Senate  | <b>C6</b>     |

### KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

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|--|-----------|
| <b>5 Finance</b>   |           |
| To <u>consider</u> papers presented by Lee Hamill, Director of Finance                                 |           |
| • <b>Finance Update Report</b>   | <b>D1</b> |
| • <b>Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24</b>  | <b>D2</b> |
| • <b>Letter of Representation</b>  | <b>D3</b> |
| • <b>United States Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP)</b>                              | <b>D4</b> |
| <b>6 Student Recruitment and Intakes, 2024/25 Entry</b>  | <b>E</b>  |
| To <u>consider</u> a paper presented by Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning   |           |
| <b>7 Performance Measures to Support Strategy 2030: 2023-24 Year-End Report</b>                        | <b>F</b>  |
| To <u>consider</u> a paper presented by Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning   |           |
| <b>8 Audit &amp; Risk Committee Annual Report</b>  | <b>G</b>  |
| To <u>consider</u> the annual report presented by Douglas Millican, Convener of Audit & Risk Committee |           |

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|-----------|--|------------------------|
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Risk Management Post Year-End Assurance Statement</b><br>To <i>consider</i> the assurance statement presented by Catherine Martin,<br>Vice-Principal Corporate Services | <b>H</b>               |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Responsible Investment Policy: Analysis of Consultation Responses</b><br>To <i>consider</i> a paper presented by Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal<br>Corporate Services | <b>I</b>               |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Student Experience Update</b><br>To <i>consider</i> a paper presented by Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary<br>Students   | <b>J</b>               |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Students' Association and Sports Union Reports</b><br>To <i>consider</i> the reports presented by Dora Herndon, Students'<br>Association President                      |                        |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Students' Association Report</b></li> <li>• <b>Sports Union Report</b></li> </ul>  | <b>K1</b><br><b>K2</b> |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Annual Court Internal Effectiveness Review</b><br>To <i>consider</i> a paper presented by Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal &<br>University Secretary                      | <b>L</b>               |

**ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

- |           |   |          |
|-----------|---|----------|
| <b>14</b> | <b>Health and Safety Annual Report</b><br>To <i>note</i> the report and <i>approve</i> the Health and Safety Policy | <b>M</b> |
| <b>15</b> | <b>Donations &amp; Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity</b><br>To <i>note</i>                                     | <b>N</b> |
| <b>16</b> | <b>Resolutions</b><br>To <i>approve</i>   | <b>O</b> |
| <b>17</b> | <b>Any Other Business</b><br>To <i>consider</i> any other matters   |          |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Date of Next Meeting</b><br>Monday, 24 February 2025, 9.30am-5pm (including Court seminar)                       |          |



## UNIVERSITY COURT

7 October 2024, Chancellor's Building, Edinburgh BioQuarter

## Minutes

- Members Present:** Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member  
 Simon Fanshawe, Rector  
 Rushad Abadan, Co-opted Member  
 Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member  
 Dora Herndon, Students' Association President  
 Shereen Benjamin, Senatus Assessor  
 Richard Blythe, Senatus Assessor  
 Ruth Elliott, Students' Association Vice-President Community  
 Alastair Dunlop, Chancellor's Assessor  
 Tobias Kelly, Academic Staff Member  
 Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor  
 Douglas Millican, Co-opted Member  
 Kathryn Nash, Trade Union Academic Staff Member  
 Mark Patrizio, Trade Union Professional Services Staff Member  
 Sarah Wolffe, General Council Assessor  
 Ruth Girardet, Co-opted Member  
 Hugh Mitchell, Co-opted Member
- Member Apologies:** Robert Aldridge, City of Edinburgh Council Assessor  
 Sarah McAllister, Professional Services Staff Member  
 Jock Millican, General Council Assessor  
 Alistair Smith, Co-opted Member  
 Kavi Thakrar, Co-opted Member
- In Attendance:** Imran Khan, Governance Apprentice  
 Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary  
 Gale Macleod, Rector's Assessor
- Presenters & Observers:** Lewis Allan, Senior Governance Advisor to the Vice-Principal & University Secretary  
 David Argyle, Head of College, Medicine & Veterinary Medicine  
 Christina Boswell, Vice-Principal Research & Enterprise  
 Iain Gordon, Head of College, Science & Engineering  
 Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students  
 Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services  
 Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal and Chief Information Officer, and Librarian  
 Sarah Prescott, Head of College, Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences  
 Daniel Wedgwood, Head of Court Services  
 Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students (for item 7)  
 Anne-Marie Coriat, College Registrar, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (for item 9)  
 Damien Toner, Director of Estates (for items 10 & 11)

## OPENING ITEMS

### Opening and welcome

Simon Fanshawe, Rector, formally opened the meeting, noting apologies as above. The Rector formally noted the resignation from Court of Douglas Alexander, following his election in July as a Member of Parliament and his appointment as a Minister of State. This created a vacancy on Court for a General Council Assessor.

The Rector's opening comments focused on the importance of accessing a variety of views from the large and diverse staff and student communities and the responsibility of the University and the Students' Association in that regard. Recognising that there were a number of current issues on which views were often strongly held and passionately expressed, he stressed the importance of ensuring that no member of the community felt afraid to express their views, citing examples of his concerns. In this context, the Rector welcomed the nature of the two recent Short Life Working Group reports on aspects of the University's investments, which had set out the variety of views held within the groups and had made areas of disagreement clear.

### 1 Minutes

Paper A1

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2024 and the Special Meeting of Court held on 3 October 2024 were approved.

### 2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log

Paper A2

#### Matter Arising

It was noted that Scottish Government officials and legal advisers were content with the draft revised Ordinance regarding General Council membership as agreed by Court on 26 February 2024, allowing submission of the Ordinance to the Privy Council Office for final approval.

#### Action Log

The Action Log was noted. No changes had been made to the current actions.

### 3.1 Principal's Report

Paper B

Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, updated Court regarding a number of recent developments, including:

- successful events hosted by the University, the Students' Association and the Sports Union to mark the beginning of the new academic year and welcome new students;
- engagement with UK Government over the future of supercomputing;
- the outcomes of national pay negotiations;

- the replacement of the Compliance Group with the Speakers & Events Oversight Group, with an expanded membership and remit;
- the successful hosting of the Edinburgh Book Festival at the University's Edinburgh Futures Institute; and
- the participation of University-linked athletes at the Paris Olympic Games.

The following points were made in discussion:

- The new remit of the Speakers & Events Oversight Group was welcomed and it was noted that this had the potential to produce positive change with respect to conduct in and around events on campus.
- There was active debate at both UK and Scottish levels regarding sustainable funding models for higher education.
- The University had had positive engagement with representatives of the UK Government regarding the future of Exascale computing but outcomes were not yet known.
- The Government's Artificial Intelligence Action Plan had been completed and was in the hands of Ministers. This was expected to contain advice that might influence significant strategic decisions with consequences for the University.

#### **4 Committee Business**

##### **Exception Committee**

**Paper C1**

Court noted the report and the following approvals that had been granted on behalf of Court by Exception Committee:

- approval of the budget for a recent IT contract and delegation of authority to Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal and Chief Information Officer and Librarian, to act as the authorised signatory this contract;

and, on the recommendation of Nominations Committee:

- re-appointment of Kathryn Nash to Policy & Resources Committee for a further term of three years, 1 August 2024 – 31 July 2027; and
- re-appointment of Kathryn Nash to Exception Committee for a further term of three years, 1 August 2024 – 31 July 2027.

##### **Policy & Resources Committee**

**Paper C2**

Court noted the report.

##### **Nominations Committee**

**Paper C3**

Court noted the report. Court's attention was drawn in particular to the intention to recruit within the current academic year to the vacant General Council Assessor position.

Douglas Millican, Convener of Audit & Risk Committee, highlighted a number of points from the paper. These included the committee's discussion of overall financial risks. It was intended that these, alongside the implications of the University's net-zero carbon targets, would be discussed further in a joint workshop of Audit & Risk Committee and Policy & Resources Committee, later in the academic year. Preparation of the Annual Report & Accounts was understood to be on track to meet the Scottish Funding Council's deadline.

Court approved the updated Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference.

**Remuneration Committee: Revised Framework for Decision Making      Paper C5**

Hugh Mitchell, Convener of Remuneration Committee, noted that the Framework for Decision Making document had been reviewed and revised in the context of the publication in 2023 of a new edition of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance. Minor changes had been made to ensure alignment with the Code and the opportunity had been taken to clarify some other points and to reflect established practice clearly.

There was discussion of the established practice of recusal of the staff and student members of Remuneration Committee for discussion of the performance and reward of individuals. It was noted that disagreement remained on this point and that the motivation for the practice was to avoid any potentially inappropriate communication about employees to other employees and so to encourage open and frank discussion among the external members of the committee.

Court approved the revised Framework for Decision Making.

**Senate****Paper C6**

Court noted the report. It was noted that the use of a Task & Finish Group to implement the recommendations of Senate's external review had proved a successful model and that the process followed had been highly consultative and thorough.

**KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION****5      Finance  
         Director of Finance's Report****Paper D**

Lee Hamill, Director of Finance, presented the report.

In providing an update on year-end calculations of EBITDA as a percentage of income for 2023-24, it was emphasised that the expected outturn followed in part from the inclusion of significant non-cash accounting entries and the receipt of restricted multi-year funding. For these reasons, recent positive movements did not result in cash coming into the University that could be deployed towards core

University activities and additionally would result in increased expenditure in future years. There was, therefore, a continued need to rebalance income and expenditure for core activities. A process to achieve this was already in progress, with a view to achieving the additional savings required for the agreed budget for 2024-25. Court had received information on this.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- While fully settled data on the University's recruitment of fee-paying students for 2024-25 were not yet available, it was apparent that the relevant intake had increased, overall but not up to the targeted levels. In future communication with Court, it would be helpful to include the resulting fees shortfall relative to budget in discussions of the required rebalancing.
- It was noted that the on-going planning and budgeting process was to produce immediate changes to expenditure and, where possible, income generation, but also strategic initiatives with longer-term benefits. Court would be kept updated as plans developed. A holistic approach was recommended, allowing Court to appreciate the interactions of different actions and their impacts.
- Targeted benchmarking was also recommended, to help clarify the nature of recent increases in expenditure. It was noted that a number of factors had contributed to these increases, including but not limited to wider inflation and fluctuation in activity in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Director of Finance provided examples of recent adjustments to financial management that had produced significant benefits.
- It was important to ensure an accurate understanding of the financial situation across the University community, including the different roles of Court and management in the budget-setting process.
- It was intended that the format of financial reporting to Court would be changed to include more contextual and planning information.

The Senior Lay Member noted that Lee Hamill was to leave the University and, on behalf of Court, thanked him for his substantial contributions to the University.

Court noted the report and granted delegated authority to the Director of Finance to conclude negotiations and agree the final outcome of the University of Edinburgh Staff Benefits Scheme valuation.

## **6 Court External Effectiveness Review: Recommendations**

**Paper E**

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary, summarised the key recommendations of the externally-facilitated effectiveness review of Court and its committees and the initial proposals of Nominations Committee to address these recommendations.

It was noted that one of these proposals had already been implemented, the set of regular attendees at Court meetings having been reduced as of this meeting.

The following points were made in discussion of recommendations relating to Court's role:

- Clarification of a number of aspects of Court's role would be welcomed. These included its role in relation to senior management and the balance of responsibility in relation to strategic decisions. It was noted that a degree of flexibility was required in this regard, in principle, to enable Court to focus in greater detail on priority areas and/or identified areas of risk, where appropriate.
- There was also scope to clarify Court's relationship to Senate. It was suggested that more direct interactions between the members of Court and Senate could help to achieve this.
- Greater clarity was also sought on the balance of responsibilities between Court and its committees.

It was noted that the intended review of the form and content of Court and committee papers might help to address some of these points, both by establishing the nature and range of members' expectations and preferences and by proposing practical adjustments to current practices.

In discussion of the recommendation relating to enhancing opportunities to hear the student voice, the following points were made:

- It was recognised that Court had a role in aiding student members of Court to fulfil their role effectively, given intrinsic challenges, which included a short term of office and student members' typical levels of governance experience, relative to other Court members. The current student members expressed gratitude to the many members of Court who had made efforts to help reduce these challenges.
- It was suggested that Court might wish to take action to ensure that its members were able to access a range of views from within the student community. There was discussion of the position of the Students' Association in relation to this. It was noted that, in line with the Code of Governance and charities legislation, the student members of Court, although officers of the Students' Association, did not act in a representative capacity when carrying out their Court roles.

Court noted the proposals from Nominations Committee, as set out in the paper, and it was noted that relevant work would be developed, with any key matters for decision to be brought to a future meeting of Court.

## **7 Student Experience Update: Student Surveys 2024 Results and Response**

**Paper F**

Colm Harmon, Vice Principal Students, and Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students, summarised key points from the paper.

The University's results from the National Student Survey (NSS) 2024 had been low in key areas in context of the sector and in comparison to benchmark institutions. While these results were concerning, major packages of work were already

underway that aimed to address the areas where improvement was required. This work was expected to be reflected positively in future years' surveys. Substantial improvements would be required in order to significantly increase the University's relative standing, since many other institutions were known to have received improved survey results.

Ongoing work included measures to achieve universal compliance with a maximum time-limit for provision of feedback on student assessments, including improved systems for monitoring this across the University. There was discussion of how to accommodate or adjust assessments that had previously, for specific reasons, required longer periods for marking and feedback.

The ongoing Portfolio Review was also expected to contribute to an improved student experience by creating greater clarity around course and programme offerings and enabling staff time and effort to be better focused. Clarity and efficiency would also be addressed through planned work to improve timetabling and, consequently, students' experience of navigating choices of study.

The Student Support Model was generating positive feedback and this was expected to be reflected in future years' surveys. Remaining operational issues were being addressed.

In further discussion, members stressed the need for improvement in key areas and made the following points:

- There was significant variation in the survey results from different parts of the University. More information on these differences would be helpful for Court. It would be important to identify the nature of good practice in high performing areas.
- Examples of high performance should be celebrated, both those parts of the survey where the institution as a whole had performed well and those parts of the University which had performed well individually.
- The respondents of the NSS being only final-year undergraduate students from the previous academic year, there would be no opportunity to seek further reflections, including on efforts to address key issues, from the same cohort. The University should consider how relevant insights might be drawn from present students.
- It was suggested that a clear and systematic framework be developed for understanding the student experience as a whole and that the Students' Association's framework, which had been presented in the Court seminar, provided a good model for this.
- As had previously been discussed, there was to be consideration of how to keep Court informed of developments in work on the student experience, to ensure thorough but efficient oversight. This might include a greater degree of input from the Heads of College at a future Court meeting.

## **8 Students' Association and Sports Union Reports**

### **Students' Association Report**

**Paper G1**

Court noted the report. A new, more thematic style of reporting in the paper was welcomed. Discussion centred on how to interpret and improve the results of a question within the NSS on the effectiveness of the Students' Association in representing students' academic interests. It was noted that students' overall impressions of representation of their academic interests would depend on a combination of the actions of the Students' Association and the University. Among other things, the Association was aiming to enhance its openness and transparency in order to ensure that students felt their views were being heard and represented.

### **Sports Union Report**

**Paper G2**

Court noted the report. It was noted in discussion that sport facilities and opportunities to participate made a significant contribution to the University's reputation.

## **9 College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine: Modernising Governance and Structure**

**Paper H**

David Argyle, Head of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM), and Anne-Marie Coriat, College Registrar, outlined the nature and purpose of proposed changes to the internal structure and governance of the College. It was noted that the proposed modernisation programme was intended as a strategic foundation for sustainable long-term change. It would create greater transparency and consistency within CMVM and create more consistent structures across the Colleges. The proposed modernisation programme was designed to support strategic decision-making, an important element of this being to enhance academic and professional services partnerships.

Discussion included the following points:

- Organisationally, teaching was not evenly distributed across the six proposed Schools in the new College structure, although academic staff from all Schools would contribute to teaching. There was discussion of implications for the student experience and the need to foster a sense of community at appropriate levels.
- It was observed that the student experience was not covered in detail in the paper, nor did it include evidence of wide consultation with students. It was noted that the student experience had been a key motivation for the modernisation proposals, although this was not prominent in the broad framework proposed at this stage. There would be further consultation as more detailed plans were developed under the new framework.
- New professional services positions would result largely from re-organisation of existing roles. The new framework was intended to provide greater accountability and coherence across the professional services leadership structure.

- The time-limited nature of the change programme was welcomed, while recognising that working at pace would require additional care to ensure appropriate consultation and effective implementation.

Court approved the revised School structure for CMVM.

## **10 New Darwin – Estates Project**

**Paper I**

Iain Gordon, Head of the College of Science & Engineering, and Damien Toner, Director of Estates, outlined the proposed project, which would deliver the final phase of the ‘Building a New Biology’ project, creating a new hub for the School of Biological Sciences. It was noted that this would enable the University to further enhance a leading centre of research and teaching, whose specialist areas included priority areas identified by government, experienced high student demand and had great potential for increased engagement with industry.

It was noted that the requested funding was within the project budget that was contained in the current Estates Capital Plan and that a good Internal Rate of Return was expected from the project. Estates Committee had considered the project and strongly recommended it for approval.

In discussion, it was noted that the financial benefits of the project included an expansion in fee-paying student numbers, while the University was not pursuing a growth strategy overall. This increase would in part be balanced by expected changes in other student populations and other financial benefits would flow from a re-balancing of sources of research funding and increased commercialisation activity.

There was discussion of the wider implications of estates projects in the context of concluding a significant part of the current Estates Capital Plan and developing the next one. It was noted that, in this context and that of other strategic priorities, a holistic view would benefit Court when considering future projects.

Court approved funding to progress the project to completion.

## **11 Strategic Acquisition Update**

**Paper J**

Damien Toner, Director of Estates, summarised recent developments and Court gave approval to progress the proposed acquisition process with appropriate revisions.

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

## **12 Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Outcome Framework and Assurances Model**

**Paper K**

Court noted the paper.

**13 Development & Alumni: Alumni Relations Activity**

**Paper L**

Court noted the report

**14 Remuneration Committee: Senior Leadership Team Annual Remuneration Review 2025 – Proposed Approach**

**Paper M**

Court endorsed the approach to the review of Senior Leadership Team remuneration and the Principal's salary, to be presented for approval by the Remuneration Committee at its January 2025 meeting, noting that the approach had not substantively changed since the previous year's process.

**15 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**16 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 2 December 2024



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

Principal's Report

**Description of paper**

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

2. Court is asked to note the information presented: members' observations or comment on any of the items would be welcome.

**Background and context**

3. The report summarises key issues for the University and the Principal's engagement.

**Discussion**

4. During October the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) took time to reflect on the current state of the Sector, the implications for Edinburgh and the actions that we need to take. The sector financial operating model is under severe stress with the impact felt by institutions across the country. This has led to the UK Government's decision to increase undergraduate tuition fees in England to £9535 and Universities Scotland to press for additional funds (3% real terms increase) in the Scottish budget for 2025/26. Taking account of this situation, and noting the increase in employer National Insurance payments announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 30 October, the SLT discussions focussed on the overarching question of how we continue to integrate our ambition for the University with what is a new financial reality. For context, the tuition fee rise will bring us an estimated £2.3million next year but the NI rise will cost us approximately £12.5million.

5. Throughout the discussion, the themes of Strategy 2030 were explored, with confirmation that they are still relevant and must continue to provide the blueprint for our future direction. In order to ensure financial sustainability and create the headroom to enable us to continue to invest in our agreed priorities and to deliver the ambitions of Strategy 2030, significant changes are necessary to modernise the University and improve efficiency.

6. As Court will be aware, we began with a range of measures in July to begin to address the situation including recruitment restraint and actions to address our rising operating expenses. The conclusion of the SLT discussions was that this will not deliver enough in a viable timeframe, therefore escalation of effectively implemented structural change is necessary, with continued alignment to Strategy 2030 as essential in all of our decision making.

7. Significant activity is also underway looking at non staff related cost management including a more logical approach to procurement and possible related savings,

identifying opportunities across all areas of University activity, and an improved use of the Estate, with potential rationalisation alongside an ongoing clear commitment to developing the Estate.

8. Further information on activity and engagement has been integrated into the Strategy 2030 themed headings below:

### *Our People*

9. Periods of change within organisations are unsettling for everyone involved and universities are no different. While we do understand that people are looking for certainty and reassurance, we are in an evolving situation where it is likely that there will be multiple decision points over the next few years. What we can commit to is being honest with staff through regular communication. To that end, further information was shared with staff in mid-November (following an initial notification in July) outlining the need to look at additional measures in order to reach a financially sustainable position for the University. Such measures include a selective voluntary severance scheme, and may include compulsory redundancy if unavoidable, with consideration of compulsory redundancies as a last resort, as always. We will continue to build on these initial communications and will augment another round of hybrid all-staff meetings scheduled for the first week in December with video communication and a dedicated SharePoint site that will bring together key information for staff and support for line managers.

10. At the all-staff sessions to date, staff are keen to understand more about the finances of the University and concerns have been raised by many staff about workloads. The need for all managers across the University to think about what we deliver, whether we can change that, or if it can be done differently, is essential as we seek to make improvements and reach a new balance.

11. The timing of events around the November announcement to staff did mean that our Union colleagues were not fully briefed in advance and we have spoken to them about that and followed up with a meeting with the Provost Kim Graham, Director of HR James Saville, Interim Director of Finance Nirmal Borkhataria and Head of Corporate and Commercial Finance Andy Slater. We have committed to improving active communication with our Union representatives and are sharing student numbers/financial information and consulting on aspects of the selective voluntary severance scheme.

12. Related events:

- Led a round of 'All staff' meetings at the King's Buildings, BioQuarter and Central campuses in October and again in early December. A number of the meetings were hybrid and we had good engagement in person and online. Interest in the sessions has been high, particularly the hybrid element with c.1300 people joining online at the most recent meeting. Where time allowed, the sessions were preceded by an opportunity for informal networking/discussion.
- Participated in a UCEA Heads of Institution briefing on the 2024-25 New JNCHES pay round.
- The Senior Team spent time at the School of Engineering in early November meeting the new Head of School, Professor Guangzhao Mao, and speaking to staff and students about their work/studies and how they feel about the University.
- Participated in a Professorial Roll signing event and also a celebratory reception for staff recently appointed to a Personal Chair.

- I was delighted that the Chancellor, HRH The Princess Royal, was able to host our annual Chancellor's Dinner at the Palace of Holyrood House where our four Chancellor's Award winners Professor Shannon Vallor, Dr. Katherine Atkins, Professor Meryl Kenny and Mr. Nial Moffat received their prizes.
- I was very pleased to award the Principal's Medals 2024 to: elite swimmer and Chemical Engineering student Archie Goodburn; Mark Kobine a dedicated Design Informatics Workshop Technician; Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley for her exceptional contribution to leadership through her roles as the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead and within the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine; Charlie Bevan and the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program Team for their excellent work; and Dora Handrea and the Edinburgh Innovations Student Enterprise Team for their exceptional commitment.

### *Learning, Teaching and Students*

13. Court will be aware that our objectives for Curriculum Transformation and the Size and Shape work need to be underpinned by a strong, high-quality, future-focused and financially sustainable set of taught programmes and courses. Portfolio review is the College-led piece of work enabling us to refine and take action to achieve these objectives. Following discussion by SLT, the programme will be accelerated, with agreed specific targets and regular meetings and with oversight of milestones to reflect the urgency of this immediate work. From next year, a Review Committee including Provost, Vice-Principal Students and Heads of College will be in place to shape the processes for programme review, including final approval and central oversight of decisions.

14. Our winter graduation ceremonies took place towards the end of November with over 8000 people graduating across 15 ceremonies. The ceremonies were celebratory although there were some challenges, including snow-related, that were very well handled by all of our staff who put so much effort in making sure that graduations are such a success.

15. I am very pleased to report that there is a real buzz about the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI). It has become the most popular place for students to study, finding spaces in every corner and on every floor. 16 masters and 1 undergraduate programme are now running and taking advantage of our interdisciplinary, critical, participatory, challenge-led and future-focused teaching, and partner organisations from sectors including Fintech, Public Services, Creative industries and Tourism now call EFI home. A spread of our own research centres are also based there, including the Generative AI Laboratory (GAIL) and the Centre for Technomoral Futures. The new EFI Director, Professor Marion Thain, who joins us from King's College London where she is the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Chair-Director of their Digital Futures Institute, starts in January and we very much look forward to welcoming her to Edinburgh. The building has also been shortlisted for the Prix Versailles' World's Most Beautiful Campuses prize and recently won the Learning Places Scotland prize for refurbishment project of the year, with our Estates Team also winning client of the year for their work on the EFI.

16. Related events:

- Regular monthly meetings with our Students Association Sabbatical Team.
- Monthly, one to one, meetings with the Students' Association President.
- 12 honorary graduates were honoured at our winter graduation ceremonies including: Michael Dye, formerly a Technician in our School of Biological

Sciences, for his work and over 50 years of service at the University; Vanessa Nakate, a Climate justice activist and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador who has worked with the Edinburgh Futures Institute; founder of the Staffin Fossil Museum, Dugald Alexander Ross for his preservation of Skye's Jurassic history and its celebration as the 'Dinosaur Capital of the UK.'

17. We had a short occupation of the Gordon Aikman Lecture Theatre in mid-November where a group of students were protesting in support of Palestine. As Court are aware, while we respect the right to peaceful protest within the bounds of our student code of conduct, we do not support protestors preventing access to our buildings and disrupting the education of many students. We were clear with the protestors that disciplinary action may be taken over any breach of the student code of conduct and were pleased that the protest ended relatively quickly.

### *Research and Innovation*

18. We continue to perform well to the Strategy 2030 KPIs in Research and Innovation (R&I) and our associated R&I Strategy is working positively to provide a focus for all related activity concentrated around our 3 missions of Future Health and Care; harnessing Data, Digital and AI and tackling the Climate and Environmental crisis. Recent SLT discussions noted the desire to improve our Full Economic Costing (FEC) recovery, enhance our ability to deliver commercialisation opportunities and to diversify income opportunities through scaled up technology innovation hubs such as BioQuarter and Forth Green Freeport.

19. Some recent highlights include:

- Edinburgh Innovations, the commercialisation arm of the University of Edinburgh, has announced record research translation figures for the financial year 2023/24, including the launch of 127 companies, 140 patents filed and £141 million invested into University-associated companies.
- Success of our spinouts continues to grow: recently Kynos Therapeutics was acquired by German pharmaceutical Dr Falk Pharma to take its inflammation inhibitors to clinic, and Resolution Therapeutics also announced a major series B fundraiser to progress its own clinical journey.
- Spinout MiAlgae achieved finalist status for the Earthshot Prize. The company work to end reliance on wild-caught fish as a primary source of Omega-3 using a patented fermentation process to grow Omega-3-rich algae using waste water from Scottish distilleries as its nutrient source.
- A flagship event at the Scottish Parliament on co-creating technology solutions for Scotland's future growth sponsored by Daniel Johnson MSP Shadow Minister for Economy, Business and Fair Work and organised by Edinburgh Innovations. Provost Kim Graham, Vice-Principal Research and Enterprise Christina Boswell and Andrea Taylor, CEO Edinburgh Innovations led the event.
- I welcomed Lord Patrick Vallance, Minister of State for Science, Innovation, and Technology, during his visit to the Edinburgh Genome Foundry and Informatics Forum.

### *Social and Civic Responsibility*

20. Much of my day-to-day activity falls under the broad heading of promoting social and civic responsibility through representation of the University (our ambition, contribution and values) at a local, national and international level.

21. To draw particular attention to two local and regional aspects of that:

- The South East Scotland City Region Deal (CRD) continues to exemplify many of our ambitions in this space and is fundamental to making an impact by attracting investment, fuelling entrepreneurship and delivering inclusive growth working through our Data Driven Innovation Hubs. One specific aspect of partnership working is the Higher Education/Further Education Strategy Group which I chair. The group brings together representation from the FE and HE sectors to focus on the success of the CRD to build trust, share intelligence in confidence, float ideas, raise awareness of potential conflicts/issues and advocate for both sectors in other arenas. The strategy Group comprises the 4 CRD Colleges (Borders, Edinburgh, Fife and West Lothian), 4 Universities (Napier, Heriot-Watt, QMU and Edinburgh), and City of Edinburgh Council, in the form of the CRD Programme Office.
- Since 2017 our Community Grants Scheme has actively supported the development of local projects, community activities and sustainable local action through funding and collaboration. Over 300 grants have been given out to date, totalling more than £770,000 for community groups and small charities working in the local area. The majority of the grants target children or young people and applications are assessed against the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with those relating to social equity and wellbeing targeted by the majority of projects.

#### *Related events*

22. Local:

- Participated in meetings of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee, and chaired the Higher Education and Further Education Strategy Group.
- Participated as an invited guest at the Open University Graduation Ceremony in Glasgow.
- Participated as an *ex officio* Trustee in meetings of the Newbattle Abbey College Trust Board.
- Re-joined the Board of the Carnegie Trust for Universities in Scotland as a Trustee and attended their Strategy Day.
- Welcomed attendees of the John P Mackintosh Memorial Lecture 2024, delivered by Allan Little on the theme of, 'Democracy Under Siege: The Challenges of Disenchantment'.
- Participated in a Scottish Financial Enterprise 'Sector Growth Strategy' Advisory Board meeting and also the SFE Annual Dinner and Scottish Financial Services Awards.
- Spoke at a Rotary Club lunch on the theme of, 'University of Edinburgh – past, present and future'.
- Participated in the Lord Provost's Civic Reception to mark the 20th anniversary of Edinburgh as a UNESCO City of Literature.
- Participated in the Eric Liddell Gala Dinner.
- Welcomed the UNESCO Ambassador, Anna Nsubuga, during her visit to the University.

- Provided opening remarks at the Academy of Medical Sciences Future-Proofing UK Health Research: Anniversary Symposium at the Royal College of Physicians in London (I co-chaired the report with Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow).
- Welcomed Dr Mary McAleese to the University before she participated in a Mitchell Conversation event with Prof Sir David Edward, Chair of the Edinburgh Europa Institute.
- Participated in a dinner to celebrate Theirworld's work on Early Childhood Development and the Jennifer Brown Research Laboratory, hosted by Gordon and Sarah Brown.

### 23. Public Affairs

- Participated in a networking event and lecture by Lord Mandelson on "Britain's New Growth Challenge" at the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
- Participated in a business reception hosted by Anas Sarwar MSP, Leader, Scottish Labour which was also attended by senior UK Government politicians – including the Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer.
- Hosted a tour of EFI with Gillian Russell, Director of Health Workforce in the Scottish Government.
- Held an introductory meeting with Chris Murray MP, MP for Edinburgh East and Musselburgh.
- Welcomed the First Minister, Rt. Hon. John Swinney MSP to the Edinburgh Futures Institute for a Scottish Government event where he delivered his speech on Scotland's public finances and priorities.
- Participated in an All-Party Parliamentary University Group event at which the Universities UK Chief Executive, Vivienne Stern, spoke about UUK's recently published 'Opportunity, growth and partnership: a blueprint for change from the UK's universities'.
- Participated in a working dinner on Economic Growth, hosted by Sir Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Secretary at the Home Office.

### 24. International

- Participated in an introductory meeting with Mr Siddharth Malik, Consul General of India, Edinburgh.
- Welcomed the Nanjing University Delegation during their visit to the University.
- Participated in the visit of the delegation from Leiden University, which included Rector Magnificus, Prof Hester Bijl, and her Senior Leadership. During their visit a Leiden and Edinburgh Collaboration agreement was signed.
- Welcomed a delegation from Southeast University, which included their President, Huang Ru, and signed an exchange agreement.
- Participated in various events at the Mastercard Foundation Presidents meeting, hosted in Edinburgh over two days. This is the first time that the meeting has been held outside Africa.
- Welcomed the Lund University delegation, which included Vice-Chancellor Prof Erik Renström.
- Travelled to Hong Kong to participate in the Hong Kong for Global AI Forum, and for a series of meetings with supporters and alumni of the University.
- Participated in meetings of the League of European Research Universities Board and Rectors' Assembly hosted by the University of Helsinki.

- Participated in several Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office events, one discussing the Economic Diplomacy Review, the other a Roundtable meeting on the UK approach to China.

25. General/other

- Participated as Board member in a Scottish Funding Council Board Strategy Session.
- Participated in regular UUK online meetings on various issues including UK matters, security risks in Higher Education, and Gaza and Israel, also a residential meeting hosted by the University of Reading.
- Participated in a Russell Group Board meeting.

**Resource implications**

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

**Risk Management**

27. 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**

28. 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**

29. No specific Equality and Diversity issues are identified.

**Next steps/implications**

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

**Consultation**

31. As the content is a summary of recent news/activity, no consultation is required.

**Further information**

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

33. Author & Presenter

Professor Sir Peter Mathieson  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor  
December 2024

**Freedom of Information**

34. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

Policy & Resources Committee Report

**Committee Name**

1. Policy & Resources Committee (PRC)

**Date of Meeting**

2. 11 November 2024

**Action Required**

3. To note the key points from the meeting.

*The minutes of the PRC meeting on 11 November 2024 can be viewed at <https://governance-strategic-planning.ed.ac.uk/governance/university-committees/court-committees/policy-and-resources-committee/agendas-minutes>*

**Further information**

24. Author

Daniel Wedgwood  
Head of Court Services  
Email: [dan.wedgwood@ed.ac.uk](mailto:dan.wedgwood@ed.ac.uk)

Presenter

Janet Legrand  
Convener, Policy & Resources Committee

**Freedom of Information**

25. Closed paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

Nominations Committee Report

**Committee Name**

1. Nominations Committee

**Date of Meeting**

2. 11 November 2024

**Action Required**

3. To note the key points from the meeting and approve
  - the re-appointment of Douglas Millican as a member and the Convener of Audit & Risk Committee until 31 July 2026; and
  - changes to the name and Terms of Reference of the committee, as detailed below.

**Key points**

*Court and committee memberships*

4. Nominations Committee noted vacancies expected to arise within the memberships of Court and relevant committees and discussed potential ways to address these vacancies, both in the short term and from the perspective of succession planning. The particular requirements of each position were noted, including the skills and personal qualities required and the time commitment associated with each role.
5. It was noted that General Council Assessor and Co-opted Member recruitment processes were due to take place. The skills required due to the anticipated vacancies would inform these processes.
6. The committee recommended to Court the re-appointment of Douglas Millican as a member of Audit & Risk Committee for the remainder of his current term of office as a member of Court, i.e. until 31 July 2026.
7. The committee would return to other membership matters later in the year, in order to make a full set of recommendations to Court before the end of the academic year.

*Court Recruitment*

8. Nominations Committee considered the proposed process for Co-opted Member of Court recruitment and agreed:
  - the use of a search agency to assist in the recruitment process; and
  - delegation of authority to the Convener and the University Secretary to oversee engagement of an agency through a suitable procurement process, including identification of appropriate agencies from which to seek quotes, evaluation of these quotes and subsequent appointment.

9. It was noted that the recruitment process was expected to proceed early in 2025, with the aim of making recommendations to the April meeting of Court.

#### *Committee Name and Remit*

10. The committee agreed that, subject to Court's approval, its name should be changed to 'Governance & Nominations Committee'.

11. The purpose of this proposed change was to reflect established practice and so increase the clarity of the University's governance arrangements. For example, Nominations Committee had recently been asked by Court to develop the protocol for handling correspondence addressed to Court and to propose initial responses to the recommendations of Court's external effectiveness review.

12. It was noted that, accordingly, the proposed changes would not bring about any change in the powers standardly delegated to the Nominations Committee, nor those reserved to Court.

13. In line with this, the committee also recommended to Court the addition of a second sentence to its stated purpose within its Terms of Reference, as follows (i.e. the second bullet point below):

#### **Purpose**

- To make recommendations to Court and manage the process for the appointment of the Senior Lay Member and co-opted members of Court, the Court's nominations on the Curators of Patronage and the filling of vacancies as these arise in the Standing Committees of Court and Court and external members on Thematic Committees.
- To consider governance arrangements relating to Court and its committees, as delegated by Court, and make recommendations to Court as appropriate.

#### **Equality & Diversity**

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

#### **Further information**

15. Author

Daniel Wedgwood  
Head of Court Services

Presenter

Janet Legrand  
Convener, Nominations Committee

#### **Freedom of Information**

16. Closed paper until approved.



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Audit and Risk Committee Report**

**Committee Name**

1. Audit & Risk Committee.

**Date of Meeting**

2. 20 November 2024.

**Action Required**

3. To note the key points from the meeting and approve the updated Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement.

*Paragraphs 4-12: closed section*

**Equality & Diversity**

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

**Further information**

14. Author  
Kirstie Graham  
Deputy Head of Court Services

Presenter  
Douglas Millican  
Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee

**Freedom of Information**

15. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Knowledge Strategy Committee Report**

**Committee Name**

1. Knowledge Strategy Committee

**Date of Meeting**

2. 29 October 2024

**Action Required**

3. To note the key points from the meeting.

*Paragraphs 4-17: closed section*

**Further information**

18. Author

Jamie Tait

Governance Manager & Clerk to  
Knowledge Strategy Committee

**Freedom of Information**

19. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

Remuneration Committee Annual Report

2 December 2024

**Description of paper**

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

**Action requested/Recommendation**

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

*Paragraphs 3-36: closed section*

**Further information**

37. Author

James Saville,  
Director of Human Resources

Presenter

Hugh Mitchell,  
Convener of Remuneration Committee

**Freedom of information**

38. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

Senatus Academicus Report

**Committee Name**

1. Senatus Academicus ('Senate')

**Date of Meeting**

2. 9 October 2024 and e-Senate in September 2024.

**Action requested**

3. Court is invited to:
  - note the report of business considered by Senatus Academicus ('Senate') at the meeting held on 9 October 2024;
  - note the report of e-Senate business conducted between 11 and 25 September 2024; and
  - note that the full minutes of the meetings held on 22 May 2024, 18 June 2024, and 9 October 2024 will be provided to Court following their approval by Senate; and that the full agenda, papers and minutes of Senate meetings are published on the [Senate website](#).

**Key points – meeting of 9 October 2024**

*Edinburgh University Students' Association - Vice President Education Priorities 2024-25*

4. Senate noted and discussed the priorities of the Edinburgh University Students' Association Vice President Education and the Sabbatical team for the 2024-25 academic year.

*Award of degrees: delegation of authority to Boards of Examiners*

5. By a majority vote, Senate approved the proposal to delegate authority to Boards of Examiners, on a trial basis, to award or confer degrees.

*Senate Standing Committee Membership*

6. Without requiring a vote, Senate approved the memberships of the Academic Policy and Regulation Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and the Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

7. By a majority vote, Senate approved a motion to reopen the election process to elect Senate-elected members to vacancies on the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

*Senate Standing Committee Priorities*

8. Senate noted and discussed the Senate Standing Committees priorities for academic year 2024/25.

*Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees 2023-24*

9. Senate noted the annual reports for the 2023-24 academic session from the Education Committee, the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee, and the Quality Assurance Committee.

*Senate Standing Committees – upcoming business*

10. Senate noted the main points of activity and business that the Senate Standing Committees would consider between October and December 2024.

*Senate External Review Task and Finish Group*

11. Senate received a verbal update on the work of the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group.

*Research Ethics and Defence*

12. Senate received a verbal update on the work of the Research Ethics for Defence Working Group.

*2023-24 Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate and its Standing Committees*

13. Senate noted the findings and actions arising from the 2023-24 Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate and its Standing Committees.

*Review of Timetabling Processes*

14. Senate received a verbal update on timetabling.

**Key points – e-Senate, 11-25 September 2024**

15. Senate members were invited to comment on the following items via an e-Senate meeting which took place in September 2024. Five members provided comments, which have been passed to relevant colleagues for consideration.

*Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita*

16. Senate approved the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita on six professors.

*Court Resolutions – Personal Chairs*

17. Senate was invited to comment on two draft resolutions of the University Court; resolutions 99/2024 and 100/2024. Three members commented on this item.

*Report from the Senate Exception Committee*

18. Senate noted the two items of business that had been approved by the Senate Exception Committee in the period between 22 May 2024 and 9 October 2024. One member commented on the report.

*Communications from the University Court*

19. Senate noted the communications from the University Court, which related to the University Court meeting of 17 June 2024. Three members of Senate commented on this item.

*Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee*

20. Senate noted the report from the Knowledge Strategy Committee as detailed within the paper, and which related to the Committee's meeting of 30 May 2024. Two members of Senate commented on this item.

*Report from the Central Academic Promotions Committee*

21. Senate noted the report of the Central Academic Promotions Committee.

**Full Agenda and Papers**

22. [Senate Agenda, Papers, and Minutes website.](#)

**Further information**

23. Author

Fraser Rudge  
Committees and Governance  
Manager

Presenter

Peter Mathieson  
Principal & Vice-Chancellor

Academic Quality and Standards  
November 2024

**Freedom of Information**

24. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

Finance Update Report

**Description of paper**

1. This paper presents an update to University Court in relation to the:
  - emerging Quarter One forecast position for 2024-25;
  - 2023-24 analytical review;
  - University's management accounts for the month of September 2024; and
  - impact of changes to employer national insurance contributions from April 2025.
  
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.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

3. University Court is asked to note the contents of this paper.

**Background and context**

4. This paper provides the Director of Finance's regular update on finance related matters to University Court.

*Paragraphs 5-23: closed section*

**Further information**

24. Author

Ricky O'Kane  
Head of Group Finance

Presenter

Lee Hamill  
Director of Finance

25 November 2024

**Freedom of Information**

25. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper presents the University's draft Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31 July 2024.
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 3-24: closed section*

*The University's Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31 July 2024 can be found at*

<https://uoe-finance.ed.ac.uk/accounts>

**Further information**

25. Author

Ricky O'Kane  
Head of Group Finance

Presenter

Lee Hamill  
Director of Finance

20 November 2024

**Freedom of Information**

26. This paper cannot be included in open business. The release of the Annual Reports and Accounts is covered by the University publication schedule.



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Letter of Representation – University of Edinburgh  
Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24**

**Description of paper**

1. The draft letter of representation from PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), in respect of the Annual Report and Accounts for the University Group for 2023/24.

**Action requested/ Recommendation**

2. University Court is asked to approve the letter of representation and its signing by the Principal and Senior Lay Member, noting the back-to-back Letter of Representation provided by the Director of Finance to members of University Court.

**Background and context**

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

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

**Discussion**

5. The letter of representation for the University is presented.

**Resource implications**

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

**Risk Management**

7. A report, Understanding Our Risks, is included in the Annual Report and Accounts to 31 July 2024.

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

8. 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 2023/24 Annual Report and Accounts. This is covered in Strategy 2030 through our commitment to Social and Civic Responsibility and via a number of individual case studies throughout the document.

## **Equality & Diversity**

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

## **Next steps/implications**

10. The University's letter of representation will be signed by the Principal and Senior Lay Member after the Court meeting. It will then be sent to PwC so that they have the assurances in place to allow them to sign the audit certificate for the University's Annual Report and Accounts for 2023/24.

## **Consultation**

11. The letter of representation has been drafted by PwC and reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee on 20 November 2024 who have recommended its approval by the Court.

## **Further information**

12. Author

Ricky O'Kane  
Head of Group Finance

Presenter

Lee Hamill  
Director of Finance

20 November 2024

## **Freedom of Information**

13. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**United States Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP):  
Management Commentary and Financial Statements 2023/24**

**Description of paper**

1. The US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements contain the financial results for the University Group for the financial year 2023/24, restated under US GAAP accounting rules.
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.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

3. University Court is asked to confirm approval of the US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements to 31 July 2024, which are a restatement of the figures, and include an extract from the commentary, already reviewed in the Annual Report and Accounts to 31 July 2024 (Paper D2).

**Background and context**

4. The US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements were presented to Audit & Risk Committee for comment on 20 November 2024. The Audit & Risk Committee also received a report from the external auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) communicating any significant findings arising from the audit that they believed are relevant to those charged with governance. PwC has confirmed that it expects to issue an unqualified audit opinion. The US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements will be included in the pack of information required by the US Department of Education and is a condition of its student loans programme.

**Discussion**

5. The US GAAP financial statements convert the figures under United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (UK GAAP) and include some of the key reports from the UK Annual Report and Accounts. The US GAAP presentation has been reviewed by Audit & Risk Committee, alongside the supporting documentation, and requires formal confirmatory approval from University Court for submission to the US Department of Education.

*Paragraphs 6-7: closed section*

**Risk Management**

8. A risk report is included in the US GAAP Management Commentary for 2023/24.

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

9. 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 2023-24 Annual Report and Accounts. This is covered in Strategy 2030 through our commitment to Social and Civic Responsibility.

### **Equality & Diversity**

10. The University's commitment is detailed in the Social Responsibility and Sustainability section included in the US GAAP Management Commentary.

### **Next steps/implications**

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

### **Consultation**

12. The US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements have been drafted in consultation with stakeholders and the figures have been prepared and reviewed by External Audit.

### **Further information**

13. Author

Ricky O'Kane  
Head of Group Finance

Presenter

Lee Hamill  
Director of Finance

20 November 2024

### **Freedom of Information**

14. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Student recruitment and intakes 2024-25 entry**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper gives an overview of the outturn of the 2024/25 entry cycle for undergraduate and postgraduate student recruitment. Data is updated from an earlier paper to Policy and Resources Committee (PRC). This paper uses data from 31 October 2024, which is our standard 'census' date, where the PRC paper used figures from 9 October.

2. The University's student recruitment is critical to delivery of Strategy 2030, which is underpinned by our Size and Shape framework and our Strategic Recruitment Enrolment Plan. A key statement in Strategy 2030 is 'We will not grow for growth's sake'. Good operational and strategic decision-making in this area is necessary to deliver on the following strategic priorities:

- i. We will be leading Scotland's commitment to widening participation.
- ii. We will be a destination of choice, based on our clear "Edinburgh Offer".

*Paragraphs 3-61: closed section*

**Further information**

62. Author

Pauline Manchester, Governance and Strategic Planning  
Shane Collins, Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions  
Jim Galbraith, Governance and Strategic Planning

Presenter

Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary, Governance and Strategic Planning

**Freedom of Information**

63. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Performance measures to support Strategy 2030 – 2023-24 year-end report**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides Court with an update on performance for our Strategy 2030 KPIs, providing a 2023-24 year-end position on our agreed measures and showing data on the direction of travel, alongside historical and benchmarking data, where available.
2. The Strategic Performance Framework (SPF) is an integral part of delivering on Strategy 2030, sitting alongside strategic change projects and staff engagement activities.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

3. Court is asked to review the year-end report, noting that the KPI data are also presented in Paper D2, Annual Report & Accounts.

*Paragraphs 4-38: closed section*

**Resource implications**

39. There are resource implications in developing and monitoring the Strategic Performance Framework, principally, but not exclusively within Governance and Strategic Planning, with the frequency of reporting a key consideration. This includes staff time across the University and development of tools to help us develop robust and more automated mechanisms to present and disseminate information. Delivery of KPI ambitions is, however, clearly linked to our institutional and financial strategy and so it is important for us to closely monitor progress.

**Risk Management**

40. Performance measurement is essential in allowing the University to monitor its exposure to, and mitigation of, various risks. Measures reported to Court focus on those that are highest impact and therefore highest risk for the University. Our performance framework is also a feature of our annual report and accounts.

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

41. In developing our performance measures, we have worked with Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) colleagues and relevant activities reflected in the SPF are in line with those of SRS and tackling the climate emergency.

42. Each group of measures is mapped to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

**Equality & Diversity**

43. Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion is key to Strategy 2030, our underlying values and our obligations under the Equality Act. This means several of our measures are relevant to assessing progress in relation to EDI and include some specific metrics for our Equality Outcomes 2021-25.

### **Next steps/implications**

44. As indicated above and in the annex to this paper, we will continue to engage with subject leads and data holders to further develop and refine measures, including setting milestones where appropriate.

*Paragraphs 45-46: closed section*

47. The next mid-year update on performance for 2024-25 will be reported to University Executive, Policy and Resources Committee and Court in the Spring of 2025, with close monitoring and continued development over the period leading up to that next report.

### **Consultation**

48. To develop this set of Key Performance Indicators and prepare this report, we have consulted across the University, and we will continue to engage as we refine the SPF measures.

### **Further information**

49. Author

Jennifer McGregor  
Senior Strategic Planner  
Governance and Strategic Planning

Presenter

Rona Smith  
Deputy Secretary, Governance and  
Strategic Planning

November 2024

### **Freedom of Information**

50. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report to Court**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper addresses the requirement for the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) to provide an annual report to Court.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. To consider the paper and note Audit and Risk Committee's Annual Report to Court to support approval of the financial statements.

*Paragraphs 3-26: closed section*

**Risk Management**

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

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

28. This paper does not contribute directly to the SDG goals as it is fulfilling a regulatory requirement.

**Equality & Diversity**

29. No major equality impacts have been identified.

**Next steps/implications**

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

**Consultation**

31. To be reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee prior to progressing to Court.

**Further information**

32. Author

Kirstie Graham  
Court Services  
November 2024

Presenter

Douglas Millican  
Convener, Audit & Risk Committee

**Freedom of Information**

33. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Risk Management Post Year End Assurance Statement**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper reports on Risk Management Post Year-End Assurances in support of the Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. To note the information presented.

*Paragraphs 3-7: closed section*

**Risk Management**

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

**Equality & Diversity**

9. No specific Equality and Diversity issues are identified.

**Next steps/implications**

10. The paper provides assurances to Court as part of the process to enable it to sign off the Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24.

**Consultation**

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

**Further information**

12. Author

Chris MacLean

Risk Manager

22 November 2024

Presenter

Catherine Martin

Vice-Principal Corporate Services

**Freedom of Information**

13. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Review of the Responsible Investment Policy:  
Responses to the Consultation and Next Steps**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper updates Court on the outcome of the Responsible Investment consultation and proposed next steps.
2. The proposal would primarily support the following Strategy 2030 outcomes:
  - a) Social and Civic Responsibility: We will ensure that our actions and activities deliver positive change locally, regionally and globally.
  - b) People: The University will be a destination of choice, based on our clear “Edinburgh Offer”. All our staff and students will develop here, whether they are from Leith, Lisbon, Lahore or Lilongwe.
  - c) The proposal would support the following Climate Strategy Outcomes: The University will be on track to be a net zero carbon University by 2040.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

3. Court is asked to note:
  - the outcome of the recent consultation on responsible investment; and
  - the proposed next steps.

*Paragraphs 4-25: closed section*

*The Responsible Investment Consultation Analysis Full Report is available at <https://sustainability.ed.ac.uk/operations/responsible-investment/policy-review>*

**Consultation**

26. This paper reports on the significant consultation undertaken May to September 2024 to inform the revised Responsible Investment Policy. It was considered by Policy & Resources Committee on 11 November 2024.

**Further information**

27. <u>Author</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
Dave Gorman	Catherine Martin
Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability	Vice-Principal Corporate Services

**Freedom of Information**

28. Open version



**University Court**

**2 December 2024**

**Student Experience Update**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides University Court with an overview of activities related to improving the student experience and presents a new approach to providing these updates in the future.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. We ask Court members to
- note the update and provide comment on the activities underway.
  - provide feedback on this approach to inform future reporting.

**Background and context**

3. Improving our student experience is a core priority for the University, directly referenced in the University Strategy 2030: “*Our teaching will match the excellence of our research. We will improve and sustain student satisfaction and wellbeing.*” Our research excellence, as demonstrated in the results of the last REF, places us firmly in the top tier for research in our community of UK dual-intensive institutions. We have made the commitment to match this excellence in our teaching and student experience.

4. As Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) we measure progress in responding to this priority by student feedback in the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

5. A wide range of activities are underway to respond to the current position with regard to the satisfaction of our students, which does not meet our strategic ambitions.

**Discussion**

6. The University has a wide landscape of student experience activities. To better capture the main projects and improvement work we are introducing clearer joined-up governance and reporting mechanisms.

7. We propose to use a new reporting format and approach for Court to be informed of the entire portfolio of work across student experience, with the focus on major projects approved by the University Initiatives Portfolio Board (UIPB), the Student Experience Delivery & Monitoring Oversight Board (SEDaMOB) and University Executive.

8. Reports will be provided at key milestones/phases for major projects, as demonstrated in the attached report, along with any further details requested by Court, expected to be two to three updates per year.

9. As appropriate, additional opportunities may be pursued for discussion of specific issues, for example in future Court seminars.

10. We will continue to provide Court with an annual update on Student Surveys in response to our KPIs.

### **Risk Management**

11. Failure to address student experience is our highest rated risk on the University Risk Register. This would mean we have not met our strategic ambitions as set out in Strategy 2030, nor fulfilled the related QAA recommendation. It carries reputational risk and continues to affect the University's standing in national league tables, and could become increasingly higher risk, given current sector headwinds around international student recruitment.

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

12. 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**

13. Relevant Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) 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**

14. If supported by Court, with feedback taken on board following this meeting, we will adopt this report style and engagement for future meetings. On this basis, the next planned update will be to the April meeting of Court.

### **Further information**

15. Authors  
Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary  
Students

Presenter  
Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students

### **Freedom of Information**

16. Open.



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

# Student Experience

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University Court Update – December 2024

Web version

# Our Priorities

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To provide University of Edinburgh students with an excellent experience from pre-arrival to post-graduation.

The vision for Student Experience Services: “We need to continue to develop the necessary infrastructure for an inclusive joined-up experience, ensuring that every student’s journey is as easy as possible and that access to support is consistent, flexible and connected”

We have grouped our student experience activity into three priorities – to give us the strongest platform from which we can build and accelerate our position





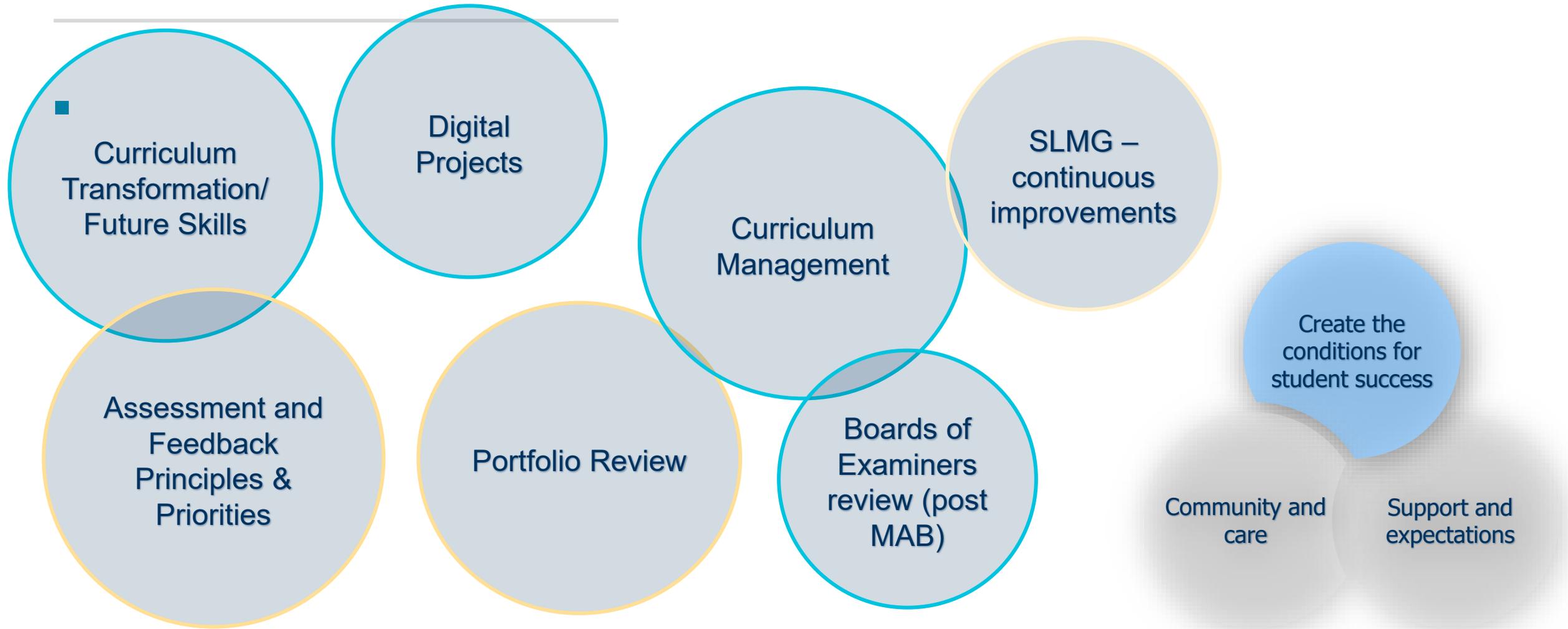
THE UNIVERSITY  
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# Summary of priority activities by theme

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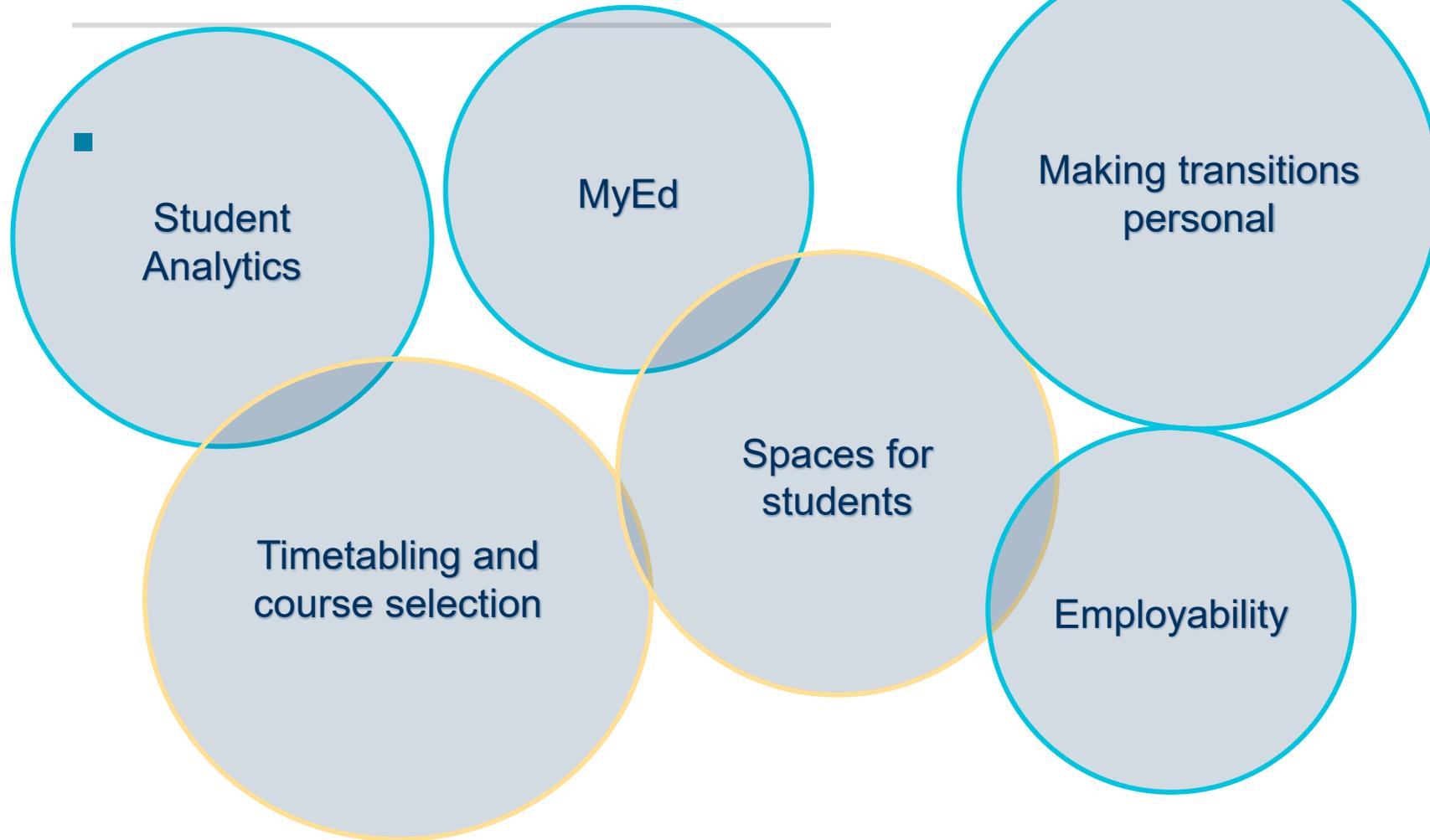


# Create the conditions for success



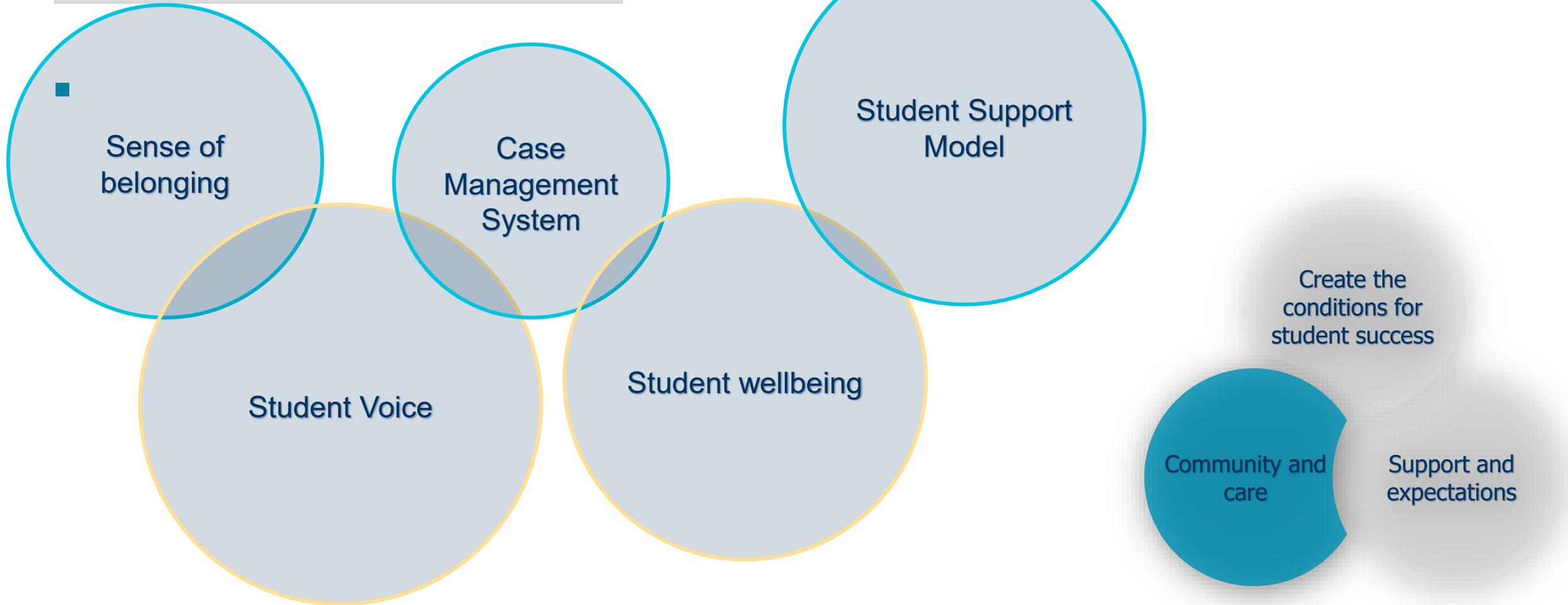
# Support and expectations

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# Community and care

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THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH

# A new approach

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# What is the change?

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## FROM

Local silos

Frequent disconnected changes

Control/risk adverse

Inconsistency

Difficult to get things done

## TO

Collaborative communities

Consistent purposeful improvements

Trust and flexibility in a framework

Clearly defined accountabilities

People-centred processes



# Benefits and success criteria

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Success of the initiatives outlined above are expected to be reflected in future satisfaction scores for external student surveys and respond to our performance indicators.

- KPI (12) Student satisfaction as reported in the NSS and other national student surveys
- Other relevant performance measures: widening participation (1); international student diversity (2); curriculum transformation (10); graduate outcomes (13); staff engagement (5).

Ongoing indicators of success will be measured through project-led feedback, monitoring and evaluation. The outcomes will be presented to University Court at appropriate junctures in project development and implementation.

Underpinning these change programmes is the requirement for a culture shift in the importance of teaching and student experience across the University, with accountability for delivery embedded in staff performance expectations.





# Next steps

We ask Court members to:

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- Note this update and provide comment on the activities underway.
- Provide feedback on this approach to inform future reporting.



UNIVERSITY COURT

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

**Discussion**

*Introduction*

5. This report will begin with a refresher on our representative structure as well as an update on our October elections. I will then detail some recent Sabbatical work, other student work, and end with a finance and strategy update.

*A Reminder of our Representative Structure*

6. I wanted to start this report with a refresher of our representative structure, since some Court members might not be familiar, and updates on our recent October elections present an excellent opportunity for this. Feel free to skip to the next section with updates on our October elections if you're already familiar!
7. We have ~1,300 programme representatives, we have at least one programme representative for every year of every programme of study. We aim for a ratio of one representative to every 40 students, so some programmes have 2-3 representatives per year group. These roles are usually appointed by the school instead of elected. Programme representatives represent their year in local Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs), where they provide feedback and help interpret feedback about individual courses and other issues their year is experiencing.

8. A step above that, we have 67 school representative positions. We have a UG, PGT, and PGR representative per school. These representatives take feedback from their school's programme representatives, as well as other channels, and represent students at various school level committees. What and how many committees they sit on depends on the school. This position is more time consuming than being a programme representative, and several of our school representatives volunteer for further work such as sitting on the library committee or being one of our 30 student members on Senate. They sit under our VP Education Dylan's remit, should they need advice or help escalating anything.

9. Representing students across the University, we have 8 section representatives: the University-wide PGR representative, University-wide PGT representative, Commuter Students' Representative, International Students' Representative, Mature Students' Representative, Part-time Students' Representative, Student Carers' Representative, and Student Parents' Representative. These roles work on a voluntary, flexible basis to give a voice to non-traditional students who may face additional barriers in accessing education. They're responsible for building supportive communities for the students they represent and ensuring that their concerns are on the University's agenda. We also have 5 campaign representatives, who run to campaign on a single issue. Students then vote based on their proposed areas of focus.

10. We have 5 liberation officers. We have a BME Officer, Disabled Students' Officer, LGBTQ+ Officer, Trans and Non-Binary Officer, and a Women's Officer. These roles work to represent marginalized communities of students. They lead and support our five Liberation Campaigns which exist to create a space where self-defining students can come together, discuss the issues affecting them, and campaign to improve their student experience. These roles have a higher time commitment than the section representatives and receive an honorarium. Recently a motion passed Student Council to introduce a new Widening Participation Liberation Officer.

11. All this to say, we have 94 elected positions, including the sabbatical officers. Our representation structure is a lot more complex than just the 5 of us, and we're lucky to be supported by so many fantastic representatives that volunteer their time to represent students. It would be impossible for the Students' Association to represent over 49,000 students without them.

12. All of our elected representatives are strongly encouraged to attend Student Council, as well. We operate a representative democracy, where representatives are expected to speak for their cohorts of students. While we don't bar other students from attending and voting, they are not expected to. Our most recent democracy review reflected that our students would prefer to elect people to represent them in this space, rather than be expected to attend themselves. Student Council meetings moved online during Covid 19, and have remained so since, to enable our online students as well as students with evening caring responsibilities to attend, but we are exploring ways to potentially host these meetings hybrid that would maintain equitable experience during the meeting for those that must join online, but allow those that can attend in-person to bring back the community building element of

chatting before and after the meeting which also supported good collaboration and mutual understanding between representatives.

13. One aspect of our Student Council meeting is that Sabbatical Officers present accountability reports outlining our recent work and progress on student-facing issues, that students then vote on. Four out of five of our accountability reports failed at the last meeting, which is unprecedented. It's rare for a single accountability report to fail, much less four. They failed due to students campaigning for divestment who feel the Sabbatical Officers and the Students' Association haven't been doing enough sharing the voting link online and encouraging students to vote the report down. They need to be voted down twice in a row for any further consequences to come into effect, and at the time of writing this we don't know what will happen at the November meeting. While we would prefer that students hadn't done this and have expressed that we are doing what we can, this is a democratic mechanism that we have in place for students to express their views on our work, and they have every right to utilize it. I bring this up because it further reflects the strength of feeling on issues related to divestment.

### *October Elections*

14. We recently had our October elections. This is where we elect our PGT and PGR representatives, 2 campaign representatives, and our unfilled positions from the March elections, which this year were our Student Carer's Representative and Trans and Non-Binary Officer. This year, we had 108 candidates running for 52 positions. While this is positive, we are still keen to see more competitive races, particularly in some of the larger Schools and for the University-wide Postgraduate roles. We saw significant increased interest in the campaign representative role, with 10 candidates standing, and will be exploring introducing more campaign representative positions in the future, to match student interest.

15. We know students engage well with communications from their school, and from hearing about the opportunities locally from the places they will represent. Capacity within Schools to fully promote the October Elections during the Nomination Period continues to be a challenge, due to its proximity to Welcome Week, and some gaps in knowledge and understanding continue to be a barrier to effective support from University staff. We also believe there were some challenges with information being shared widely enough, particularly to reach the Postgraduate Research community, so we're working on this for future years to avoid delays to promotion of the opportunities and risk of low numbers of candidates or vacancies.

16. Across the October Elections, 1685 voters cast 3104 votes, a 38% decrease in voters from 2023 (although noting that 2023 was a 68% increase from 2022), and a 56% decrease in votes. However, levels of engagement in October 2023 were unusually high, and despite the drop this year, the overall trend is positive with votes cast having increased 28% from 2021.

17. While there are always multiple factors that shape Election turnout, we believe that these figures demonstrate the impact of the voting incentives, which were first piloted in October 2023, and again this year although with a different incentive. Last year, the incentive combined a target-based catering offer of a free coffee for all

voters, combined with a prize draw. This year, we decided to pilot an altruistic incentive: for every four voters, the Students' Association would plant a tree. The messaging was positively received, but the turnout indicates it was a significantly weaker incentive for voting. We continue to reflect on ways to balance the need for incentives to be effective with the desire for them to reflect organizational values and be inclusive to online students.

Now, onto some of our recent work:

### *Sabbatical Officer Work Updates*

#### *Housing and Cost-of-Living*

18. Housing and cost of living are intertwined issues for students, so I'm grouping them together here. The number one issue for students in securing housing according to the recent Student Life Survey was affordability.

19. Because of this, Ruth organized a protest with sabbatical officers from across Scotland as well as NUS Scotland. Each participating Students' Union held a protest on their own campus to raise awareness of student homelessness and what it looks like. Our protest also included a call to freeze rents in University accommodation. Each Union also signed an open letter to Scottish Parliament asking them to better incorporate students into the new Housing Rights Bill, through actions such as extending protections to students living in PBSAs and abolishing the need for a guarantor.

20. I am also still working with relevant parties on reforming the University guarantor scheme, and conversations are progressing well.

21. Addressing a different side of the cost-of-living crisis, John, our VP Activities and Services, has been working hard to expand access to free breakfast for students. The free breakfast we fund and host in Potterrow has been seeing the best numbers it has in a while, doubling attendance on last year, and we have had to start ordering more food to meet demand! John is also supporting our school representatives in establishing local breakfast clubs within their schools as well. We know a scheme like this works best when it's located where students are and helping to build community in those areas. John assisted the LLC UG representative in establishing a breakfast club in their school, and similar efforts are underway with representatives from PPLS, Business, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, ECA, and the Vet School. It's great to be able to feed more students, and to support our school representatives in making a tangible change for their community.

22. I also want to highlight how important funding pots like the participation grant and hardship fund are. We constantly see students having to weigh the feeding themselves and paying rent. Now that the cold has come on so early, we're going to see the cost of heating added into the balance. Most students can't afford all three while working 20h per week, or less. That's why the hardship fund is so helpful, it helps students balance this a bit easier. Additionally, not every student is going to splurge on joining a society or sports club when their budget is that tight. The participation grant removes that barrier and allows students to access these essential opportunities for finding community and enjoying oneself outside of studies.

23. We're very grateful that although the University is experiencing financial difficulties, budget for funds like these hasn't yet been cut. Appetite for community activities continues to grow with high levels of interest in and engagement with student groups, and students taking the initiative to form new societies – we are currently reviewing applications from 42 new potential student groups – and with getting involved in activities like volunteering.

#### *Student Voice*

24. Our work to improve student voice at the University is also well under way. First, I'm on a group that works to improve the Student Life Survey, and I'm happy to say completion rates have improved and we're hoping to improve them further. The Student Life Survey can give valuable insight into some of the topics that the NSS asks about and allows for tracking how students across years are responding.

25. Additionally, I am working on reforming what were known as 'Student Voice Forums' last year. They were not achieving their intended purpose, and so instead I am trialing three different formats this year to more effectively achieve different desired outcomes of the original. The first I have run have been called 'Student Voice Pop-Ups.' Lucy Evans and I went to the Nucleus and the Main Library, areas with high foot traffic, to speak to students about their experience so far this semester. We had a lot of high-quality conversations with students about what issues they've been experiencing. Going in-person and quasi-spot polling gives some insight into how various issues are impacting the average student. Additionally, all those students met the Students' Association President and Deputy Secretary Students, improving visibility on campus. I'll have information on how other formats are going next semester.

26. The Students' Association is also collaborating with Marianne Brown, Head of Student Analytics, Insights, and Modelling, on creating a new Student Voice Strategy, to be able to address the need for large reform in structures and culture across the University to best support Student Voice.

27. One such area that Dylan and I are particularly interested in is improving Student Staff Liaison Committees, as they are currently highly inconsistent in both quality and structure. We are looking to review data on how they operate and recommend best practice. CAHSS began collecting data on their SSLC's and we're working with the University on collecting similar data from the other two colleges as well.

28. As College-level SSLC's have just happened as well, with Dylan attending all six, he will be writing his observations on what worked better than other things in that space, to improve Student Voice there, as well.

#### *Paragraphs 29-36: closed section*

37. Finally, 2025/26 will be the final year of our Strategic Plan and we are developing plans for completing and reviewing the current plan, while building a new plan for the future that takes into account members' needs and the changing operating environment.

### **Resource implications**

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

*Paragraph 39: closed section*

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

40. Several of the activities outlined support a wide variety of the SDGs.

### **Equality & Diversity**

41. 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**

42. We would welcome feedback from Court in relation to any of the issues outlined.

### **Consultation**

43. Consultation on this paper was not required.

### **Further information**

44. Author

Dora Herndon

EUSA President 2024-25

Presenter

Dora Herndon

EUSA President 2024-25

### **Freedom of Information**

45. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 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 activity and direction contribute to the following aspects of Strategy 2030;
  - i) The undergraduate curriculum will support breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it.
  - ii) We will be leading Scotland's commitment to widening participation.
  - iii) We will be a destination of choice, based on our clear "Edinburgh Offer". All of our staff and students will develop here, whether they are from Leith, Lisbon, Lahore or Lilongwe.
  - iv) We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.
  - v) Our estate will be fit for purpose, sustainable and accessible. We will support learning, research and collaboration with our neighbours, businesses and partners.

**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 has enjoyed a successful start to the 2024/25 academic year, with strong engagement from both new and returning students. Following a successful Welcome Week, our efforts have focussed on ensuring that all students have access to a wide range of sporting opportunities, while promoting physical activity as a means of fostering positive wellbeing and a sense of community. We've provided extensive support and learning opportunities for our club committee leaders, ensuring that they have the resources and training needed to facilitate positive experiences for students. Additionally, we have hosted a myriad of events to increase participation and raised the profile of UoE Sport. This paper outlines the initiatives, priorities, and strategic direction of the Sports Union.

**Discussion**

*Recreational, Intramural and Competitive Sport*

5. As of the 16 November, we have already competed in 493 BUCS fixtures this Semester, with Edinburgh taking the win in 326 of these. Additionally, we have completed 473 Intramural fixtures across 9 sports.
6. Our Recreational Sport Programme has also seen lots of activity this Semester. Our International Sports Club has expanded from previous years, with it now offering sports such as curling, mountaineering, and trampolining, which students are

otherwise less likely to try as beginners. We have had 136 students attend across 9 sessions so far this semester. Many of our clubs are also organising Stressbuster sessions during exam season, to help our students stay active during the busy exam period.

7. All 71 sports clubs will be hosting Give it a Go sessions during week 1 of Semester 2, to provide opportunities for new and continuing students to get involved or try a new sport. Additionally, we are working in conjunction with EUSA to organise a multi-sport event at the end of Semester 2, focussing on engaging with international students.

8. Sport at Edinburgh had a prominent presence at the two recent Open Days, at central campus, Kings Buildings, and Pleasance. Around 70 prospective students were interested in becoming performance athletes at Edinburgh, with all of them currently competing at a top age-group or international level.

#### *Coaching & Volunteering Academy*

9. This year, thanks to the introduction of a new full-time staff member, we have been able to provide extensive support to our 853 club committee volunteers. Our volunteers are essential to delivering an inclusive and positive experience for all students at the University, and we aim to provide them with the skills and knowledge to support our members.

10. In Semester 1, we have hosted 3 Wellbeing & Inclusion Forums, which are focussed towards students in leadership, wellbeing, inclusion and social roles. Expert staff across the University and external organisations provided insightful talks about cultural awareness, to promote a continuing positive shift in our clubs. Staff from the Chaplaincy spoke to our volunteers about how to have conversations about mental health and how to signpost students to the appropriate resources available in the University. They also discussed how our volunteers can ensure their own mental wellbeing whilst supporting others.

11. We have organised several courses and workshops for our volunteers, including regular full-day first aid courses for sports injuries and ConcussEd training to educate students on concussions.

12. EUSU has three General Meetings per Semester, with committee leaders from all clubs in attendance. We provide important updates, whilst also sharing best practice. The Shinty Club presented at one of these, discussing how they embedded wellbeing talks during their training sessions. They covered topics such as Women in Sport Week and how to recognise when someone is struggling. By embedding this in their weekly training sessions, all club members have also become familiar with the club's Wellbeing Officer.

#### *Events and Good News!*

13. The Sports Union hosted its annual President's Ceilidh on 24 October. The event brings together 132 committee leaders from our 71 clubs, to thank them for their incredible efforts at the start of the academic year and to encourage them to connect with others across all of our clubs.

14. On 29 October, UoE Sport and D&A hosted the Celebration of Sport event in the Playfair Library. This was an excellent event with a live panel interview with four of our Olympic/Paralympic athletes, as well as live demonstrations of karate and fencing by our clubs. Long-term supporters of UoE Sport, current performance athletes, University staff, and key contributors to the Sports Union were in attendance. The feedback received was extremely positive, with UoE Sport and D&A looking at hosting similar events in the future.

15. This semester UoE Sport programmes, athletes, staff, and coaches have been shortlisted for a number of awards across the industry. Sport & Exercise facilities have been shortlisted for 'Best Facility of the Year' at the Scottish Leisure Network Group Awards. At the National Fitness Awards, we have been shortlisted for 'Regional Gym of the Year' and 'Education Facility of the Year'. Additionally, we are a category sponsor for the 'Moment of the Year 2024' award at the Team Scotland Awards. Finally, at the Aquatics GB Awards, Stephen Clegg has been shortlisted for 'Para-Swimming Athlete of the Year', and coaches Matt Trodden and Adam Smallwood for 'Coach of the Year'.

#### *Direction of Sport at Edinburgh*

16. EUSU memberships have been growing as more students get involved in sport throughout the semester. We currently have 7,641 unique members, including record numbers in our Intramural Programme with 1,367 unique members.

17. EUSU are in the process of reviewing our policies, Constitution, and Code of Conduct to ensure clarity and alignment with the rest of the University. We have updated a number of policies already, and are aiming to complete our review by the end of Semester 2, for implementation in the 2025/26 academic year. Throughout this process, we will consult with colleagues across the University for guidance, as well as our students to receive feedback.

18. We would like to extend our thanks to the University for re-opening the Participation Grant later into the Semester. Our members have fed back that this was immensely beneficial, as most of our members purchase memberships later into the Semester, following team selections. With 378 grants awarded for Sports Club applications, it shows the vast impact this has on the ability of our students to participate in EUSU activity.

19. Our agreement with PlayerLayer (our kit supplier) is set to expire next summer, so we have gone out to tender in partnership with Sport & Exercise. We aim to find a suitable and affordable partner for the next 3-6 years to provide match/training kit, leisurewear and uniform across UoE Sport. We will work closely with students and staff to ensure our future partner will meet our needs, as kit is extremely important for our sense of belonging to the University.

20. At the start of this Semester, we launched uoesport.tv, which is a livestreaming platform for all of our clubs to use for their fixtures. We have worked closely with S&E to install high-quality fixed cameras across our sports facilities, as well as investing in portable cameras which our clubs can set-up easily. We launched the project with a pilot group of clubs and engagement has grown immensely over the first couple of weeks. Our fixtures have been viewed across the globe,

demonstrating our contribution to the worldwide reputation of the University. In Semester 2 we will expand the platform to a wider group of clubs, to provide further opportunities for students, alumni and families to engage with UoE Sport.

### **Resource implications**

21. N/A

### **Risk Management**

22. No major risks.

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

23. This paper contributes to the following SDGs;

- a. 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing. All the work we do at EUSU is focussed on enhancing the health and wellbeing of our university community.
- b. 4 – Quality Education. We believe our student/volunteer development efforts contribute to a more complete and expanded education for students.

### **Equality & Diversity**

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

### **Next steps/implications**

25. The Sports Union President and Executive Committee oversee the strategic direction of the Sports Union.

### **Consultation**

26. Consultation for this paper was sought from Millie Doherty (Head of Sports Development Programmes) and Mark Munro (Director of Sport & Active Health).

### **Further information**

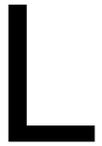
27. Author & Presenter

Philine Rouwers  
Sports Union President

16 November 2024

### **Freedom of Information**

28. Open Paper



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Court Internal Effectiveness Review**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides the internal review of Court's effectiveness for the 2023/24 academic year. This is part of our compliance with external requirements and general good governance practice.

**Action requested/Recommendation**

2. Court is invited to consider and approve the annual internal effectiveness review for 2023/24.

**Background and context**

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

**Discussion**

*Contents*

4. The review consists of the following sections:
- 1) Compliance with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance
  - 2) Summary of annual discussions with Court members
  - 3) External effectiveness review
  - 4) Senate effectiveness reviews

*Compliance with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance 2023 ('the Governance Code')*

5. A review of compliance has been undertaken to provide assurance that the University has been compliant over 2023/24 with the 8 high-level principles and 106 underlying provisions in the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance. It has also been provided to the Audit & Risk Committee as part of their review of the internal controls and assurance environment.

6. In this context, Court is invited to note the following minor update to be made to Court's [Statement of Primary Responsibilities](#), to refer to the latest edition of the Code. The final sentence of the second paragraph of the Statement is changed:

from

This Statement is also compliant with the requirements of provision 11 of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2017).

to

This Statement is also compliant with the requirements of provision 12 of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2023).

### *Summary of annual discussions with Court members*

7. The Senior Lay Member and/or University Secretary held individual discussions over the course of the summer, and into the autumn, with most Court members who have had a year or more of experience on Court, as well as with departing members. Frank Armstrong, in the capacity as Intermediary Member of Court, held a review meeting with the Senior Lay Member, having sought comments in advance from members of Court.

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

9. The following main points were made:

- A lot of important work takes place in Court's committees, which is then reviewed or approved at the Court meeting. Papers submitted to Court should highlight which committees have already discussed particular issues and should be refined to keep the papers decision-focused and reduce repetition of previous discussions. It is important that Court members feel informed about the work that is approved by committees;
- Members who sit on Court committees feel that their skills are generally being well-utilised, and they find the meetings valuable;
- The input of members of the Executive team who attend Court is valued and many Court members would welcome additional opportunities to hear more from them on appropriate issues, both during and outside of scheduled meetings;
- External Court members expressed a desire to build relationships between members, perhaps through engagement outwith the meeting cycle;
- The information provided to new members at induction was of a high quality and members who have engaged in informal mentoring have valued this;
- The quality of the papers produced and the Court site are valued. A number of suggestions for improvement were made, which will be considered as part of on-going work in response to the external effectiveness review of Court.
- The change in chairing arrangements has been broadly welcomed by Court members;
- Positive feedback on the support provided by the Court Services team and the ability of Court Services to respond in detail to queries;
- Members appreciate that the dates for meetings are generally available in good time, to allow them to prioritise Court and committee meetings in their diaries.

10. Other, more individual comments, were:

- There have been some instances where more local interests have been raised at Court when it might not be the most appropriate forum;

- It would be helpful to hear updates from the senior team on the University's progress on strategic items;
- People with specialist skills can contribute very quickly but for more generalist members it can be helpful to meet with executive staff to help understand the institution.
- The full role of Senate is not clear to all Court members and more information on this could be helpful; and
- Induction materials could be updated to include additional information including organisational charts, biographies, and short guides on finances in the university sector. This would help new members to contextualise what Court is trying to deliver.

#### *External Effectiveness Review 2023/24*

11. The report of the recent external effectiveness review was approved by Court in June 2024 and is published in full on the University [website](#). The report notes that: "The University benefits from the high calibre, commitment and high level of engagement of all the members of Court [...] Members take their roles and responsibilities seriously and are committed to the success of the institution." Initial responses to the report's recommendations were considered at the last Court meeting (7 October 2024) and Court will be updated as relevant work progresses.

#### *Senate Reviews*

12. An externally facilitated review of Senate and its committees by sector body AdvanceHE took place in 2022/23. The final report and proposed actions in response to the review were considered at the Senate meeting on 11 October 2023 and reported to Court on 4 December 2023.

13. At its meeting on 7 February 2024, Senate established the Senate External Review Task & Finish Group to consider the recommendations arising from the external review and develop proposals in response. The composition of the Group is broadly reflective of the Senate membership and includes one of Court's Senate Assessors, Professor Richard Blythe. To date, the Task & Finish Group has met four times. It is due to remain in place until 31 July 2025. As reported to Court on 7 October 2024, proposals relating to the format and frequency of Senate meetings were approved and implemented for the 2024-25 academic year. Changes introduced will be evaluated for effectiveness.

14. At its November 2024 meeting, the Task & Finish Group discussed and agreed a proposal for Senate regarding the formation of a Business Committee to support agenda setting. The Group also held a discussion with the Vice-Principal Students and Conveners of the Standing Committees in response to a recommendation that the Vice-Principal Students review the Terms of Reference, coverage and scope of the three Senate Committees with a view to ensuring that they together cover all university academic priorities, while identifying any overlap. The Vice-Principal Students will use the outcomes of the discussion paper to provide an interim update to Senate in December and develop proposals for change.

15. The 2023-24 Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate and its Standing Committees was conducted in the summer of 2024, and the review report was noted at the 9 October 2024 meeting of Senate (see [Senate paper S 24/25 1K](#)). The

Senate Internal Effectiveness Review highlighted areas for improvement, some of which overlapped with work by the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group. Areas of good practice were identified in relation to Senate's standing committees, although a common need was identified to improve communication with the wider University community about the work of the committees.

### **Resource implications**

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

### **Risk Management**

17. An annual review of effectiveness contributes to realising best practice in governance, which supports effective risk management.

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

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

### **Equality & Diversity**

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

### **Next steps/implications**

20. If approved, the paper will be published and any agreed actions will be progressed.

### **Consultation**

21. The paper has been reviewed by Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary. The detailed document on compliance with the Governance Code was submitted to the September meeting of Audit & Risk Committee.

### **Further information**

#### **22. Author**

Lewis Allan  
Kirstie Graham  
Governance & Court Services

#### **Presenter**

Leigh Chalmers  
Vice-Principal & University Secretary

Anda Nicolson  
Projects Officer & Policy Adviser to  
the Vice-Principal & University  
Secretary

### **Freedom of Information**

23. Open once approved.



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

**Health and Safety Annual Report**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper provides an annual report on the health and safety arrangements at the University of Edinburgh and provides information on the annual plan in relation to health and safety management at the University in 2025.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. To note the paper and approve the Health and Safety Policy.

**Background and context**

3. The safety and the health of the people who form the University's community is fundamental to our ability to be successful in our work, supporting the aspirations of Strategy 2030 and the University's mission. The arrangements in place to support this require to be effective, well-implemented and they should address the risks presented by the University's operations and activities. The University uses a number of mechanisms to review these arrangements; this report is provided to Court, via Audit and Risk Committee, to assist with its remit.

4. The University Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee (USHAWC) met on 30 November 2023, 27th March 2024 and 28th August 2024 and the minutes and papers are available to members on request. An extraordinary meeting was arranged for 29 of October to review the proposed Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

5. Court members were made aware in December 2023 of the [updated sector H&S Management Standard](#) (published October 2023) through this report. The document is produced by the Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA) in partnership with Universities Colleges Employer Association (UCEA) and endorsed by Universities UK (UUK). It was not issued as expected by UUK, to all Principals/Vice-Chancellors as planned in 2023. It has been confirmed by USHA that a communication video has been completed and is being sent directly to all Principals/Vice-Chancellors before the end of 2024 with this document. As a reminder, the document sets out responsibilities expected across the institution from the governing body through all layers of management. This document has been referred to in the development of the revised University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

6. University Executive (UE) review quarterly health and safety reports presented by the Vice-Principal Corporate Services, the senior officer with a designated remit for health and safety. UE now also approve an Annual H&S Plan for the institution; approved by UE on 29 October 2024. UE has access to the USHAWC's SharePoint site and it is expected that members there view the minutes of meetings and reports.



7. The USHAWC updated its [Terms of reference](#) in early 2022 (next scheduled for review in 2025): it operates as both a management and a consultative committee, with all six University management areas represented and both staff and student representation (Trade Unions and EUSA), meeting three times a year. The senior management representatives act as conduits to their Areas (Schools/Departments), bringing matters to the Committee and communicating to local senior management, in their 61 areas, information as necessary. The USHAWC has three thematic sub-committees: Radiation Safety, Biological Safety and the Health & Wellbeing Sub-Committee (staff), where strategy and operational programme delivery are reviewed and each of these reports annually to USHAWC (with additional reporting as needed during the year).

8. The USHAWC's annual standing reports provide management information on a full range of health and safety matters with performance reviewed and discussed. Data submitted in the reports is collated through self-declaration annual reports from Heads of School/Departments, management reports and centrally by the Corporate H&S Department.

## Discussion

*Paragraph 9: closed section*

### *Revised Health and Safety Policy and Framework*

10. The University's Health and Safety Policy and the supporting arrangements have been in place for over 40 years and it has been reviewed periodically in that time with the main management responsibilities being set out in the document. The University values its staff and whole community for the contribution they make and consider them '*the lifeblood of the University*' in its Strategy 2030. It is essential, therefore, that the systems we have in place prevent harm to our community and that it functions well.

11. The Policy, its Frameworks and arrangements guide the community to ensure this by providing all staff with clarity about their responsibilities, as well as the training and information to enable them to maintain a safe workplace and undertake activities safely.

12. The Policy has been reviewed to identify any areas for improvement to support both the aforementioned purpose and the University Strategy. To do this, both internal and external factors were taken into account. These include the sector management standard '*Leadership and management of health and safety in higher education institutions*'. Our review encompassed the existing H&S statement and policy document described as being Tier 1 of our written arrangements, including the Framework: Organisation document. The second Framework called Arrangement's document will be reviewed in academic year 2024-25.

13. The University has a complex environment with regard to health and safety management in the workplace. We have people engaged in the delivery of a vast array of roles in different environments working with many different hazards. This can be seen through the work this year to identify the range of work undertaken in each area. The University's 61 areas (Schools/Departments/College offices) completed a



review using guidance on their hazard and risk profile to assist the review of the competent advice and guidance the University requires to provide. The organisation's role in educating and being at the forefront of research means that these hazards can have elevated levels of risk that require careful management from the scale of activity to the risk associated with advancing research with new ideas. This profile is being developed to be used to assess the level of risk associated with these 56 identified topics.

**Paragraph 14: closed section**

*The Health and Safety Policy and Framework are available at <https://health-safety.ed.ac.uk/policy-cop/policy>*

*Significant Updates during 2023- 2024*

**15. Fire Safety** The University successfully delivered its new response to the changes introduced in August 2023 by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. This included a local response to investigate all fire alerts, before SFRS are contacted. This response continues to be well executed by Estates' Security and local staff after a full year, across the institution, with advice of the University Fire Safety Unit (FSU).

**16. University Code of Practice on Local Extract Ventilation (LEV) Management Update Review of LEV** Estates and Health and Safety worked together to introduce a consistent approach to the management of LEV, including procurement an extensive programme of work to examine the condition all equipment present in many areas of the organisation. The University has in excess of 1000 such systems removing contaminants from the work place environment. This was successfully completed in the summer of 2024 and moves on to the planning phase of what is required over a 10-year period to prioritise a rolling replacement programme.

**17. Biological Safety** Following the introduction of a new University standard or the Containment Level 3 laboratories, the Biological Safety Unit has now completed its first audit in all areas. The outcome is being recorded as a successful result with all areas showing a consistent approach in line with the Code of Practice.

**18. Radiation Safety.** The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) launched their new Registration and Consent system in October 2023; however, we have not been required to begin review of the University's arrangements as yet. This new consent process has introduced a considerable workload for the HSE and this is impacting on routine visits. For note, the new process changes the way employers apply to HSE for new consents to carry out certain practices relating to work with ionising radiation. The University currently has four practices requiring consent for its work. The Radiation Protection Unit has also introduced a new guide and training this year for the Transport of Radioactive materials.

**19. Mental Health and Wellbeing.** A new '*Framework Commitment to Mental Health: Support for Wellbeing activity this is for staff*, 'was approved by USHAWC and the new Deputy Director Health and Wellbeing has paused promotion until the seven programmes of work, to support the Framework, were matured this year with relevant partners, the launch is scheduled for Spring 2025, alongside the new HSW Policy. The three pillars set by the new Framework being:



- **Promoting the positive:** Supporting effective team and people management practices. Designing 'good jobs', jobs that support autonomy, competence and a sense of belonging. Promote awareness, training and good practice
- **Preventing harm:** Identifying incidence and causes of stress at work through stress risk assessments and other relevant data. Taking action to eliminate and/or manage significant causes of stress at work. Supporting individuals and teams to develop their skills to do this well and recognise/improve coping skills.
- **Supporting ill-health:** Providing support for those suffering from mental ill-health, whatever the cause, by providing access to specialist professional help & support, reducing stigma that might provide a barrier to access and supporting return to work

20. **Enforcement Visits.** There has been a number of planned and reactive enforcement visits to the University from agencies across a range of topics. These have all been documented and discussed at USHWC regarding the nature of the visit and any response or action taken. The University has received routine visits in the period from Environmental Health (Edinburgh City Council), SEPA, Counter Terrorism Security Advisers, Department of Land Transport, Plant Health, Office of the Nuclear Regulator and reactive visits from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Health and Safety Executive.

21. **Training.** Significant unanticipated work was undertaken in 2023-24 to transfer all of the University online H&S training courses, due to the P&M system requirements, to the three new platforms for our staff, students and visitors. This work has been considerable and the introduction of additional software to connect to the new platforms slow. It is noted that the P&M system could not accept historical records, these require to be kept locally. We have been able to provide our first set of records on centrally provided training from the P&M system data this year, however it is noted that these are the records the system holds but not all courses have been accessible for the full year period.

### **Resource implications**

22. There is no financial impact of this paper: there is likely to be, however, an impact in terms of the need for increased training, a 10-year plan for LEV replacement and a developing mental health and wellbeing agenda and these will form part of the normal planning round considerations for 2025/26.

### **Risk management**

23. The safety and the health of the people who make up our University community is fundamental to our ability to be successful in our work, supporting the aspirations of Strategy 2030. This report forms part of the measures used for the organisation to review how the risk to staff, students, suppliers and visitors is managed.

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

24. This paper provides the Committee with information on the current management of health and safety and the key risks and controls with a H&S Plan for 2025. Management of health and safety contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 8 – Good Health and Wellbeing and Decent Work and Economic Growth. The



work described in support for disabilities contributes to the achievement of UNSDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities (see below).

### **Equality & diversity**

25. The work undertaken to support H&S Annual plan and evaluation of risk will continue to improve the workplace in terms of health and safety for all, therefore, should ensure our diverse workforce enjoy a consistent experience. This paper provides an update on the Staff Disability Advisory Service which was launched in 2023 – a service which follows the social model for disability in assisting to remove barriers in the workplace for staff.

### **Next steps/implications**

26. This paper is presented to support Court in meeting its requirements concerning health and safety.

27. Author

Suzanne Thompson  
Director of Health and Safety  
November 2024

Presenter

Catherine Martin  
Vice Principal Corporate Services  
November 2024

### **Freedom of Information**

28. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

Development & Alumni: 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 31 August 2024 to 31 October 2024 and an update on current alumni relations activities. In addition, it includes details of the gifts included in the totals reported in the October report to University Court.

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 4-9: closed section

Discussion

Global Alumni Events

10. Upcoming global alumni events

<b>New York, Washington DC and Boston, USA</b> Delegation visit to the East Coast of USA featuring an open to all flagship alumni event in New York, a small-scale alumni volunteer reception in DC and a host of wider alumni, philanthropy, and partnership activity.	November 2024
<b>Mexico City and Guadalajara, Mexico</b> British Council events featuring talks, alumni masterclasses and networking opportunities.	November 2024
<b>New South Wales, Australia</b> R(D)SVS alumni dinner hosted by Prof Lisa Boden.	November 2024
<b>Toronto, Canada</b> Virtual talk by Prof Shannon Vallor for the Edinburgh University Club of Toronto.	November 2024
<b>Paris, France</b> UK alumni network in France annual Christmas party at the British Council.	December 2024

Recent Global Events

11. In September, the International Recruitment Team and counterparts from other Scottish universities hosted an alumni event in Nairobi. Later that month, Scotland House in London hosted a Scottish Universities event for recent graduates.

12. In October, ECA Principal Prof Juan Cruz hosted a small alumni dinner for ECA alumni in Beijing. The New York Alumni Club hosted a networking meet-up at the start of October, enabling local alumni to make connections over informal drinks. The Toronto Alumni Club hosted a talk by local author Alex Lam, on his new book *Long Life: Mapping your Wellbeing with Purpose and Meaning*. The International Recruitment Team hosted a sold-out alumni event in Jakarta. Alumni in Nigeria had the opportunity to attend the Nigerian Talent, UK Educated careers fair and networking event in Lagos. Alumni events hosted in collaboration with the School of Social and Political Sciences and the Business School took place in Osaka and Tokyo.

13. At the start of November, alumni in Istanbul joined graduates from other UK universities for a British Council careers and networking event.

#### *Alumni support for Widening Participation*

14. *The Insights Programme* has been chosen as the case for support for the USA Year End Appeal, highlighting a 2019 student participant who is now an alumni host for the Programme. The appeal will ask 10,000+ alumni through direct mail, email and social media to donate to this life-changing programme.

15. The impact of the Insights Programme will also be showcased during the D&A November Delegation to the USA. This will include an informal Insights and alumni volunteer event in DC and meetings with key alumni contacts in Boston.

16. Eligible students were emailed on 1 November inviting them to apply for the 2024/25 Insights Programme. Applications close on 18 November and decisions will be communicated to the students in early January.

17. The Insights team worked with Communications & Marketing department on an [article](#) for the Edinburgh Impact website. The piece explores the impact of the Insights Programme on student and alumni participants and includes reflections from Chris Cox and Shelagh Green.

#### *Student Engagement*

18. The [Student Experience Grants](#) annual application window commenced on 10 October and concluded on 7 November. These grants offer one-time contributions of up to £5,000, aiming to support innovative projects and initiatives geared towards enhancing students' social, academic, sporting, or cultural development. The team is currently reviewing all of the submitted applications. The selection committee will meet in December to determine who is successful, with announcements scheduled for January 2025.

#### *Alumni support for Student Recruitment*

19. In November, we hosted two student and alumni panel events for Postgraduate Virtual Open Days. Four alumni offered their insights and advice to prospective students.

20. Alumni Ambassadors, some of our most recent graduates, will have supported the International Recruitment Team at education fairs for prospective students in

Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi this November. This is an initial phase of our increased support for recruitment efforts in the region as part of the work of the India Regional Diversification Group.

#### *Digital Communications and Podcast*

21. Issue 8 of digital [Enlightened](#) magazine was published on 23 September 2024 featuring more alumni impact stories, with over 37,500 recipients opening the email. Work on Issue 9 (Christmas edition) is currently underway with the next issue due for publication on 19 December 2024.

22. A refreshed edition of the Multi Story Edinburgh handbook was distributed digitally to all recent UG graduates as a follow up communication to the graduate welcome email on 23 September.

23. A new issue of 'Events and Opportunities' newsletter was emailed to alumni on 27 September. The newsletter was opened by 80,619 recipients, with 2,899 unique clicks.

24. The second issue of 2024/2025 Multi Story Edinburgh newsletter, which was themed around sustainability, was sent to 6,200 new graduates on 30 October. The newsletter had a 68% open rate (4,226 recipients).

25. We continue to develop and promote the [Multi Story Edinburgh podcast](#) which has had over 10,000 downloads to date. Season six was released on 30 September. In addition to five new episodes, two specials have also been produced.

#### **Resource implications**

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

#### **Risk Management**

27. There are policies and procedures in place to mitigate risks associated with funding activities including the procedure for income due diligence across campus.

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

28. 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**

29. There are no specific equality and diversity issues associated with the paper. However, cognisance is 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. We also actively promote a range of EDI-related scholarships and wider programmes to donors, including the MCF programme highlighted above, the Black British Scholarships programme, the Nyerere Scholarship and specific PhD scholarships to attract candidates from under-represented groups.

30. D&A is also closely connected to the current Review of the University's History and Race, ensuring alumni engagement with the findings and recommendations as they emerge. We also help alumni to understand the University's position on a range

of EDI-related issues as these are played out (with greater or lesser degrees of accuracy) in the public domain and in the media.

### **Next steps/implications**

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

### **Consultation**

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

### **Further information**

33. Authors

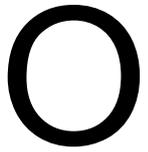
Gregor Hall, Finance Manager  
Emily Gwiazda, Alumni Relations  
Project Officer

Presenter

Chris Cox  
Vice-Principal Philanthropy &  
Advancement

### **Freedom of Information**

34. Open version



## UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024

### Resolutions

#### Description of paper

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

#### Action requested/Recommendation

3. To approve the following Resolutions presented in final format:
  - No. 99/2024: Foundation of a Personal Chair of AI, Memory and War
  - No.100/2024: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Educational Change and Diversity

#### Background and context

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. As Chair titles are approved by Resolution, they can only be altered by Resolution.

#### Discussion

7. The draft Resolutions were circulated to General Council and Senate for observations.

#### Resource implications

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

#### Risk Management

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

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

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

### **Equality & Diversity**

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

### **Next steps/implications**

12. 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**

13. 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**

14. Author  
Kirstie Graham  
Court Services

### **Freedom of Information**

15. Open paper.

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

**Draft Resolution of the University Court No. 99/2024**

**Foundation of a Personal Chair of AI, Memory and War**

At Edinburgh, the Second day of December, Two thousand and twenty four.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to found a Personal Chair of AI, Memory and War:

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 Personal Chair of AI, Memory and War 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. Notwithstanding the personal nature of this Chair, the terms and conditions of appointment and tenure which by Statute, Ordinance and otherwise apply to other Chairs in the University shall be deemed to apply in like manner to the Personal Chair of AI, Memory and War together with all other rights, privileges and duties attaching to the office of Professor.
4. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 January Two thousand and twenty five.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary

# **UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

## **Draft Resolution of the University Court No. 100/2024**

### **Foundation of a Personal Chair of Educational Change and Diversity**

At Edinburgh, the Second day of December, Two thousand and twenty four.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to found a Personal Chair of Educational Change and Diversity:

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 Personal Chair of Educational Change and Diversity 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. Notwithstanding the personal nature of this Chair, the terms and conditions of appointment and tenure which by Statute, Ordinance and otherwise apply to other Chairs in the University shall be deemed to apply in like manner to the Personal Chair of Educational Change and Diversity together with all other rights, privileges and duties attaching to the office of Professor.
4. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 August Two thousand and twenty four.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary