



University Court
John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls
Monday, 24 February 2025

AGENDA

OPENING ITEMS

- 1 **Minute** A1
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2024
- 2 **Matters Arising & Review of Action Log** A2
To raise any matters arising and review the Action Log
 - Update on Ordinance 217 (General Council Membership & Registration)
- 3 **Principal's Report** B
To note a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal
- 4 **Committee Business**
 - Exception Committee C1
 - Policy & Resources Committee C2
 - Governance & Nominations Committee C3
 - Knowledge Strategy Committee C4
 - Senate C5

KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

- 5 **Finance and Planning Update Report** D
To consider a paper presented by Nirmal Borkhataria, Interim Director of Finance and Kim Graham, Provost.
- 6 **Student intakes 2025-26 – Early application insight** E
To consider a paper presented by Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning
- 7 **Students' Association and Sports Union Reports**
To consider the reports presented by Dora Herndon, Students' Association President and Philine Rouwers, Sports Union President
 - **Students' Association Report** F1
 - **Sports Union Report** F2
- 8 **BioQuarter – Scottish Power Energy Network Upgrade** G
To consider a paper presented by Damien Toner, Director of Estates Services, and to approve the University's contribution to partnership funding of the project
- 9 **Annual People Report** L
To consider a paper presented by James Saville, Director of Human Resources

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

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|-----------|---|----------|
| 10 | Edinburgh Innovations Strategy Update and Knowledge Exchange & Innovation Fund
To <u>approve</u> for submission to the Scottish Funding Council | H |
| 11 | Self-Evaluation Action Plan
To <u>note</u> | I |
| 12 | Donations & Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity
To <u>note</u> | J |
| 13 | Resolutions
To <u>approve</u> | K |
| 14 | Any Other Business
To <u>consider</u> any other matters | |
| 15 | Date of Next Meeting
Monday 28 April, 2pm-5pm | |



UNIVERSITY COURT

2 December 2024, Raeburn Room, Old College

Minutes

- Members Present:** Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member
 Simon Fanshawe, Rector
 Rushad Abadan, Co-opted Member
 Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member
 Shereen Benjamin, Senatus Assessor
 Richard Blythe, Senatus Assessor
 Alastair Dunlop, Chancellor's Assessor
 Ruth Elliott, Students' Association Vice-President Community
 Ruth Girardet, Co-opted Member
 Dora Herndon, Students' Association President
 Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor
 Sarah McAllister, Professional Services Staff Member
 Douglas Millican, Co-opted Member
 Jock Millican, General Council Assessor
 Hugh Mitchell, Co-opted Member
 Kathryn Nash, Trade Union Academic Staff Member
 Mark Patrizio, Trade Union Professional Services Staff Member
 Alistair Smith, Co-opted Member
 Kavi Thakrar, Co-opted Member
 Sarah Wolffe, General Council Assessor
- Member Apologies:** Robert Aldridge, City of Edinburgh Council Assessor
 Tobias Kelly, Academic Staff Member
- In Attendance:** 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
 Kim Graham, Provost
 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
 Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary, Governance and Strategic Planning
 Daniel Wedgwood, Head of Court Services
 Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students (for item 11)

OPENING ITEMS

Opening and welcome

Simon Fanshawe, Rector, opened the meeting. In his opening remarks, he stressed the value of accessing a wide range of views on matters of debate in the University community. He also reflected on recent events in which he had participated, including the Rector's Installation ceremony that had taken place on 16 October, following which the Rector had hosted a discussion of the opportunities and challenges of artificial intelligence. He recorded his thanks to Professor Kenneth Baillie and Professor Sotos Tsaftaris for their participation in this successful event and to the University's Events & Protocols team for facilitating it.

The Rector also drew Court's attention to the work of the Scottish Social Mobility Society and the support they had received from the University's Widening Participation team and other relevant members of staff.

1 Minutes

Paper A1

The minutes of the meeting and note of the seminar held on 7 October 2024 were approved.

2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log

Paper A2

Action Log

It was noted that the Action Log had been updated with regard to work relating to financial delegations. This was approved.

3 Principal's Report

Paper B

The Senior Lay member noted and welcomed changes that had been made to the structure of the Principal's Report.

Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, invited comments and questions on the report.

There was discussion of communications concerning the University's financial position, given the existence of contrasting perception of this within the University community. It was noted that upcoming staff engagement events would provide an opportunity to clarify an imbalance between growth rates in expenditure and income and why it was important to address this. To do so, it would be important to distinguish retrospective financial reporting from the situation facing the University in the future. The UK higher education sector as a whole was facing a number of financial challenges which affected Edinburgh.

It had been announced that a voluntary severance scheme would be run as a measure to reduce staff costs. It was clarified that this scheme had not yet been developed in detail but that it would be a selective scheme with a strong element of

local decision-making, a part of which would be to protect the University's ability to deliver key priorities.

There was also discussion of an occupation of a teaching building on campus that had been carried out by protestors in relation to calls for divestment in connection with conflict in the Middle East. The University had made clear that preventing the use of University buildings in this way was not acceptable. The occupation had ended and the building was again being used for teaching.

4 Committee Business

Policy & Resources Committee

Paper C1

Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member, introduced the report, noting that the majority of the items discussed at the last meeting of Policy & Resources Committee (PRC) were included in the Court agenda.

Court noted the report.

Nominations Committee

Paper C2

Court noted the report. Court approved the following, as recommended by Nominations Committee:

- the re-appointment of Douglas Millican as a member of Audit & Risk Committee and as the Convener of that committee until 31 July 2026 (the conclusion of his current term as a member of Court); and
- a change in the name of the committee to become 'Governance and Nominations Committee' and related changes to the committee's Terms of Reference, noting that this was to reflect established practice and did not involve any change in the standing powers of the committee or of Court. It was further clarified that the designation 'Governance and Nominations Committee' was consistent with sector norms.

Audit & Risk Committee

Paper C3

Douglas Millican, Convener of Audit & Risk Committee, gave a brief overview of key points from the report. Court approved the updated Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement, noting that there would be a need to update financial measures at the next annual review.

Knowledge Strategy Committee

Paper C4

Court noted the report.

Remuneration Committee Annual Report

Paper C5

Hugh Mitchell, Convener of Remuneration Committee, gave a brief overview of the report, noting that standard processes had been followed throughout the year. In

addition, analysis of the Grade 10 staff population had been conducted and this had provided helpful context for the committee's work.

Court noted the report.

Senate

Paper C6

Court noted the report. In discussion, it was noted that the prominence and importance of the student voice in Senate had increased and that this was in line with one of the recommendations of Senate's external effectiveness review.

There was also discussion of the mechanisms whereby Senate provided assurances to Court on teaching quality and progress in implementing the recommendations of the Senate external effectiveness review, through the dedicated Task & Finish Group.

KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

8 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report [taken before item 5]

Paper G

Douglas Millican, Convener of Audit & Risk Committee (ARC), highlighted key points from the report, including that:

- the Annual Internal Audit Statement had concluded that the University's overall system of governance, risk management and internal control remained adequate and had noted improvements in the system of internal financial control, in areas where previously there had been challenges connected to the implementation of the People & Money system;
- the committee had received assurances on the University's processes to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its operations, but had expressed concerns in relation to long-term financial sustainability;
- Risk Management Committee had provided assurances to ARC that the University had been satisfactorily managing its key risks during the year ended 31 July 2024, and had noted planned enhancements to risk management processes; and
- ARC had received appropriate assurances regarding compliance with sector corporate governance requirements.

Overall, ARC was content to recommend the relevant statements contained within the University's Annual Report and Accounts, while drawing attention to areas for future improvement.

In discussion, it was noted that ARC members had sought additional clarity on the applicability of the University's risk management framework to its subsidiary companies. There was also discussion of the advantages and risks that were inherent to managing information systems across a highly devolved institution. It was recognised that this required a carefully prioritised and differentiated approach to the different systems involved.

Lee Hamill, Director of Finance, summarised key aspects of the report, which contained both an analytical review of 2023-24 and a forward-looking Q1 2024-25 forecast summary. It was noted that the analytical review contained novel elements in an activity-based approach to costing and that the Q1 forecast incorporated the impacts of the UK government budget announcement.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Opportunities would be welcomed to discuss long-term budgeting and planning holistically at Court level.
- There might be cause to re-examine targeted levels of student recruitment, or processes for conversion of applications, given that growth in fee income had fallen short of targets. It was noted that the conversion process was complex and the University had developed rich datasets to analyse the different stages of the process, taking into account significant variation between groups of applicants. The process was also subject to changing patterns of applicant behaviour, affecting the whole sector, which the University was working to understand in more detail and to account for. There was also a degree of trade-off between the targeted fee income levels and the University's strategic diversification targets.
- Staff had been informed that the University would be implementing a voluntary severance scheme. It was observed that a purely voluntary scheme was unlikely to deliver significant strategic outcomes and noted that the planned scheme would be selective, in order to identify appropriate opportunities to reduce staff costs without endangering the delivery of key activity, including in the priority areas of the staff and student experience.
- It was recognised that wider, cross-institutional changes would also be required and relevant work was on-going. Improved staff data was providing new opportunities to assess staffing levels and trends across the University. More clarity would follow as the next planning round and associated processes progressed.
- There was discussion of the scope of required reforms and approach to planning and budget-setting in the changed context. It was noted that there was a wide range of views both within Court and in the wider University community as to the extent of the financial challenge facing the University and the scale of the response required. The importance of clear communications was emphasised, including explanation of the purpose of EBITDA generation and the rationale for the targeted levels.
- Court was a potential source of relevant skills and knowledge in addressing the financial situation and members would be glad to offer support, as appropriate, if provided with relevant work in progress.

Lee Hamill, Director of Finance, summarised remaining procedural requirements to complete the Annual Report and Accounts, noting that Court had received briefing on the content of the document in a dedicated prior session. While the audit process was largely complete, the external auditor had not yet completed their work or

delivered a final audit opinion. No requirements for material changes were anticipated. In addition, members of Court had requested some clarificatory adjustments to narrative parts of the document.

For these reasons, Court was being asked to grant provisional approval and enable subsequent completion of the process by relevant individuals.

Court provisionally approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24 and delegated authority to the Convener of Audit & Risk Committee (ARC), the Principal and the Senior Lay Member to approve subsequent adjustments to the narrative content of the Annual Report and Accounts and any non-material changes in response to the remaining observations of the external auditor.

Letter of Representation

Paper D3

Court approved the letter of representation and its signing by the Principal and Senior Lay Member, and noted the back-to-back Letter of Representation provided by the Director of Finance to members of University Court.

United States Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP) Paper D4

Court provisionally approved the US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements to 31 July 2024 and delegated authority to the Convener of Audit & Risk Committee (ARC), the Principal and the Senior Lay Member to approve any subsequent changes in response to the remaining observations of the external auditor.

It was noted that narrative elements of this document would be adjusted in line with the Annual Report and Accounts.

6 Student Recruitment and Intakes, 2024/25 Entry

Paper E

Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance and Strategic Planning, outlined key points from the paper, including that:

- Total budgetary tuition fee income targets for this recruitment cycle had not been achieved, although fee income had grown on a year-on-year basis. This outcome would be analysed and would be used to inform forward planning.
- Most numerical recruitment targets had been met and intake numbers had increased year-on-year even in those areas where targets had not been met. However, the overall student population had fallen marginally, as an unusually large cohort of students had graduated in the previous year.
- There had been further progress in diversifying the international student population, in line with strategic aims.
- The next recruitment round was underway, with offer-making to applicants in progress.

In discussion, it was noted that the University's Size & Shape work provided strategic context for recruitment targets and outcomes, being aligned with Strategy 2030 and having been revised in the light of the changing external context. The importance of

connecting recruitment targets to work to enhance the student and staff experience was noted, and that the on-going portfolio review was a key element of doing so.

In discussion on the topic of fee levels, it was noted that fee levels for the coming year had been set.

It was noted that the paper reported a fall in applications from the rest of the UK in the 2024 entry cycle, when compared with the 2023 entry cycle. The reasons for this were not clear, but demand remained strong and early evidence from the new recruitment cycle indicated demand, as measured through number of applications, rising again.

7 Performance Measures to Support Strategy 2030: 2023-24 Year-End Report **Paper F**

Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance and Strategic Planning, introduced the paper, noting that this backward-facing report was one of two reports on the University's performance measures that Court received each year.

In connection with the carbon reduction targets mentioned in the report, it was noted that a successor to the University's Climate Strategy was due to be presented to Court in the current academic year.

Court discussed ways to further develop the performance measurement framework. Recognising that some of the progress reporting in the paper was qualitative and/or merely indicative, it was suggested that more measurable quantitative measures be introduced where possible and it was noted that this reflected suggestions made by members of Policy & Resources Committee.

9 Risk Management Post Year-End Assurance Statement **Paper H**

Court noted the Statement.

10 Responsible Investment Policy: Analysis of Consultation Responses **Paper I**

Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services, summarised key points from the paper. The consultation exercise had been run over three months and had gathered almost 2,000 responses, with a high degree of convergence among them on many points. The policy was to be updated, taking into account the consultation responses, and would be submitted to relevant governance bodies within the academic year. Related work would be pursued to the same timescale, including the creation of the new group whose establishment had been agreed by Court at its October meeting.

The Senior Lay Member recorded thanks on behalf of Court to the researchers who had produced the independent analysis of the consultation responses.

Court discussed the size of the response to the consultation, noting that, while a small proportion of the University community, the number of responses was high in the context of comparable consultation exercises and demonstrated significant

strength of feeling among those who had responded. It was noted that clear communication of the timelines for developing the policy would be important, given this level of interest within the community.

It was observed that clear protocols regarding the maintenance and future amendment of the policy would be important, to ensure its clarity and stability, enabling the policy to remain focused on principles rather than being subject to pressure relating to any particular cause.

11 Student Experience Update

Paper J

Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students, introduced the paper, noting that a new style of presentation had been employed, in order to provide Court with updates on work in key areas while setting these in the context of the breadth of work being undertaken in relation to the student experience.

The new style of presentation was welcomed and the suggestion made that the ultimate aims of relevant work be set out in more detail, in order to contextualise progress.

The role of Senate in overseeing relevant work was discussed. It was observed that the members of Senate and the wider academic community were committed to providing the highest quality learning and teaching and were open to innovation and change to this end. It was noted that the paper included references to a need for a culture shift to raise the importance of teaching and student experience across the University and it was emphasised that this shift was required at the level of the whole organisation and was already in progress. It was noted that embedding accountability for delivery in staff performance expectations need not conflict with the autonomy of academic staff or the recognition of the high levels of intrinsic motivation among the staff.

Commonalities between the presentation in the paper and the Students' Association's student experience framework were noted and this alignment was welcomed.

12 Students' Association and Sports Union Reports Sports Union Report

Paper K2

Dora Herndon, President of the Students' Association, highlighted key points from the paper, in particular the success of livestreaming of sporting events, the recruitment of a new staff member, enabling enhanced support to sports clubs, and the scale and significance of the Sports Union's tender for a kit supplier. Court noted the report.

Students' Association Report

Paper K1

Dora Herndon, President of the Students' Association, introduced the paper, highlighting in particular:

- the information provided on the Students' Association's representative structure;
- work carried out by the Students' Association in relation to student housing, both within and beyond the University;
- significant work, including collaborative work with the University, on the student voice; and
- budgetary matters, including the impact on the Students' Association of changes to employers' National Insurance contributions.

The following points were made in discussion:

- It was noted that completion rates had improved for the Student Life Survey. While timing factors were likely to have contributed to this, there had also been active efforts to achieve this improvement, including more dedicated face-to-face engagement with students.
- It was observed that the Students' Association's representative activity could be perceived by some students to cover a limited range of views. It was noted that a considerable proportion of the representative activity was generally not politicised, being dedicated to representation at class, discipline or School level, for example.
- The paper noted that four of the accountability reports provided by the Students' Association's sabbatical officers had been rejected in votes in a Student Council meeting, for reasons related to campaigning on divestment issues. A verbal update was given to Court, noting that three of these reports had been rejected for a second time at a subsequent Student Council meeting and that this would trigger additional processes. The significant pressures on the sabbatical officers from working in a highly charged political context were noted.

Court noted the report.

13 Annual Court Internal Effectiveness Review

Paper L

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary, gave a brief overview of the paper, noting in particular that the nature of feedback received through internal effectiveness review processes largely reflected points made within the recent external effectiveness review and that, therefore, relevant actions were largely covered under on-going work in response to the external review.

Minor amendments to Court's Statement of Primary Responsibility were approved, such that this referred to the latest edition of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

14 Health and Safety Annual Report

Paper M

Court noted the report and approved the Health and Safety Policy.

15 Development & Alumni: Alumni Relations Activity

Paper N

Court noted the report

16 Resolutions

Paper O

Court approved the following Resolutions:

- No. 99/2024: Foundation of a Personal Chair of AI, Memory and War; and
- No.100/2024: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Educational Change and Diversity.

17 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

18 Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 24 February 2025



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

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.

General Discussion

4. The current financial situation, and our evolving response to it, has been uppermost in the minds and activity of the Senior Leadership Team since I last updated Court. Finalised financial data has enabled us to rework the 5-year plan and agree the significant savings that are required to bring the University back to a solid financially stable position. We have also discussed a framework of the detailed activity we need to undertake to address the key areas where change is required. The seriousness of this situation, and the extent to which change is required, has been at the heart of my recent communication to staff and the decision to extend the current Voluntary Severance Scheme by two weeks until the 28 February. By the time of Court, the University Executive will have had the chance to see and understand the latest financial analysis and to consider our responses. I will give a verbal update on this at the Court meeting.

5. For the current cycle of student recruitment, we are closely monitoring demand, as evidenced through the number of applications we've received, in comparison to the same point in previous cycles. Where we have the data we are also monitoring against our peers. We have significantly enhanced our speed of offer-making. Whilst many metrics are ahead at an aggregate level, there remain a number of risks, noting variability by subject and volatility in recent cycles. We will keep Court updated as the 2025 entry cycle progresses – further detail is provided in paper E.

6. Also, to note that in late January the Scottish Government announced action following the Withers Review of post-school reform of the simplification of the funding landscape. The Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to Parliament on 5th February which proposes amendments and new powers applicable to fundable post-16 education bodies, Scottish Funding Council (SFC), and Scottish Ministers. In general, the Bill aims to increase the role of SFC with one of the key points being to enable SFC to take full responsibility for securing the delivery of National Training Programmes and apprenticeships from Skills Development

Scotland. If passed, under the terms of the Bill, SFC will also have a new duty to secure monitoring of financial sustainability of post-16 bodies, with Ministers able to request information (via SFC only).

7. Related events:

- Spoke to the attendees at the General Council half yearly meeting covering the Annual Report and Accounts for 2023/24 and a summary of the current financial context.
- Addressed guests with a review of the year at the General Council Christmas gathering.
- Participated in the General Council Assessor recruitment process.
- Participated as Board member in several Scottish Funding Council Board meetings, and a Board Effectiveness review.
- Participated in a Russell Group Board meeting and working dinner with Lord Vallance, Science Minister in the Westminster Government.

Strategy 2030 Themes

Our People

8. We are conscious that the current financial situation and our necessary responses are impacting staff across our University. We know that people are looking for certainty about their own situation but we are also clear that that is very difficult to give as we work through the detail, interdependencies and agree actions. We have committed to being honest about the challenges as we seek to reshape and also that we look to bring about the changes as quickly as possible. This latter point is necessary from a financial perspective but should also serve to limit the period of uncertainty for staff as much as we can. We are also clear that our staff are a critical part of a thriving future and we will continue to involve them as we re-shape over the next 18 months or so.

9. Over recent weeks we have hosted a number of sessions with staff, sharing information and seeking feedback, including the following: with the academic leadership discussing the financial challenges and also progress with work to improve the student experience; we have revised our approach to the Leaders' Forum which brings together c.160 of the University's key leaders, the first of three in person gatherings will take place just after Court and will consider the financial challenge and associated actions in more detail; the in-person meetings of the Leaders' Forum are now being augmented with monthly calls to the same group concentrating on other key aspects of activity including existing strategic change projects; a smaller but very insightful meeting with colleagues at all levels from College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences to consider the staff experience. We have also kept our trades union colleagues informed at key decision points over the last few weeks and along with our Interim Director of Finance, Nirmal Borkhataria, I met with the joint unions the week before this meeting of Court.

10. Our latest Staff Survey is also now live, running from 3rd February to 3rd March. The short (15 minute) survey aims to gather the anonymous views and feedback from staff about such things as work environment, development, perceptions of leadership, inclusion and belonging at the University. The survey is being widely promoted to aim to achieve a higher response rate than the last iteration.

11. Changes to the Staff Benefits Scheme (SBS) pension scheme, for staff employed in Grades 1-5, came into effect on 1 January. Agreement with the scheme trustees,

following the latest valuation, means that the contributions for the scheme members and the University have been reduced with no change to the benefits. We hope that this will make the scheme more affordable and attractive to staff, with the rate payable by SBS members falling from 9.1% to 6.1% of pensionable pay.

12. Related events:

- Hosted a rousing reception to congratulate and thank over 300 staff who have reached the milestones of 20, 30, 40 and 50 years of continuous service for our University.
- Chaired the Regius Chair of Medicine appointment panel.
- Addressed colleagues on the current Senior Leader Induction programme.

Learning, Teaching and Students

13. Our work to prioritise improvements for student experience continues at pace with two main updates:

14. Noting our intention to improve our approach to assessment and feedback and particularly feedback times for our students, we have introduced closer monitoring of turnaround times working with Heads of College and key staff in our Schools, supported by Student Experience Services. We are pleased to report that this stronger focus has resulted in a positive change. At our last report to Court, the data from Semester 1 2023/24 showed that only 55% of assessments were returned to students within three weeks. This has now improved substantially to 72% in Semester 1 2024/5. Of 26 Schools/Deaneries, 21 have improved from Semester 2 23/24 to Semester 1 24/25. Those where we have yet to see improvement, or improvement has been minimal, are the focus of further close attention. In addition, interim targets for 2024/25 have been met or exceeded by fourteen Schools including all Schools in the College of Science and Engineering. We have written to all staff involved thanking them and to all students to let them know about our continued commitment to improve, acknowledging this key shift as we continue to build on this position.

15. College-focussed meetings on portfolio review activities, overseen by the Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Oversight Board (SEDaMOB), have been held to assess the viability and coherence of their Postgraduate Taught (PGT) programme portfolio. Consideration of the portfolio of courses within those programmes is at an early stage.

Paragraphs 16-17: closed section

Student voice and communications

18. We regularly inform and share initiatives and events with our students to enhance their sense of belonging and show that we are listening to their feedback to us about how to improve. A full set of our email communications are available at [Latest communications | The University of Edinburgh](#) and we would especially highlight our message about improvements to assessment timeliness, which was especially welcomed by EUSA colleagues. A further note that the National Student Survey launched on 3 February. Staff in Schools will be actively promoting this and have been provided with a toolkit and advice on how to do so.

19. We also hosted another successful round of 'Festive Lunches' over three dates in December 2024 at South Hall. Over 250 students and staff were in attendance to enjoy a traditional festive meal, quiz and chat in an informal setting. The lunches are open to all students, but more heavily promoted to those who were remaining in Edinburgh over the winter break.

20. Related events:

- Regular monthly meetings with our Students' Association Sabbatical Team.
- Monthly, one to one, meetings with the Students' Association President.
- Delivered a lecture on proteinuria as part of the renal module to second year MBChB students.
- Welcomed students to the University at a Visiting Students Welcome Event.

Research and Innovation

21. There were a number of elements to my first visit to India as Principal with a key one being to visit the Gujarat Biotechnology University partnership. The partnership is going very well and the visit raised lots of new possibilities for developing or exploring new opportunities.

22. I also met the leadership team of Ahmedabad University and the GIFT City Company stakeholders including with Deputy High Commissioner to Gujarat and Rajasthan, and industry and government representatives. I also spoke at the QS India 2025 summit on the theme "Creating Equitable Educational Partnerships Amid Global Uncertainties: India's Role in Fostering Innovation and Research" and had several bilateral meetings with current or prospective Indian partner organisations, also with QS and with the British High Commissioner.

23. I have been invited to lead, for Universities Scotland, a series of delegation visits to Brussels. The aim is to ensure that the HE Sector in Scotland has a strong profile and is a full participant and influencer in matters related to the future of EU Framework Programmes. The first delegation visit took place in early February. The full programme of what felt like a very worthwhile visit included discussions with: EU Commission on Research and Innovation; staff of the UK Mission to the EU; an industry and pharmaceutical industry roundtable; a session with the Director General Research on the European Innovation Council; informative discussions with Flemish universities.

24. Closer to home I was pleased to be invited to a reception celebrating the UK's AI ecosystem hosted by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP, at Downing Street. I naturally undertook to speak to as many key people as possible about the benefits of the UK investing in Exascale at Edinburgh.

25. Two recent significant awards that Court may wish to take note of that boost our commitment to our strategic focus on the environment:

- [Engineers awarded £2m to aid offshore renewables research](#) - The £2m award was made by the Wolfson Foundation, an independent charity with a focus on research and education.
- [Partnership set to boost offshore wind tech](#) - £2.5m in funding awarded through the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) Place Based Impact Acceleration Account (PBIAA) scheme. The project is one of seven across the UK.

26. We were also very pleased that two of our academic staff were recognised by HM The King in the New Year Honours: Professor Susan Welburn, Professor of Medical and Veterinary Molecular Epidemiology received an OBE for services to One Health research and to disease elimination. Professor Melissa Terras, Professor of Digital Cultural Heritage received an MBE for services to Digital Humanities.

27. Related events:

- Participated in a DSIT Research Security Independent Advisory Board meeting.
- Chaired the latest meeting of the UUK/Russell Group task force on Security Risks in Higher Education.
- Participated in a League of European Research Universities Board of Directors meeting.

Social and Civic Responsibility

28. The university takes part in a range of activity that supports people living in Edinburgh, the region and beyond.

29. Through our Data Driven Innovation (DDI) initiative we are committed to providing opportunities for people to thrive across the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal area:

- We have supported local businesses working across our six DDI hubs (Edinburgh International Data Facility (EIDF), the Bayes Centre, the Usher Institute, Edinburgh Futures Institute, the National Robotarium, and Easter Bush) to secure more than £200million in investments, four times the initial target and in half the anticipated timeframe, with half of the funding secured by businesses within the city deal area enabling them to grow their activities and stay in the local area.
- As Chair of the Higher Education/Further Education Strategy Group of the Deal, I recently signed the Community Wealth Building Pledge on behalf of all the universities and colleges involved in the Deal. The pledge asks each university and college to support the growth and development of local businesses; support fair employment practises; and engage with community-based organisations and projects to build resilience and long-term security within the region – a commitment we have undertaken to review regularly.

30. *Building a sense of community:*

- We continually monitor the activity we undertake to review our impact, significant highlights are noted in [What we did in year four](#), the recently published annual review of our current Community Plan. We are registering good progress with highlights including growing engagement between local schools and the Edinburgh BioQuarter and the positive impact for local residents of student social enterprises and University social investments. These investments include a further £1million to Social and Sustainable Capital (SASC) from our [£8m Social Investment Fund](#). SASC has already contributed significantly to Simon Community Scotland providing housing for 30 people who have experienced homelessness in Edinburgh.
- Our Forest & Peatlands Programme is progressing with tree planting operations at Rullion Green and Drumbrae, with planting due to be completed in Spring 2025. This programme enables us to link our research with our efforts toward our climate targets in a way that supports communities to enjoy nature in the three sites.

Three PhD posts, fully funded by the Programme, have been awarded and will commence in May. The PhDs will be investigating the impacts of woodland creation and peatland restoration on carbon, biodiversity and community.

- A new exhibition in the Main Library is now open which features historic and contemporary artworks that consider environment, ecology, as well as the entangled relationship between economic and colonial legacies and the climate crisis. "[Rooting: Ecology, Extraction & Environmental Emergency in the University's Art Collection](#)" showcases a range of artforms by 30 different artists acquired by the University and which, like the wider collections, are currently used to support and enhance research and learning.

31. Related events local:

- Participated in meetings of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Annual Conversation with UK and Scottish Governments, and chaired the Higher Education and Further Education Strategy Group.
- Participated in a roundtable dinner on 'The role of the Public Sector in enabling Scotland's economic growth' hosted by FWB and EY.
- Spoke at the Kortext LIVE conference on topic of "The digital university: a vision for the future of higher education".
- Attended the funeral of Sir Fraser Stoddart, a Nobel Prize-winning distinguished alumnus of the School of Chemistry and supporter of the University.
- Participated in a Scottish Financial Enterprise Sector Growth Strategy Advisory Board meeting.

32. Related events global

- Participated in an introductory meeting with Consul General of Japan in Edinburgh, Mr Tadashi Fujiwara & Deputy Consul General, Ms Minoru Ishii.
- Welcome to the University a delegation from the Ministry of Education, The People's Republic of China, and from the Embassy of The People's Republic of China in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland led by Mr Wu Yan, Vice Minister of Education and Mrs Zhang Jin, Minister Counsellor (Education).
- Met with Dr. Mohammed Al Saggaf, President of the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, and his delegation who were visiting the UK.
- Participated in a joint Association of University Presidents of China-League of European Research Universities Presidents' Dialogue meeting hosted by UCL.
- Welcomed Professor Xiang Zhang, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Hong Kong and his colleagues whilst they were visiting Edinburgh for Fraser Stoddart's funeral.
- Participated in a two-day workshop on the theme of "Making China-Collaboration Sustainable", organized by the Awareness, Security and Knowledge in International Collaboration Project, GFZ Helmholtz Centre for Geosciences, Potsdam.

33. Related events Public Affairs

- Participated as an invited guest in the Scottish Financial Enterprise - Scottish Parliamentary Reception hosted by Liz Smith MSP.
- Met Ash Regan MSP and her team to discuss allegations of xenophobia and also widening participation.

- SLT colleagues and I hosted a festive reception for politicians at the Edinburgh Futures Institute.
- Welcomed the First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney MSP, and attended his event in the Playfair Library at which he set out why it was important that the Scottish Budget passes.
- Welcomed the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Neil Gray MSP, on a visit to the Edinburgh Centre for Multiple Sclerosis Research.
- Alongside other Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Leaders, participated in a meeting with the Deputy First Minister, Kate Forbes MSP and the Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon Ian Murray MP.
- Welcomed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, Kirsty McNeill MP, on her visit to the Supercomputer at Easter Bush.

Resource implications

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

Risk Management

35. 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

36. 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

37. No specific Equality and Diversity issues are identified.

Next steps/implications

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

Consultation

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

Further information

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

41. Author & Presenter

Professor Sir Peter Mathieson
Principal and Vice-Chancellor
February 2025

Freedom of Information

42. Open version.



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

Exception Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Exception Committee

Date of Meetings

2. The Committee considered business by correspondence over 17-24 January 2025 and 30 January – 3 February 2025.

Action Required

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

Key points

Paragraphs 4-7: closed section

General Council Assessor Appointment

The full current membership of Court can be seen at:

<https://governance-strategic-planning.ed.ac.uk/governance/university-court/membership-of-court>

Further information

8. Author

Daniel Wedgwood
Head of Court Services

Presenter

Janet Legrand
Convener, Exception Committee

Freedom of Information

9. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

Policy & Resources Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Policy & Resources Committee (PRC)

Date of Meeting

2. 3 February 2025

Action Required

3. To note the key points from the meeting.

The minutes of the PRC meeting on 3 February 2025 can be accessed at:

<https://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Governance/PolicyandResources/2024-2025/20250203-PRC-Minute-Web.pdf>

Further information

22. Author

Daniel Wedgwood
Head of Court Services

Presenter

Janet Legrand
Convener, Policy & Resources Committee

Freedom of Information

23. Closed paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2024

Governance & Nominations Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Governance & Nominations Committee

Date of Meeting

2. 27 January 2025

Action Required

3. To note the key points from the meeting.

Paragraphs 4-11: closed section

The membership of Court and its committees can be found on the University website:

<https://governance-strategic-planning.ed.ac.uk/governance/university-committees>

Equality & Diversity

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

Further information

13. Author

Daniel Wedgwood
Head of Court Services

Presenter

Janet Legrand
Convener, Nominations Committee

Freedom of Information

14. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

Knowledge Strategy Committee Report

Committee Name

1. Knowledge Strategy Committee

Date of Meeting

2. 30 January 2025

Action Required

3. To note the key points from the meeting.

Paragraphs 4-23: closed section

Key points

Further information

24. Author

Jamie Tait

Governance Manager & Clerk to KSC

Presenter

Colm Harmon

Vice-Principal Students & Interim

Convener to KSC

Freedom of Information

25. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

Senatus Academicus Report

Committee Name

1. Senatus Academicus ('Senate').

Dates of Meeting

2. This report relates to the following meetings of Senate:

- 22 May 2024;
- 18 June 2024;
- 9 October 2024;
- 11 December 2024 and e-Senate in November 2024; and
- 5 February 2025 and e-Senate in January 2025.

Action requested

3. Court is invited to:

- note the confirmed minutes of the Senate meetings held on 22 May, 18 June, 9 October, and 11 December 2024;
- note the report of business considered by Senate at the meeting held on 5 February 2025;
- note the report of e-Senate business conducted between 13 and 27 November 2024, and between 8 and 22 January 2025; and
- note that the full agenda, papers and minutes of Senate meetings are published on the [Senate website](#).

Key points – meeting of 5 February 2025

Minutes and e-Senate Reports

4. Senate approved the minutes of the meetings held on 22 May 2024, 18 June 2024, 9 October 2024, and 11 December 2024. Senate approved the e-Senate report of 8-22 January 2025.

Senate & Senate Standing Committee Elections 2025/26

5. By a majority vote, Senate approved arrangements for the 2025/26 Senate and Senate Standing Committee Elections.

Conferral of Awards

6. Senate approved the conferral of awards for the students detailed within the appendix of the closed paper. The paper ensured students weren't disadvantaged by the commencement of the trial period whereby Boards of Examiners have deleted authority to award or confer degrees from 1 January 2025. Students presented within this paper required conferral of award arising between the 2024 Winter Graduation ceremonies and the commencement of the trial period.

Report from the AI Adoption Task Force

7. Senate discussed a report from the AI Adoption Task Force, which provided information in response to Senate's consideration of a previous paper at its meeting of 11 December 2024.

Senate External Review Recommendation: Standing Committee Remits Update and Options

8. Senate noted an update on progress made against recommendation 17 of the Advance HE External Review of Senate Effectiveness; and discussed the consideration of the student experience across Senate and its committees.

Senate Standing Committees: Mid-Year Reflection on 2024-25 Priorities and Contribution to 2025-26 Priorities

9. Senate considered a paper which provided a mid-year reflection on progress made against the 2024-25 standing committee priorities; and which invited Senate consideration of potential priorities for 2025-26.

Budget Working Group

10. Senate received a verbal update on behalf of the Budget Working Group, which had been formed following Senate's meeting of 11 December 2024. This is a Group drawn from the elected membership of Senate. Professor Colm Harmon will act on behalf of the Senior Leadership Team as the key liaison point to help inform this Group on pertinent matters. He will provide background and context to inform the discussions of the Group but is not a member.

Key points – e-Senate, 13-27 November 2024

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

Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita

12. Senate approved the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita on four professors.

Senate Election Dates 2025-26

13. Senate noted information on the proposed dates in 2025 for the nomination and election of Staff seeking election to Senate, and election of elected Senate members to Senate standing committees. Three members commented on this item.

Communications from the University Court

14. Senate noted the communications from the University Court, which related to Court's special meeting of 3 October 2024, and to the ordinary meeting of 7 October 2024. Four members commented on this item

Current Progress within the Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Working Group

15. Senate noted an update on progress made by the University Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Working Group; and noted dates for consultation workshops to be held with Senate members in January 2025.

Key points – e-Senate, 8-22 January 2025

16. Senate members were invited to comment on the following items via an e-Senate meeting which took place in January 2025. Seven members provided comments, which have been passed to relevant colleagues for consideration.

Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita

17. Senate approved the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita on two professors.

Court Resolutions – Personal Chairs

18. Senate was invited to comment on two draft resolutions of the University Court; resolutions 1/2025 and 2/2025. Six members commented on this item.

Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee

19. Senate noted the report from the Knowledge Strategy Committee, which related to the Committee's meeting of 29 October 2024. Six members of Senate commented on this item.

Report from the Central Academic Promotions Committee

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

Full Agenda and Papers

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

Further information

22. Author

Fraser Rudge
Committees and Governance
Manager

Presenter

Peter Mathieson
Principal & Vice-Chancellor

Academic Quality and Standards
February 2025

Freedom of Information

23. Open paper.



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

Finance and Planning: Update Report

Description of paper

1. This paper presents an update to University Court in relation to the:
 - approval and signing of the 2023-24 Annual Report and Accounts;
 - 2025-2030 Planning Round including University Executive agreed actions being taken to deliver a framework to return the University to a sustainable financial position;
 - finalised Quarter One forecast position for financial year 2024-25; and
 - University's management accounts for the five months to December 2024.
2. This paper is aligned with the outcomes set out in Strategy 2030 by supporting the University's continued drive towards financial sustainability, which underpins all of our aspirations.

Action requested/Recommendation

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

Paragraphs 4-26: closed section

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

27. In order to support the outcomes of Strategy 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals it is essential that we work to secure the ongoing financial sustainability of the University.

Equality & Diversity

28. Where required, the various initiatives proposed to address financial sustainability will be informed by Equality Impact Assessments.

Next steps/implications

29. Senior Leadership Team and University Executive have continued extensive discussions to inform this paper, plans are being implemented aligned to our articulated commitment to address the University's long-term financial sustainability, and return to a position of more flexible strategic investment and ambition. We welcome feedback in relation to this report and next steps.

Consultation

30. This paper builds on papers and reports to Senior Leadership Team and University Executive.

Further information31. Author

Ricky O'Kane
Head of Group Finance
Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary,
Governance and Strategic Planning
17 February 2024

Presenter

Nirmal Borkhataria
Interim Director of Finance
Kim Graham
Provost

Freedom of Information

32. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

Student intakes 2025-26 – Early application insight

Description of paper

1. This paper gives an overview of the in-cycle picture on student recruitment for 2025-26, based on data from 3 February 2025.

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 objectives. 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 3-37: closed section

Consultation

38. Student Recruitment Management Group have regularly discussed the matters covered in this paper relating to the 2025-26 student recruitment cycle, most recently in January 2025. University Executive are also receiving regular updates, including an earlier version of this update at its February meeting.

Further information

39. Author

Clare MacKay, SRA
Robbie Willis, SRA
Shane Collins, SRA
Laura Cattell, SRA
Pauline Manchester, GaSP
Jim Galbraith, GaSP

Presenter

Rona Smith, Governance and Strategic Planning

Freedom of Information

40. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

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. I hope everyone had a lovely holiday break! I know we certainly came back refreshed and ready to make an impact in our final semester.

6. Some quick updates: Court members will be happy to hear that while three motions of censure against sabbatical officers were brought to the January Student Council meeting, none of them passed. Additionally, we recently completed our Annual Members' Survey. While results are still being analyzed, we successfully almost doubled our response rate compared to last year, and it is exciting that recent efforts to revamp email communications and the introduction of our mascot Dusty do seem to be reaching more students.

7. I figured rather than more in-depth updates on our past work, a look ahead at the rest of the semester would be more helpful at this time.

Strategic Change

8. Our Students' Association Strategic Plan from 2019 was originally written to 2025 and then extended to 2026 partly in response to Covid-19, and partly to cover the Teviot closure since certain aspects focused on Teviot. It is now time to review and develop our next strategic plan that will start April 2026. I'm particularly passionate about taking a moment to re-orient and ensure we remain relevant to our

members. Our recent Annual Members' Survey included questions on what students view as the purpose, successes, and failures of the Students' Association, and that feedback will help inform the earlier stages of planning.

9. Something that will be key to this is undertaking a democracy review. It has been ten years since we last did a full review of our democratic systems. Since then, the University of Edinburgh and the Higher Education landscape have changed significantly. Our representative structure doesn't quite match the student body. For example, we have no formal representation for online students, because this was an emerging development ten years ago. Certain other aspects, such as Student Council, feel as though they have lost their purpose. It is clearly time to take a step back and rethink our entire democratic structure to ensure that it remains functioning and valuable to students for another decade. We are intending to start this process while the current officers are still in office to get our feedback and then continue work with the next team. We're particularly excited to join this with our other Student Voice work we have partnered with the University on.

Housing

10. It is going to be a very eventful semester for housing work at the Students' Association! First, Ruth has worked to organize Sabbatical Officers across Scotland to work together on getting amendments into the new Housing Bill to better protect students. Since coming back from winter break, Ruth has been meeting with relevant MSPs to lobby them, as are other sabbatical officers across Scotland. There was also an open letter sent to the housing minister that we signed. Second, every February we host a housing week to help students prepare for flat hunting at the end of the semester and ensure they're aware of their rights. Events include a housing fair, a session on housing rights in Scotland, a renter-friendly craft session, and a panel on ending student homelessness. Housing Week is after the submission of this paper, but I can update on how it went in the meeting if desired. Finally, I am continuing to work on improving the Guarantor Scheme with Sarah McAllister. We have been going over a wealth of data on the scheme her team has collected and identifying areas for improvement, and I have been collecting examples of how other Universities run their schemes. I have high hopes this will be in a better place by the end of the semester.

Students' Association March Elections

11. By the time of the Court meeting, we will almost be at the start of the campaigning period for our March elections, for around 40 representative positions, including the 5 Sabbatical Officers. Court will want to note that Ruth and I are not considering re-running. We launched our March Elections promotional activity just before the winter break, starting with an encouragement to all students to consider running and the launch of our 'They should stand' scheme to enable students and staff to recommend students who might be good candidates — we then reach out to students to offer information and encouragement to consider the roles. Potential candidates have access to 1-2-1 sessions with current sabbatical officers and a range of support staff to find out more, and there is a range of guidance and support for candidates during the elections period.

12. We have updated role descriptions in light of feedback to ensure they capture all practical aspects of roles, and in particular to ensure sabbatical candidates can have an understanding of day-to-day role requirements, including Trustee responsibilities.

13. We are aiming to increase voter turnout by 5% on last year's total, in line with our Strategic Plan target, and are once again using member incentives to drive engagement. The University is also working to improve Student Voice, and recognizes the importance of student representatives in this work. We were pleased to secure inclusion of elections information in student communications. The Principal has also sent an all-student email to encourage students to consider running for a position and will also follow up in March with a specific communication to students about voting.

14. From a governance perspective, ensuring the conducting of fair elections is a legal requirement set out in the Education Act, and we provide a report on our elections to the University Secretary in line with the Code of Practice agreed with the University on Education Act compliance. We conduct our elections in line with our Election Regulations which all candidates must follow, with our Student Voice Manager acting as Deputy Returning Officer and the National Union of Students supplying an independent member of staff to serve as Returning Officer each year (approved by our Governance Subcommittee).

Key dates

- 26 February (noon) Campaigning period begins (candidates may not promote themselves until then)
- 3 March (10am) to 6 March (5pm) Voting is open for all students
- 7 March – Results announced at our Results Event and published online later that evening
- 26 May – Sabbatical Officers-elect begin a 2-week handover and initial induction period.
- 6 June – current team leave office, new team officially take over roles

Give it a Go

15. Our GIAG week at the start of semester was a great success, with 3 Fairs in Potterrow during the week attracting students, a programme of See the City tours and activities, and a programme of evening activities, socials, and over 100 society or Sports-led taster/welcome events. The week aims to provide all students with a chance to re-engage easily with their student community, including the appx. 1000 newly arrived semester 2 'visiting students' who have chosen Edinburgh for a short period studying abroad.

16. Attendance at our Activities Fair was up 18% on last year, with 1700 students attending. Our Cultural Fair hosted 35 student groups representing a wide array of nationalities, cultures, and faiths and 480 students visited. Our volunteering fair had 42 student groups and local charities promoting opportunities to get involved in volunteering, and attendance increased from 100 last year to 400 this year. 103 students attended our Language Exchange social, swapping skills in 13 languages. Over 120 students took the opportunity to join one of our See the City tours with all tours filled. We supported a number of student groups to put on events as part of the

program: 54 Society led events were helped and Sports Clubs hosted 52 with over 700 tickets issued to our student-led events. In addition, we directly programmed 14 activities and events which saw over 2300 student attend including quiz nights, Taste of Scotland Events, Drink Drag and Mini Draw, Yoga sessions, Jazz nights, and Vintage Fairs.

Sabbatical support and development

17. The sabbaticals have all taken the opportunity to participate in 360 degree personal development reviews, including a self-reflection element, and individual externally facilitated coaching and development conversations in order to make the most of the feedback provided by peers, as well as Association and University staff colleagues. A further team development session will take place later in February. In addition, we held a mid-year review and planning day with the Senior Management Team in January, providing a chance to reflect on achievements and the year to date, as well as planning to make the most of the remainder of the year.

Teviot focus – funding and planning

18. With just 10 months to go before Teviot returns to Students' Association operational management, scoping and planning for service delivery of the revitalised spaces are underway. You can watch a joint update from Lucy Evans and I on the project [here](#).

19. With many of our current students having no previous experience of the spaces, we're working to ensure students will be aware of and welcomed into a vibrant space that meets their needs and expectations. The brand-new and newly refurbished spaces provide opportunity to ensure we deliver programmes and services that attract more students, including our Community Lounge and Wellbeing Studio creating opportunities for students to meet and enjoy activities that bring them together.

20. We held workshops in January for Association staff and students, to gather feedback and inform our detailed operational plans for re-opening. The space will open within our financial year starting on 1 April so we're currently ensuring our own investment is such that we can deliver spaces, services, and experiences to meet students' expectations following a lengthy closure and significant behind the scenes investment. At the same time, we are also considering how best to manage the transition of the additional provision for students in Potterrow and relocation of our staff from the temporary office space on Roxburgh Street during second semester next year.

Paragraphs 21-23: closed section

Resource implications

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

Risk Management

25. Financial risks are highlighted in the report.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & Diversity

27. 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

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

Consultation

29. Consultation on this paper was not required.

Further information

30. Author

Dora Herndon

EUSA President 2024-25

Presenter

Dora Herndon

EUSA President 2024-25

Freedom of Information

31. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

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 (SU) continues to thrive well into Semester 2, with a packed calendar of events, competitions, and governance developments. As we approach the final stages of the BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport) season, teams are gearing up for crucial fixtures, while many now shift focus towards the cup competitions. Engagement remains strong, with events like the Sports Ball bringing the community together to celebrate achievements. Alongside this, we have made progress in key areas, including a Code of Conduct review, the Value of Sport report, and preparations for the upcoming SU elections. Our commitment to volunteer development remains a priority, with ongoing training opportunities to support club leaders. Additionally, our livestreaming platform, UoESport.tv, continues to grow, reaching international audiences and showcasing the best of university sport. This paper outlines our ongoing initiatives, key priorities, and strategic direction moving forward.

Discussion

Student Engagement

5. The Sports Union continues to see strong student engagement across all areas, with membership numbers reflecting this success. We are proud to report a record number of Intramural participants with 1,906 members, alongside a thriving club

membership of 8,157, demonstrating the continued demand for accessible and inclusive sporting opportunities at UoE.

6. At the time of writing this report, the third week of competition this semester has concluded, and we have completed 205 BUCS fixtures and 245 Intramural fixtures, highlighting the continued engagement and competitive spirit across our teams. Looking ahead, BUCS Nationals will take place during the week commencing February 10th, with 117 athletes set to represent the University across six sports. This marks a significant milestone in our sporting calendar, providing a platform for our students to compete at a high level.

7. As we look to the future, the SU elections are fast approaching, with the EUSU AGM taking place on 6 March. This is an important opportunity for students to take on leadership roles, contribute to the development of EUSU, and help shape the future of student sport at the University.

8. A heavy focus has been placed on EUSU governance since our last Court report, with a comprehensive review of our policies and supporting documentation. Notably, we have reviewed the SU Code of Conduct, working to align it more closely with the University's Code of Student Conduct and Appeals Procedure, ensuring greater clarity and consistency. Importantly, this process has been highly student-driven, with numerous club committees actively contributing feedback to ensure the new Code is well understood and embedded within clubs. We extend our thanks to the University's Student Conduct team for their invaluable support and expertise throughout the process. The final draft will be presented for approval at the EUSU AGM.

Direction of Sport at Edinburgh

9. The independent Sport and Active Wellbeing Report (published 13 Jan 2025) highlights the significant impact of sport at Edinburgh, reporting a net benefit of £22.62 million for the 2023/24 academic year. This includes £12.2 million in economic benefits and £10.42 million in social benefits, with a benefit-cost ratio of 5.69 – demonstrating that for every £1 invested, the University generates £5.69 in value.

10. In collaboration with the Student Recruitment Office, UoE Sport has developed an Athlete Recruitment & Scholarships paper, currently under review by the appropriate committees. This paper highlights the academic and professional success of elite-level athletes at Edinburgh and seeks further support to enhance recruitment efforts. Strengthening our ability to attract and support talented athletes will further elevate the University's sporting profile and competitive success.

11. Several major facility projects are progressing well. Construction of the new Rowing Boat Store at Strathclyde Park is underway, with completion expected in May 2025. The redevelopment of Cameron Bank at Peffermill is now at the planning stage, with work set to begin in April 2025 – this will introduce two multisport synthetic playing surfaces, supporting both student sport and the Edinburgh Rugby partnership. Following this, the redevelopment of the South fields will add a 700m trim trail and a 400m hybrid track, further enhancing training and recreational opportunities.

UoE Sport Partnerships

12. We are also going through a tender for our next sports kit provider, as our current partnership expires this summer. This rigorous tender process has been shaped by student and staff input to ensure that key priorities – such as sustainability, student opportunities, and sense of belonging – are met. The importance of this partnership extends far beyond kit supply, as our sportswear is a core part of the University's identity, worn by students across Edinburgh, the UK, and internationally. The successful bidder will be announced in the coming weeks, potentially ahead of this court meeting.

13. UoE Sport is working with external agency Tayburn to enhance and unify the 'Sport at Edinburgh' brand. Our aim is to elevate the profile of sport at the University, ensuring a strong and cohesive identity that resonates with students. As with all key projects, student input will be central throughout the process to create a brand that truly reflects their experiences and aspirations.

14. Key partnerships continue to strengthen, with Scottish Athletics relocating their headquarters to Peffermill and both the Scottish Football Association and Scottish Hockey East Office now based within University facilities. The Edinburgh Rugby partnership is now in its second year, and remains highly valuable, with ongoing discussions around further investment into University infrastructure.

Events and Good News!

15. The annual Sports Ball once again brought together 2,000 students in the biggest celebration of sporting achievement at UoE. The event recognised the incredible contributions of our volunteers, top athletes, and clubs/teams, highlighting the strength of our sporting community. This year's award winners showcased excellence across all levels of sport, from grassroots participation to international competition. The Sports Ball continues to be a highlight of the year, reinforcing the importance of sport in creating a strong, inclusive, and high-achieving student community.

16. Since the October launch of our livestreaming platform, UoESport.tv, it has transformed how we showcase sport at Edinburgh. With support from a Student Experience Grant, we've expanded our livestreaming capabilities, purchasing new equipment and providing training for students to enhance coverage. This has allowed us to stream over 60 fixtures across 12 weeks, reaching a wider audience and strengthening the sense of belonging within the University community. Engagement has been strong, with 2,928 active users – demonstrating the demand for high-quality coverage. In total, over 1,308 hours of sport have been watched, with streams accessed in 52 countries, showcasing our teams on an international level. Collaborating with EUSA and University departments, we've also ensured that fixtures are displayed across campus, making it even easier for students to stay engaged. As we continue to develop UoESport.tv, this platform is set to play a key role in raising the profile of our athletes and clubs, connecting our community, and celebrating sporting success at all levels.

Planning Submission

17. We are currently focussed on our planning submission, with the final presentation scheduled for 11 March. We recognise the challenging financial climate within the sector and are approaching this year's submission with a balanced and strategic mindset. Our request will reflect a careful consideration of priorities, ensuring that we continue to support the student experience while aligning with the University's broader financial position. While our ask of the University will be measured, we are focussing on low-cost, high-impact options that directly benefit the student population. Key priorities include; reducing club membership costs to make sport more accessible, increasing free one-off events to encourage wider participation, providing additional financial support for students travelling to competitions, and supporting student groups looking to engage in sport and active health initiatives.

Resource implications

18. N/A

Risk Management

19. No major risks.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

20. 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

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

Next steps/implications

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

Consultation

23. Consultation for this paper was sought from Millie Doherty (Head of Sports Development Programmes) and Cameron Ritchie (Depute Director and Head of Operations).

Further information

24. Author & Presenter

Philine Rouwers
Sports Union President

7 February 2025

Freedom of Information

25. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

BioQuarter – Scottish Power Energy Network Upgrade

Paragraphs 1-25: closed section

Further information

26. Author

Anna Stamp

Head of Strategic Planning, Estates

Presenter

Damien Toner

Director of Estates

Freedom of Information

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



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

Edinburgh Innovations strategy update and Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund Strategy

Description of paper

1. This paper provides Court with an update on our Edinburgh Innovations Strategy and provides our Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund Strategy for the Scottish Funding Council.

2. Knowledge Exchange activities are framed by Strategy 2030 and our Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 through the sections on “Commercialisation and Industry Engagement” and on “Public and Policy Engagement” respectively. Our knowledge exchange ambitions and our contribution to SFC’s Outcome Framework and Assurances Model (which the Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund Strategy is part of) are therefore aligned with the aspirations articulated in both Strategy 2030 and the Research and Innovation Strategy 2030.

Action requested/Recommendation

3. Court is asked to approve the University’s Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund strategy document, the forecast metrics document and the Equality Impact and Assessment.

[The strategy document, as submitted to the Scottish Funding Council, can be accessed at:

https://www.sfc.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/KEIF-Strategy_UniversityOfEdinburgh.pdf

Background and context

4. The template SFC provided for the KEIF strategy takes a broad approach to knowledge exchange and innovation, including non-commercial activities such as public and policy engagement. However, the main focus is on commercialisation and innovation to contribute to the Scottish economy, which for the University of Edinburgh is delivered through Edinburgh Innovations (EI).

5. EI has refreshed its strategy to align with and support the University of Edinburgh R&I Strategy 2030. The EI strategy has recently been agreed at EI Board and is focused on five objectives aligned to the R&I Strategy – People; Partnerships; Growth; Ventures; Business. EI’s strategy aims to increase numbers of academics taking the journey from concept through creation and commercialisation. It focuses on the quality of those concepts being developed and the regional, societal and economic impact. The strategy will support academics to innovate and industry to engage.

SFC Outcome Framework and Assurances Model

6. SFC’s approach to the new Outcomes Framework and Assurances Model replaces the annual Outcome Agreement process.

In summary:

- SFC will continue to communicate its expectation about outcomes through funding allocations, guidance, financial memoranda and letters of grant with attached funding conditions.
- SFC's approach to governance sign off for the Outcome Framework and Assurances Model (OF&AM) varies by thematic area. Some parts of the OF&AM require sign-off by Court, others don't.
- SFC has asked for KEIF Strategies to be approved by Court
- The OF&AM has been developed working with universities and colleges to develop the scope and parameters of the new approach to assurance and accountability
- The Outcomes Framework sets out SFC's expectations of colleges and universities in return for the funding they receive
- The Assurance Model comprises the mechanisms by which SFC will engage with colleges and universities and monitor their delivery of outcomes.

7. For some elements of the OF&AM (Research Excellence, High-quality Learning and Teaching and the Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund) there has been engagement with the sector to co-develop the approach to assurance and accountability and this is integrated within the OF&AM.

8. KEIF funding for 2024-25 for the sector is £23m, an increase of £2.15m from 2023-24 UIF allocations. Our 2024-25 KEIF funding, allocated via the platform and outcome grant is £3.19m, compared to £2.58m in University Innovation Funding in 2023-24. This represents a 23.5% increase on AY 2023-24. In terms of our sector share, our uplifted KEIF allocation represents 13.9%, compared to 12.4% UIF funding in 2023-24. Our KEIF allocation for 2024-25 is the highest institutional allocation across the sector.

Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund

9. The Knowledge Exchange and innovation Fund (KEIF) replaced the University Innovation Fund and is a new model beginning in the current academic year. The UIF was outdated because it was driven by historic data. There have been recent new policy drivers (National Innovation Strategy and the Entrepreneurial Campus Blueprint) which supported the need to change the UIF model.

10. The KEIF focuses on University strategies to articulate the broader value of Knowledge Exchange and Innovation activities to Scotland, and how national metrics can be developed to further recognise these and improve the KEIF allocation model.

11. 2024-25 saw the first iteration of the KEIF model, and it sets a direction of travel for Scottish institutions. SFC acknowledges that further development work and long-term changes will be required which can only be delivered over several years. SFC have made the commitment to work in partnership with the sector to develop the model beyond AY 2024-25.

Discussion

12. Court approval of the KEIF five-year strategy is a condition of submission to SFC. The proposed strategy follows on from and aligns to the already Court approved R&I Strategy.

13. The Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund provides a relatively small proportion of the overall investment UoE makes into its KE&I activities. The document sets out our overall strategy for this activity, which is anchored in the R&I Strategy 2030 and EIs strategy which aligns to this. The KEIF strategy highlights specific planned new initiatives to 2030 for which KEIF funding may contribute to capacity building. It is noted that SFC have placed strategic emphasis on how shared services may be developed that benefit HEIs across Scotland.

14. Specific new initiatives for which KEIF is cited to contribute include:

- Sector specialist expertise to support acceleration in high value venture creation.
- Shared service function allowing Scotland's university ecosystem to benefit from infrastructure and skills.
- Sector engagement in priority clusters to drive industrial partnership
- Public engagement, to inform and inspire and engage communities and members of the public based on our research and innovation.

Resource implications

15. To effectively deliver our innovation strategy and ultimately the Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund strategy, there are resource implications across the whole University. Developmental work is led principally by Edinburgh Innovations and the Edinburgh Research Office, but support is also required from Governance & Strategic Planning. Information from across the University is required to allow us to deliver against our strategy and our KEIF and therefore there is a wider contribution resource implication. A key purpose of SFC's Outcome Framework and Assurance Model process is to demonstrate accountability for University funding from the SFC.

Risk Management

16. Our Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund strategy is a public statement and thus failure to provide SFC with an acceptable document could potentially impact on our reputation with the Scottish Government, stakeholders and staff and potentially undermine funding arrangements.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

17. The production of our Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund strategy fulfils an external regulatory requirement, and all of our innovation activities contribute to the SDGs. Whilst we do not articulate these goals in our KEIF, the narrative of how we aim to fulfil the requirements of SFC's Outcome Framework and Assurances Model touches upon all aspects of the SDGs. Our Outcome Framework and Assurances Model is aligned to Strategy 2030, and the SDGs are an integral part of this.

Equality & Diversity

18. Equality and diversity objectives are positively targeted in the Outcome Framework and Assurances Framework. SFC has a strategic partnership with the

Equality and Human Rights Commission, and SFC and EHRC have published their action plan which asks institutions, where appropriate, to contribute to a set of National Equality Outcomes. This work is embedded into institutions' current Public Sector Equality Duty reporting. We are required to produce an Equalities Impact Assessment of KEIF.

Next steps/implications

19. On approval from Court, we will formally submit our Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund strategy to the Scottish Funding Council.

Consultation

20. This paper and associated KEIF documentation have been drafted by Edinburgh Innovations, Edinburgh Research Office and Governance & Strategic Planning, seeking input from colleagues from the wider University community, including the Vice-Principal Research. The document has also been reviewed by University Executive and Policy & Resources Committee, and comments received have been incorporated into this final version.

Further information

21. Author

Jennifer McGregor
Strategic Planning

Andrea Taylor
Edinburgh Innovations

Anne-Sofie Laegran
Edinburgh Research Office

February 2025

Presenters

Catherine Martin, Director of Corporate
Services Group

Freedom of Information

22. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP)

Description of paper

1. This paper presents the University's annual report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on activities to effectively manage quality assurance and deliver on enhancement.

The Self-Evaluation Action Plan is available at

<https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/academic-quality-and-standards/self-evaluation-action-plan-seap>

Action requested/Recommendation

2. For noting. In line with regulatory requirements, the SEAP is presented to University Court for information and to support oversight of quality assurance and enhancement.

Background and context

3. A new institutional annual quality reporting process to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has been implemented from 2024/25, the Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP). The SEAP replaces both the previous annual quality reporting process and the learning and quality aspects of the Outcome Agreement process.

4. The SEAP has been produced in accordance with the SFC [Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities 2024-25 to 2030-31](#) which outlines the key elements of Scotland's new [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#). It will be used as part of the evidence base for the new institutional quality review process, the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review \(TQER\)](#), and to monitor institutional progress with the outcomes of the TQER and support the annual institutional liaison meetings with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

5. The report is divided into two sections: Self-Evaluation 2023-24 (reflecting on annual institutional quality assurance and enhancement activities and outcomes, including progress made since the last external review) and Action Plan 2024-2025 (a consolidation of the planned institution level enhancement activities arising from the self-evaluation). It is a concise, high-level summary of themes discussed and associated actions taken by various groups and committees across the institution, and as such is drawn from existing reports and papers and updates from relevant stakeholders.

6. The SEAP is intended to be a live document that can be revisited and updated throughout the academic year. A key aim of the process is to demonstrate to staff and students how their contribution to the activities that impact the quality assurance and enhancement of learning, teaching and the student experience are collated and used to document and drive strategic enhancement within the institution.

7. Student partnership is a key aspect of the TQEF, and therefore we have included a Statement of Partnership (not a SFC requirement) which the Principal and Vice President Education co-signed in order to demonstrate that the SEAP has been produced in partnership with the Students' Association and reflects the interests and priorities of students. We will continue to work together with the Students' Association to engage students as partners on an ongoing basis in the preparation of the annual SEAP and in the monitoring of the implementation of the actions.

Discussion

8. The SFC has stipulated that a new approval and sign-off process must be implemented for the SEAP to ensure that the Accountable Officer is sighted on, and has ownership of, the quality of the student experience, academic standards and academic integrity. Only once the Accountable Officer is satisfied with the thoroughness and effectiveness of the evaluation and action-plan should it be submitted to SFC. It is not a requirement that the SEAP be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body prior to submission, however the SEAP should be shared with the Governing Body to support their oversight of quality assurance and enhancement. It is for the institution to determine when to do so based on their own governance schedules.

9. The SEAP was co-signed by the Principal and the Students' Association's Vice President Education before it was submitted to the SFC on 2 December 2024. The SEAP is now presented to University Court for information and to support oversight of quality assurance and enhancement.

Resource implications

10. There are no specific resource implications associated with the report.

Risk Management

11. The provision of a high-quality student experience is a high level risk on the University's Strategic Risk Register, and is overseen by the Risk Management Committee reporting to Audit & Risk Committee and Court. Additionally, failure in effectiveness of the quality assurance framework, including aligning review activity with external expectations and taking action on findings, constitutes an institutional risk.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & Diversity

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

Next steps/implications

14. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) will work together with the Students' Association to engage students as partners on an ongoing basis in the preparation of the annual SEAP and in the monitoring of the implementation of the actions.

Further information

15. Authors

Professor Tina Harrison
Deputy Vice-Principal Students
(Enhancement)

Brian Connolly
Academic Policy Manager,
Academic Quality and Standards,
Registry Services

January 2025

Freedom of Information

16. Open paper



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

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 1 November 2024 to 31 December 2024 and an update on current alumni relations activities.

2. All gifts contribute to different aspects of the University’s goals under Strategy 2030 and due diligence procedures ensure there is no conflict with the values summarised in the strategy.

Action requested/Recommendation

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

Paragraphs 4-5: closed section

Discussion

Global Alumni Events

6. Upcoming global alumni events:

New York, Boston, Connecticut, USA / Toronto, Canada Annual Burns Night celebration events.	January / February 2025
Mexico City, Mexico / Bogota, Colombia / Lima, Peru Business School hosted alumni events during student recruitment visit to Latin America.	January 2025
New York, USA ECA event for alumni and prospective students hosted by ECA Principal Professor Juan Cruz.	February 2025
Berlin, Germany Business School hosted alumni event during student recruitment visit.	February 2025
London, UK Alumni and supporter event hosted by the Principal as part of a series of University events taking place to showcase Edinburgh’s expertise and leadership in AI.	March 2025
New York, USA Annual New York City Tartan Day Parade and post-parade alumni reception.	April 2025
Toronto, Canada The Edinburgh University Club of Toronto Annual Dinner featuring Professor Frank Cogliano as guest speaker.	April 2025

Recent Global Events

7. As part of a University delegation to the USA in November, we hosted an alumni reception in Washington, D.C. focussed on volunteer cultivation and stewardship. This was followed by one of our annual flagship alumni events in New York with Professor David Argyle as guest speaker, who updated attendees on the University's One Health agenda. At both events, guests heard about developments with the Insights Programme and how they can support this important project this year.

8. Other alumni events in November included British Council hosted activity in Mexico City and Guadalajara, and a reception in Abuja as part of Connected Scotland and British Council Going Global Conference activity. There were also a number of volunteer-led events that month including an alumni gathering in Quito hosted by our regional alumni contacts in Ecuador and a virtual talk by Professor Shannon Vallor for the members of the Edinburgh University Club of Toronto.

9. In December, the Business School hosted a gathering for alumni in Riyadh and later in the month alumni joined graduates of other UK universities in France for a British Council hosted Christmas Party in Paris. In Beijing, ECA held a festive alumni reception hosted by ECA Principal Juan Cruz, with the Beijing Alumni Club also engaging in the event.

10. In January, the Zhejiang Alumni Association kicked off 2025 with an industry development salon and annual alumni dinner.

11. Recent School and College activities include alumni events hosted in collaboration with the School of Social and Political Science and the Business School in Osaka and Tokyo. Professor Mona Siddiqui, School of Divinity, connected with local alumni in Boston in late autumn. At the Vet School, Professor Lisa Boden, Head of School, hosted a dinner with local alumni in Sydney in November and we also worked with colleagues to engage alumni during the London Vet Show in the same month. We continue to work with colleagues on the Edinburgh Medical School anniversary in 2026.

Alumni support for Widening Participation: Insights Programme

12. The Insights Programme continues to benefit students across the Colleges. Eligible second-year widening participation students were emailed in November inviting them to apply for the 2024/25 Insights Programme. A total of 218 applications were received and offers were made to 148 students.

13. The series of preparatory developmental workshops that help these students build confidence and prepare for their Insights Week visits to alumni began in January and will conclude in May. These sessions cover essential skills, such as networking and professionalism, and involve interactive content delivered by Careers Service advisors, Development and Alumni staff, and online video calls with globally based alumni. The Insights Week will take place from 2-6 June.

14. We ran a fundraising campaign focused on Insights in December for our US-based audience across multiple channels including telephone, direct mail, email, social media, meetings and events. Early results show the campaign has been

successful, bringing in a new group of alumni donors supporting Insights and exceeded our target of £30,000.

Alumni support for Student Employability

15. Close collaboration continues with specific academic Schools to develop tailored alumni engagement in support of the University's student employability agenda. Most recently we worked with the Careers Service and key academic and professional services staff in the School of Mathematics on a large-scale event. Open to all Maths undergraduate and Masters students, it involved ten selected alumni volunteers returning to campus to share their advice and experiences. Further activities in a wider selection of Schools are being planned for semester two.

Alumni support for Student Recruitment

16. In November, a number of alumni ambassadors provided support to University representatives at education fairs in Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi, by talking with prospective students about their experiences of studying at the University and on living in Edinburgh. 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.

17. Work continues to develop alumni engagement strategies to support School and College student recruitment and conversion priorities, working with specific Schools. This includes a tailored initiative with the School of Engineering, with nine recent alumni interviews to be published over the coming period to inspire future students. Four alumni volunteers were involved in a bespoke event for the School of Social and Political Science at the postgraduate open day, to share with prospective students their experiences of study at the School. A further two alumni were involved in the same School's offer-holder activities in Jakarta.

Student Engagement

18. Our support for recruitment activities continues in January with alumni volunteers taking part in a student alumni panel for PG Online Learning Essentials, with more panels planned for the coming months. At these events, our prospective students can put their questions directly to our alumni panellists to help them inform their decision-making.

19. In the autumn 2024 round of Student Experience Grants, over £202,516 was awarded across 55 successful grant applications. These funds will support an array of innovative projects and initiatives that will enhance student development and experience. Funded projects include 'The Community Champions' project, which aims to pilot and evaluate the impact of paid student-led Community Champion roles in fostering connections and community among students and staff. Another successful application was for an 'AI-driven Carbon Emissions Calculator' to measure student carbon footprints and offer tailored actions to reduce emissions. The full list of awards can be found on the [Student Experience Grants website](#).

Publications

20. Issue 03 of 2024/2025 *Multi Story Edinburgh* newsletter themed around further study and learning was sent to over 6,000 new graduates in November.

21. A special festive edition of *Enlightened* was sent to all alumni in December, serving as our main Christmas communication with alumni. It featured a [festive article](#) and a [playlist](#); this content was used in our festive communication with supporters as well.

22. The end of the year edition of *DigestEd* was issued in December and sent to over 400 volunteers.

Digital Communications

23. We continue to develop our presence on social media. Our Instagram account saw a significant increase in following and engagement in 2024. We gained over 1,800 new followers and 160k impressions. Our [most recent collaboration with the corporate Instagram account](#) became the best performing post on [@edalumni](#) to date, with 30k accounts reached and 63k views. Work is ongoing on the set up of a new Edinburgh Alumni LinkedIn Page with plans to launch in April.

24. The Development and Alumni websites migrated successfully to the University's new Content Management System and went live in November. With agreement from the USA Development Trust, we moved [their website](#) into the University of Edinburgh content management system (CMS) as its previous CMS stopped working at the start of 2025.

Resource implications

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

Risk Management

26. 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

27. 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

28. 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.

29. 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

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

Consultation

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

Further information

32. Authors

Gregor Hall
Finance Manager
Emily Gwiazda
Alumni Relations Project Officer
Development & Alumni

Presenter

Chris Cox
Vice-Principal Philanthropy &
Advancement

February 2025

Freedom of Information

33. Open version



UNIVERSITY COURT

24 February 2025

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. 1/2025: Alteration of the title of Personal Chair of Politics
 - No. 2/2025: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Neuroinflammatory Medicine

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. The embedding of the updated HR records process has brought to light the existence of a Chair and the change of title of a Chair without a corresponding Resolution, hence the backdated nature of these Resolutions.

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 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

Resolution of the University Court No. 1/2025

Alteration of the title of Personal Chair of Politics

At Edinburgh, the Twenty fourth day of February, Two thousand and twenty five.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to alter the title of the Chair of Politics founded by Ordinance 129;

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

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

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

1. The Chair of Politics shall hereafter be designated the Chair of Politics and International Relations.
2. This Resolution shall come into with effect from 1 August Two thousand and twenty two.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Resolution of the University Court No. 2/2025

Foundation of a Personal Chair of Neuroinflammatory Medicine

At Edinburgh, the Twenty fourth day of February, Two thousand and twenty five.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to found a Personal Chair of Neuroinflammatory Medicine:

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 Neuroinflammatory Medicine 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 Neuroinflammatory Medicine 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 February Two thousand and twenty.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary