



## University Court

6 October 2025

Pentland Suite, John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls

### Agenda

#### OPENING ITEMS

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1 Minutes</b>  | <b>A1</b> |
| To <u>approve</u> the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2025                                   |           |
| <b>2 Matters Arising &amp; Review of Action Log</b>   | <b>A2</b> |
| To <u>raise</u> any matters arising and <u>review</u> the Action Log                                |           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Update on the Responsible Investment Advisory Group</li></ul> |           |
| <b>3 Principal's Report</b>   | <b>B</b>  |
| To <u>note</u> a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal   |           |
| <b>4 Committee Business</b>   |           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Exception Committee</li></ul>                                 | <b>C1</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</li></ul>                    | <b>C2</b> |
| To <u>approve</u> a re-allocation of funding  |           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Governance &amp; Nominations Committee</li></ul>              | <b>C3</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Audit &amp; Risk Committee</li></ul>                          | <b>C4</b> |
| To <u>approve</u> the Risk Appetite Statement   |           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Remuneration Committee</li></ul>                              | <b>C5</b> |
| To <u>approve</u> revisions to the Framework for Decision Making                                    |           |

#### KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

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|--|-----------|
| <b>5 Finance and Planning Update Report</b>  | <b>D</b>  |
| To <u>note</u> a paper presented by James Gray, Chief Financial Officer, and Kim Graham, Provost                                       |           |
| <b>6 Students' Association and Sports Union Reports</b>  |           |
| To <u>note</u> reports presented by Ash Scholz, President of the Students' Association, and Liv Stevens, President of the Sports Union |           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students' Association Report</li></ul>   | <b>E1</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sports Union Report</li></ul>  | <b>E2</b> |
| <b>7 Student Surveys 2025: Results and Responses</b>   | <b>F</b>  |
| To <u>note</u> a paper presented by Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students, and Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students                    |           |

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| <b>8</b>                                   | <b>Teviot Row House Compliance Works</b>   | <b>G</b> |
|  | To <u>approve</u> additional funding to complete the works. Paper presented by Damian Toner, Director of Estates   |          |
| <b>9</b>                                   | <b>Microsoft Agreement</b>   | <b>H</b> |
|  | To <u>approve</u> the agreement and <u>delegate authority</u> to the Vice Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University to sign the contract. Paper presented by Gavin McLachlan, Vice Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University |          |
| <b>10</b>                                  | <b>Consideration of the Investigation into Financial Oversight and Decision Making at the University of Dundee</b>   | <b>I</b> |
|  | To <u>note</u> a paper presented by Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary  |          |
| <b>11</b>                                  | <b>Award of University Benefactor</b>  | <b>J</b> |
|  | To <u>approve</u> the award of University Benefactor status to two new recipients. Paper presented by Peter Mathieson, Principal   |          |
| <b>ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL</b> |  |          |
| <b>12</b>                                  | <b>The University of Edinburgh Cross &amp; Salmon Trust: Appointment of New Trustee and Re-appointment of Continuing Trustee</b>   | <b>K</b> |
|  | To <u>approve</u> the appointment of a new trustee and the re-appointment of a continuing trustee  |          |
| <b>13</b>                                  | <b>Legacy Loans Recommendation</b>   | <b>L</b> |
|  | To <u>approve</u>  |          |
| <b>14</b>                                  | <b>Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy &amp; Procedure</b>  | <b>M</b> |
|  | To <u>approve</u>  |          |
| <b>15</b>                                  | <b>Anti-Fraud Policy 2025</b>  | <b>N</b> |
|  | To <u>approve</u>  |          |
| <b>16</b>                                  | <b>Donations &amp; Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity</b>  | <b>O</b> |
|  | To <u>note</u>   |          |
| <b>17</b>                                  | <b>Any Other Business</b>  |          |
| <b>18</b>                                  | <b>Date of Next Meeting</b>  |          |
|  | 1 December 2025  |          |
| <b>19</b>                                  | <b>Remuneration Committee: Senior Leadership Team Remuneration Review – Proposed Approach</b>  | <b>P</b> |
|  | To <u>approve</u> (closed session for Court members)   |          |



UNIVERSITY COURT

23 June 2025

Usher Institute, BioQuarter, Edinburgh

Minutes

- Members Present:** Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member  
Simon Fanshawe, Rector  
Katya Amott, Students' Association Vice-President Education  
Shereen Benjamin, Senatus Assessor  
Richard Blythe, Senatus Assessor  
Alastair Dunlop, Chancellor's Assessor  
Ruth Girardet, Co-opted Member  
Tobias Kelly, Academic Staff Member  
Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor  
Sarah McAllister, Professional Services Staff Member  
Douglas Millican, Co-opted Member  
Jock Millican, General Council Assessor  
Hugh Mitchell, Co-opted Member  
Kathryn Nash, Trade Union Academic Staff Member  
David Ovens, General Council Assessor  
Mark Patrizio, Trade Union Professional Services Staff Member  
Ash Scholz, Students' Association President  
Alistair Smith, Co-opted Member
- Member Apologies:** Rushad Abadan, Co-opted Member  
Robert Aldridge, City of Edinburgh Council Assessor  
Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member  
Kavi Thakrar, Co-opted Member  
Sarah Wolffe, General Council Assessor
- In Attendance:** Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary  
Gale Macleod, Rector's Assessor  
Claire Sarafilovic, Governance Apprentice
- Presenters & Observers:** Lewis Allan, Senior Governance Advisor to the Vice-Principal & University Secretary  
David Argyle, Head of College, Medicine & Veterinary Medicine  
Nirmal Borkhataria, Interim Director of Finance  
Fiona Boyd, Chief of Staff & Head of the Principal's office  
Iain Gordon, Head of College, Science & Engineering  
Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students  
Kim Graham, Provost  
Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services  
Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal & Chief Information Officer, and Librarian  
Sarah Prescott, Head of College, Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences  
Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary, Governance and Strategic Planning  
Louise Kelso, General Counsel and Director of Legal Services  
Daniel Wedgwood, Head of Court Services (clerk)

<b>Observers</b>	Morag Angus, Co-opted Member appointee, starting 1 August 2025 Sandra Cummings, Co-opted Member appointee, starting 1 August 2025 Christopher Morson, Co-opted Member appointee, starting 1 August 2025
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## OPENING ITEMS

### Opening and welcome

Simon Fanshawe, Rector, opened the meeting, noted the apologies received and welcomed the two new student members of Court, Ash Scholz and Katya Amott, and the three appointees to the position of Co-opted Member, who were observing this meeting and would begin their terms of office in the new academic year, Morag Angus, Sandra Cummings and Christopher Morson.

Having opened the meeting, the Rector invited the Senior Lay Member to chair the main items of business on the agenda.

### 1 Minutes

**Paper A1**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2025 were approved, subject to one requested amendment, for which Court's approval would be sought subsequently [Note: approval was subsequently granted by correspondence.].

### 2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log

**Paper A2**

#### Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

#### Action Log

The Action Log was noted. The Action Log had been updated to reflect developments related to recommendations of the 2018 and 2024 effectiveness reviews of Court, all of which were dealt with elsewhere in the agenda of this meeting:

- proposed changes to the Delegated Authority Schedule (item 10);
- proposed disbandment of Knowledge Strategy Committee (item 11); and
- proposed changes to Court and committee papers (item 4., Paper C3).

### 3 Principal's Report

**Paper B**

Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, introduced the report, highlighting in particular the recent confirmation that the University would host the new national Exascale supercomputer, a decision that recognised the University's world-class expertise in this area. The Principal noted the crucial contribution of Professor Mark Parsons to achieving this outcome. More generally, the University was well placed to contribute to government priorities in technology and innovation, in particular in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and so to take advantage of related research and educational opportunities.

The Principal also noted the following notable developments since the paper had been written:

- The results of the national Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey had been published. The University's results had improved substantially in a number of areas, including the priority area of Assessment & Feedback. A full report on this would be provided to Court at its next meeting.
- The report of Professor Pamela Gillies' investigation into financial oversight and decision making at the University of Dundee had been published.
- The University had fallen by seven places in the QS World University Rankings. While the University's outcomes, as measured within the rankings, had generally remained strong, the international environment was increasingly competitive. It had been noted at the national level that a number of UK universities had similarly fallen in the QS rankings. The University had risen in some other rankings.
- The University had performed well in the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings, which track performance against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This including retaining joint first ranking in the world for the contribution to SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.

The following points were made in discussion:

- University policies relevant to the Supreme Court judgment on the interpretation of the Equality Act would be re-examined, recognising that concerns had been raised regarding their compatibility with the judgment. The University's legal advice was that the policies were legally compliant and new guidance to accompany them was in preparation.
- Efforts had been made to avert recent industrial action but it had not proved possible to reach agreement on key points. It was hoped that further strike action could be avoided. Measures would be taken to minimise the impact of any industrial action on students.
- While the situation at the University of Dundee, as discussed in the Gillies report, involved many unique elements, there were also contextual factors of relevance to all Scottish and UK universities and the situation highlighted the importance of the oversight role of a university Court.
- The University was carefully monitoring student recruitment, including any possible changes in demand and conversion resulting from policy changes in the USA. Overall, international student recruitment outturn for autumn 2025 entry remained relatively uncertain, for a variety of reasons.
- The process to recruit a Chief Financial Officer was progressing well.

#### **4 Committee Business**

##### **Exception Committee**

**Paper C1,  
Paper R**

Court noted Exception Committee's approval of the granting of a 99-year lease for an electricity substation, along with the cabling route serving the substation, which was necessary to progress the refurbishment project at the Edinburgh College of Art.

Court also considered and approved a similar 99-year lease (as proposed in Paper R) of ground and cable routes for a substation within the McLeod Street Student Accommodation site.

### **Policy & Resources Committee**

### **Paper C2**

Court noted the report.

Court's attention was drawn to the intention to continue the Dryden Shed Relocation project, which had previously been paused as a result of the Category C projects review. It had since been confirmed that this project would be fully funded by an external funder and that the funder expected the project to progress. Consequently, an updated business case was being prepared for consideration by the Estates Committee Exception Group.

### **Governance & Nominations Committee**

### **Paper C3**

Court noted the report and approved the following appointments, on the recommendation of Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC). The named members, attendees and observers recused themselves from the meeting while the relevant decisions were taken:

- the reappointment of Ruth Girardet as a co-opted lay member of Court for a second four-year term from 1 August 2025 and as a member of PRC for a second three-year term;
- the appointment of David Ovens and Morag Angus as members of PRC, each for a three-year term of office from 1 August 2025;
- the appointment of Hugh Mitchell as Intermediary Court Member from August 2025;
- the appointment of Christopher Morson as a member of Audit & Risk Committee, for a three-year term of office from 1 August 2025;
- re-appointment of Toby Kelly as a member of Remuneration Committee to 31 May 2025, co-extensive with the remainder of his current term as a member of Court;
- re-appointment of Iain Gordon and Sarah Prescott as Curators of Patronage, for a two-year term of office from 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2027 (co-extensive with the remainder of their current terms as Heads of College).

Court noted further appointments to committees and other groups that had been approved directly by GNC under delegated authority, as detailed in the report.

Court also approved the development of reforms to the form and content of Court and committee papers, in line with feedback received from members, and the implementation of these reforms for the academic year 2025/26, noting that changes would be reviewed after one year.

Douglas Millican, Convener of Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) summarised key points from the report. He noted that revised financial metrics had been proposed for the Risk Appetite Statement. Court's approval for these revised measures was not sought at this stage: they would be subject to further consideration and, as appropriate, brought forward for approval at a future meeting. It was suggested that there may insight to be drawn from benchmarking such measures with those of other institutions.

Court approved the Internal Audit Plan 2025-26.

Court approved the External Audit Annual Plan for 2024-25 and the External Audit Fee for the 2024-25 audit. Work had been conducted to learn lessons from the previous year's audit and to prevent avoidable challenges from arising at year-end. An interim audit was being conducted.

The following points were made in discussion:

- It was noted that ARC had sought formal clarification of the status of the Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP). It was clarified that activities of the CTP had been moved from the CTP Board to the Learning & Teaching workstream of wider current change programme and that activities would be reconsidered and prioritised in the new context. It was confirmed that this change did not affect Senate's oversight of relevant activities under the CTP.
- It was noted that the Internal Audit report referred to benchmarking against good practice in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion aspects of recruitment processes. It was suggested that this should be approached with due consideration and appropriate advice, given that there was controversy over what constituted good practice in this area.

Court noted the report and approved the updates to the University's Collections Management Policy, ahead of a major review in academic year 2029/30.

Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, introduced the report. It was noted that Senate had passed a vote of no confidence in the University Executive and that this had been communicated to the Executive.

It was observed that this vote related specifically to the current cost-saving plans and that a common concern among members of Senate had been to establish a greater understanding of the principles underlying this and the intended outcomes. It was noted that this concern was fully recognised by the University's executive leadership and that, while much relevant work was still in progress, no significant change in the academic mission, ambitions or overall nature of the University was envisaged. Rather, the aim was to enable the University to be more resilient and flexible in its approach to achieving its mission.

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

### **5 Finance and Planning**

#### **5.1 Finance Update Report**

**Paper D1**

Nirmal Borkhataria, Interim Director of Finance, presented the finance update report, which included the Quarter 3 (Q3) forecast for 2024-25 and management accounts for April 2025.

Court noted the report.

#### **5.2 2025-26 and 2026-27 budget and strategic cost saving proposals**

**Paper D2**

Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member, noted that, in line with Court's instructions at the previous meeting, the paper on the budget and strategic cost saving proposals had been distributed to Court members before the main circulation of Court papers and a briefing session had been held, giving members additional time and opportunities to clarify and consider the proposals.

Nirmal Borkhataria, Interim Director of Finance, and Kim Graham, Provost, summarised the nature of the proposed budget, along with the proposed programme to manage the University's finances and make progress with change initiatives such that this budget could be delivered, and thanked all those who had worked to formulate the budget and related plans, noting that Court's challenge and support during this process had been very valuable.

It was noted that approval was sought for a budget spanning two financial years, as this reflected the aspiration to return to a position of surplus generation within this timescale, and this was also the period within which a programme to implement recurrent cost savings would be completed. Budget projections for the following three years had also been included, providing an overall five-year plan. It was noted that the budget as presented accounted for restructuring costs, which would contribute to a projected deficit position in the first year of the budget, but would allow for a surplus in the second. In line with these projected outcomes, cash balances were expected to continue to fall for the first year of the budget and to rebuild thereafter.

One important contextual factor was the need to manage the risk of a breach of the University's major debt covenants. Sensitivity analysis, as provided in the paper, showed the potential for covenant headroom to narrow beyond comfortable levels if appropriate budgetary measures were not taken in a suitable timescale.

It was noted that substantial cost savings had already been achieved, through measures including recruitment restraint and the recent Voluntary Severance scheme. Savings targets had been allocated to budget holders and actions to achieve significant savings had been identified within budget areas. Further work to achieve savings within budget areas would be enabled through the work of five workstreams to develop a programme of cross-institutional change.



Court's attention was drawn to a set of guiding principles for the work to achieve cost reduction, both principles applied to the programme overall and principles specific to each workstream. It was noted that an overarching principle was protection of the academic mission and reputation of the University and that one purpose of a co-ordinated and time-limited programme of change was to avoid the potentially damaging effects, in this regard, of a more piecemeal approach. Additional overarching principles included a commitment to engage openly with staff and students, including through Senate and the recognised trade unions, and a commitment to evaluate proposed actions, and respond appropriately, with regard to potential impacts on equality, diversity and inclusion.

Court engaged in extensive discussion of the budget and cost-saving proposals, within which the following points were made:

- The paper was welcomed as providing richer background than had previously been available. It was noted that the need to take action was now widely accepted, both within Court and, to a significant extent, more widely.
- Questions remained over the nature and timing of the action to be taken.
- Reservations were expressed about whether the plan was viable in terms of the relationship between academic mission and financial planning. It was also noted that working closely with staff and addressing concerns about how delivering the budget could impact the academic mission would be crucial. Correspondence from several staff on this theme, which had been relayed to Court, was noted and discussed.
- The balance of and interaction between local and cross-institutional action was discussed at length, with concerns expressed that dispersed action, effected through the University's devolved structure, could lead to less coherent outcomes. It was noted that the central workstreams had a crucial role in this respect, although there were also benefits to local decision-making, based in expert and fully contextualised knowledge. An appropriate balance of these approaches would be essential.
- Reservations were expressed over approval of the budget in the absence of a comprehensive articulation of the envisaged outcomes of the programme of change and their relation to the strategic direction of the University. In particular, it was suggested that this could elevate the risk of producing more dispersed and less coherent actions. It was noted that opportunities to create savings and improvements were both subject to active on-going work. The motivations for working at pace were also acknowledged.
- In this context, there was discussion of the potentially damaging effects of uncertainty and how best to move to a position of greater certainty and clarity. Concerns were expressed over proceeding with remaining levels of uncertainty and, in this context, it was noted that Court could consider the option of approving the first year of the budget and monitoring progress before considering the second. In response to this, it was noted that the purpose of proposing clear and decisive action was to remove uncertainty as soon as possible, and that approval of the two-year budget would empower such action and so help provide the necessary clarity.
- The proposal to enhance the monitoring and management of performance as part of the Staff workstream was welcomed. It was noted that contribution could also be measured separately from performance.

- Court's oversight would be of crucial importance, through information to be provided to Court at subsequent meetings and on an ongoing basis. It was noted that this point should not delay approval of the budget and that Court would be expected, in any case, to hold management to account for delivery of the budget according to the stated principles, with suitable information provided to enable this oversight. Reporting to Court should be regular and transparent. The University should consider appropriate levels and means of dedicated support for this.
- Good communications would continue to be vital and concerns were expressed about the current approach. It was noted that, along with impacts on staff and student morale, prospective students and those supporting them would be aware of the University's plans to effect a programme of change. It was suggested that this was a further reason to minimise the degree and duration of uncertainty around this. It was also noted that challenges were widely known to exist at the level of the higher education sector and that the University had less control over perceptions at this level.
- It was observed that, while concerns expressed in the discussion reflected Court members' thorough and thoughtful consideration of the implications of budgetary decisions, Court's role in approving the budget should be primarily to satisfy itself that the proposed budget appropriately recognised the financial context and a commensurate need for action, rather than to examine the details of specific actions, which were still in development. Nonetheless, where clarity could be provided, it should be communicated without delay.

Court approved the group-level budget for 2025-26 and 2026-27 as set out in the paper, noting the variety of views that had been expressed over the course of the discussion and the need for the provision of further information to support monitoring and evaluation of the cost-saving plans necessary for the delivery of the budget and their impacts.

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

### **6.1 Students' Association Report**

**Paper E1**

### **6.2 Sports Union Report**

**Paper E2**

Court noted the reports.

## **7 Data-Driven Innovation (DDI) Initiative Progress Report Q2 – 2024/25** **Paper F**

Kim Graham, Provost, introduced the report, summarising the substantial progress that had been made to date within this large-scale initiative and noting that its impacts also fell within a wider context of innovation activity and regional collaboration. The focus was now on accelerating this progress to develop and deliver an ambitious regional agenda in collaboration with partners. The University's hosting of the new national supercomputer would further expand the potential impact of the initiative.

Noting the significant scale of investment by the University over the course of the 15-year programme, alongside substantial government funding, additional budgetary detail was requested. It was noted that relevant capital expenditure was largely complete, meaning that revenue investments would be the focus of future activity.

Further information was sought also on the economic impacts of the initiative, including job creation and support for companies. It was agreed that further detail would be provided to Court at a future meeting.

## **8 Net Zero Infrastructure – Easter Bush Campus Utilities Networks Expansion**

**Paper G**

Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member, summarised the nature of the requested approval of funding, noting that this project had been identified at the previous meeting of Court as one of the current estates capital projects that should progress. As part of this, Court's attention had been drawn to the need to approve the University's contribution to the project in order to enable access to the low-cost government loans that constituted the majority of the project's funding.

Court approved the University's contribution to the funding of this project.

## **9 Senior Lay Member: Recruitment and Election**

**Paper H**

Hugh Mitchell, Co-opted Lay Member of Court, assumed the Chair for this item.

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary, introduced the paper, noting that the proposals in the paper were brought forward on the recommendation of Governance & Nominations Committee. She also drew members' attention to a recently circulated amendment to the electoral regulations that Court was being asked to approve. This amendment was to clarify the conditions under which appeals against any decision of the Returning Officer could be considered, in the context of the election of a Senior Lay Member, the newly proposed material being that presented within square brackets below:

(Extract from Paragraph 18 of the proposed Regulations for the Election and Appointment of the Senior Lay Member of the University Court):

“Appeals will only be considered on the grounds of procedure or prejudice [such as a disadvantage suffered by a candidate as a result of a decision which was ultra vires, manifestly unreasonable, tainted by apparent bias, based on an error in fact, or which should reasonably be reconsidered because new material evidence has become available]”

It discussion, it was clarified that the eligibility criteria and person specifications for the role were still to be formulated.

Court approved the proposed updates to the role description, the approach to available remuneration and the election and appointment regulations for the Senior Lay Member.

## **10 Amendments to Delegated Authority Schedule**

**Paper I**

Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member, resumed the Chair.

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary, summarised the proposals in the paper, noting that the Delegated Authority Schedule had not been reviewed for a number of years and that the intention was to review the document annually in future.

It was noted that an increase in the Principal's approval limit had been proposed in the context of inflationary increases in spending and a desire to limit the burden on Court and its committees of granting approvals for spending of relatively low significance or risk. Adjusting the Principal's approval limit had been identified as a practical way to change the threshold for approval at the executive level, in terms of implementation within University systems, in addition to maintaining an appropriate locus of accountability. Governance & Nominations Committee had discussed this proposal and had recommended that the new limit be set at £5 million. It was observed that this level was well within the expected range for the approval limit for a Chief Executive Officer at an organisation of the University's size.

In discussion of the paper, clarification was provided regarding the nature of changes to student fees policy that would require approval at different levels.

Court approved:

- setting the delegated approval limit for the Principal at £5 million;
- increased delegation to the University Executive and the Future Students Committee for academic fee approvals, while retaining the requirement for Court to approve any major structural changes to fees;
- other, minor updates to the Delegated Authority Schedule, as listed in the paper.

## **11 Knowledge Strategy Committee Future Governance**

**Paper J**

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary, summarised the paper. Following consideration by Senate, there was widespread agreement that Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC) should be disbanded and it was recognised that further work was required to establish the details of the future committee structure for this area, taking into account the needs of IT, libraries and collections and providing appropriate reporting lines for both operational and oversight purposes.

Court approved the disbandment of KSC.

The Senior Lay Member thanked all members of KSC, past and present, for their service.

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

## **12 Development Trust – Amendments to the Deed of Trust and Update on the Development Trust**

**Paper K**

Court approved amendments to the Deed of Trust to include the specific power for the Trustees to:

- delegate approval and signing authority in respect of donations to the Trust; and
- make written resolutions, including by electronic means.

**13 Implementation of Ordinance No. 217 (General Council Membership and Registration) Paper L**

Court approved the implementation of Ordinance No. 217 on 1 October 2025.

**14 Donations & Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity Paper M**

Court noted the report.

**15 Education Act 1994 requirements in relation to the Students' Association Paper N**

Court noted the assurance of current compliance.

**16 Prevent Duty Annual Compliance Paper O**

Court noted the report.

**17 Resolutions - Chairs Paper P1**

Court approved the Resolutions to found professorial chairs, as listed in the paper.

**Resolutions – Degree Regulations Paper P2**

Court approved:

- Resolution No. 6/2025: Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations; and
- Resolution No. 7/2025: Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations.

**18 Court meeting dates 2026/27 Paper Q**

Court approved the meeting dates.

**19 Any Other Business**

The Senior Lay Member thanked Frank Armstrong, Mark Patrizio and Alastair Smith for their many contributions to Court and its committees, this being their final meeting as members of Court.

**20 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday, 6 October 2025



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Principal's Report

<b>Description of paper</b>	This paper provides a summary of important aspects of University business that have occurred since the last meeting of the University Court and are not covered in the substantive papers. Highlights of the Principal's main activities in the timeframe are also included.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>note</b> the contents. Any questions will be addressed during the Court meeting.	
<b>Appendices</b>	N/A	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	N/A	
<b>EDI implications</b>	N/A	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	N/A	
<b>Consultation</b>	Generally no consultation is required as the paper is a report of recent news/activity. Where subjects covered require specialist input then consultation with the lead contact has taken place.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Open paper	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor <a href="mailto:Principal@ed.ac.uk">Principal@ed.ac.uk</a>
	Presenter:	Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor
	26 September 2025	

## Principal's Report

### **Summary**

1. The paper updates Court on key University activity for the period end of June 2025 to end of September 2025.
2. The first part of the paper includes information on general University activity. The second part of the paper provides updates on activity that is specifically related to the 4 key areas of Strategy 2030: Our People, Learning, Teaching & Students, Research & Innovation, Social & Civic Responsibility.
3. Topics covered include latest political affairs activity, industrial action and the Principal's key meetings.

### **Discussion**

#### *General*

4. Momentum on our work to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the University, and improve our ways of working, has continued over the summer months. Following the Voluntary Severance (VS) Scheme which led to c.350 colleagues leaving the University voluntarily, two further options for staff have been launched with a closing date of 31 October, a Voluntary Redundancy (VR) scheme and a Retirement Option. The VR scheme is specifically targeted at Grades UE09 and UE10 where there has been significant growth in recent years and low take up of the earlier VS scheme.
5. Prioritisation decisions have also been taken to identify the projects which will continue to deliver our priorities while reducing costs: these projects are now agreed, approved by the University Executive and communicated to staff.
6. A co-ordinated communications programme is in place with regular email messages at key decision points and in-person engagement opportunities at College and Professional Service Group levels. This includes all-staff events at each of the three Colleges which are running on a regular basis. Arrangements are also being finalised for two in-person events at University level where staff will have the opportunity to hear about recent developments and ask questions; these sessions will be hosted by members of the Senior Leadership Team.
7. The financial sustainability issues facing the sector have continued to play out over the summer and will do so for the foreseeable future. We discussed the publication of the BDO/Gillies Report at the last Court meeting in June and a formal paper is presented on this Court agenda. As noted there, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) have just released a publication "The SFC's Expectations of Good Governance", the implications of which we will continue to explore with them.
8. An SFC Report on 'Financial Sustainability of Universities in Scotland, 2022-23 to 2026-27' has also just been released. This provides detailed information at sector level on operating position, cash balances, sources of income, expenditure, liquidity, cash flow, borrowing and capital expenditure. The Report confirms the precarious financial

position of the majority of Scotland's universities and the calls for a meaningful review of Higher Education funding continue to grow. Universities Scotland has agreed terms of reference with Scottish Government for a project on the future sustainability of the sector. We are actively contributing, including via Professor Colm Harmon, whose academic expertise is in this area of educational economics. Regrettably, but not surprisingly, this work is unlikely to conclude before the Holyrood elections in May.

9. July saw the publication of report from the academically-led Review of Race and History. This was commissioned by the Executive in 2021 as part of our commitment to address historic and contemporary issues of racism and inequality. The Review was led by Professor Tommy Curry and Dr Nicola Frith. In response to the Race Review's findings and recommendations, the University has set out a series of immediate actions and long-term commitments. These efforts will be spearheaded by a Response Group, co-led by the University's Lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Fiona McClement, and Dr Omolabake Fakunle, Senior Lecturer and Chancellor's Fellow at the University's Moray House School of Education and Sport. I was pleased to attend the first meeting of the Group and speak to members about the objectives and importance of the work.
10. Edinburgh's Festivals transformed our campus again for three weeks in August. A total of 1,287,503 tickets were issued for performances in University buildings in 2025, up 6% from last year. The International Book Festival continues to flourish at the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) with a busier than ever feel borne out by a 60% increase in footfall on last year at EFI, including 25,000 visitors in one weekend. Digital reach saw audiences in 63 countries, ranging from Japan to The Vatican. This burgeoning activity has a positive impact on income figures for the University with 85,600 bed nights sold for a mix of Festival performers / groups and individual leisure visitors to the city, generating £4.4m of income.
11. There have been a number of political developments resulting in changes in key departments for the University including: a new Secretary of State for Scotland in the former Court member Rt Hon Douglas Alexander, a move to Secretary of State for Business and Trade for the Rt Hon Peter Kyle; a move to Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology for the Rt Hon Liz Kendall; a move for the Rt Hon Ian Murray to a joint appointment as Minister of State in the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. There has been a key change at Holyrood too where Ben Macpherson MSP is now Minister for Higher and Further Education. I have written to all new appointees with appropriate personal messages and an invitation to visit the University at their convenience.
12. Related events:
  - Welcomed Sir Chris Bryant MP, Minister of State (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) and Minister of State (Department for Science, Innovation and Technology), to the Edinburgh Futures Institute to discuss the University's place in the summer festivals, our impact in the creative sector and the future of tourism.



- Welcomed Director-General of the World Health Organisation, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Rt Hon Ian Murray MP, Secretary of State for Scotland, and Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Drug and Alcohol Policy and Sport, to the official opening of the Usher Building on 26 June. In addition, a number of major media outlets attended and held interviews with the myself, ministers, and Dr Tedros.
- Participated in regular online UUK discussions on various topics: campus tensions, UCAS, current issues.
- Met with Professor Andy Schofield, incoming Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glasgow.
- Participated in two Russell Group Board meetings and in a Universities Scotland Main Committee.
- Welcomed Paul Thwaite, NatWest Group CEO to the University for a tour of Edinburgh Futures Institute and a meeting including Mark Parsons, Director of EPCC and Dean of Research Computing.
- Participated in a meeting with Sarah Thiam, Chief Executive of Prosper.
- Participated in a 'Diversifying Leadership in Elite Universities' - Advisory Board Meeting.
- Attended a Queen Elizabeth Prizes for Education 30th Anniversary lunch celebrating past winners.
- Participated as a Board member in several Scottish Funding Council Board meetings.

### *Strategy 2030 Themes*

#### Our People

13. As part of our commitment to providing an inclusive and safe working environment for our staff we have launched a 'Report + Support' platform for staff to easily raise concerns about any bullying, harassment or discrimination that they may be experiencing. Once a report has been logged on the system, confidential support and guidance will be offered to the member of staff raising the concerns. The new system mirrors an existing approach for students and was built with input from across our community. Training and awareness sessions are being offered.
14. We have also redesigned and relaunched the staff benefits portal, which brings together employee benefits and discounts into one place. This includes the cycle to work scheme, healthcare cover, dental insurance, electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme and free mortgage advice, alongside a wide range of discounts and voucher schemes.
15. Significant improvements have also been made to the Redeployment Register facility, which offers a smoother process for eligible members of staff to get their information posted and for managers to find suitable potential candidates for roles.
16. On employee relations, the University College Union (UCU) called 5 consecutive days of strike action to coincide with Welcome Week on 8-12 September. To date we have been notified that 905 staff participated across all areas, with an average of 3.5 days of action taken per person. There was an increase in professional services staff

participation but total numbers remained below those typically seen in previous strike action.

17. We have met with the joint trade unions to share outline details and the briefing documents associated with the portfolio of 13 projects approved by University Executive. I was involved in the meeting in late July. Ongoing engagement, including consultation and negotiation aimed at preventing further industrial action by UCU, will continue to be managed through HR and the Staff Workstream Lead. College and Professional Service Group Heads will meet with the Joint Unions to discuss local changes as plans develop.
18. All the sector trade unions have announced they are opening ballots for industrial action over the UCEA Sector Pay Offer on 20 October 2025, closing on 28 November 2025. UCU are balloting for Strike Action and Action Short of Strike and will be aggregated across the UK, meaning that all members will be balloted and will need to meet the 50% turnout nationally and have a majority in favour to get a mandate. Unison and UNITE are balloting for Strike Action only and will be disaggregated, meaning each branch will ballot their own members and each branch will need to meet the 50% turnout and have a majority in favour to get a mandate.
19. Related events:
  - Participated in the Annual University Court update and led the Q&A session.
  - Participated in a meeting with the Joint Unions.
  - Participated in the Leaders Update and Academic Strategy Group, discussing student survey results and work to streamline Board of Examiners' activity .
  - Welcomed staff involved in the organisation and running of the summer graduations to a thank you reception at Abden House.
  - Participated in the Senate and Committees new member induction.

#### *Learning, Teaching and Students*

20. Thank you to those Court Members who joined us to celebrate the success of our graduating students at this summer's graduation ceremonies. The majority of the 25 ceremonies were very positive occasions with over 7,200 graduates in attendance and 11 Honorary Graduates. We did experience protests, mainly focused on pro-Palestine, at most ceremonies and at some of those ceremonies there was significant disruption. While we support the right to free speech it is a fact that politically motivated protests had a disruptive impact on proceedings and an impact on many of those attending. There will be changes put in place to the ways in which ceremonies will run in November to try to ensure a neutral atmosphere enabling the celebration of achievement to be the focus.
21. As there is a formal paper on the agenda at this meeting relating to student survey results, I will keep my remarks short but did want to acknowledge some meaningful improvements to students' satisfaction in all external Student Survey results that have been a focus of intense activity – highlighting especially the progress we have made in the timeliness of assessment feedback and ensuring our students feel their voices are

heard and their feedback is listened to and acted upon. These positive signs are encouraging but there is clearly still much work to be done. We will continue to prioritise initiatives that improve the experience of both our students and our staff.

22. Our Welcome Week activity was very positive this year: all activities and ceremonies were busy and there was a lively atmosphere across campus. We had c.2000 attendees at both of the welcome ceremonies and the parents and supporters' event was also well attended. The student information fair, EUSU clubs and EUSA societies fairs were particularly popular. As noted above, we had industrial action running throughout Welcome Week and reports confirmed that staff on the picket lines were respectful of the student-focussed activity taking place. My thanks to all who worked to ensure such a warm welcome to start our academic year. The latest information on admissions figures is noted in the Appendix to the Finance and Planning Report.
23. Almost 200 postgraduate taught students from across the University joined a reception in the Playfair Library on 20 August 2025 to celebrate submitting their dissertations and the end of their studies, alongside their supervisors and other staff. The event also marked the start of the countdown to students' graduation ceremonies in November and provided staff with an opportunity to wish students all the best for the future.
24. Some positive news that after months of work with Foreign and Commonwealth Officials, students from Gaza arrived in the UK including Scotland in late September. This first group included an Edinburgh student who has been receiving personal support to help with the transition to university life to ensure that they are fully supported and ready to start their studies at Edinburgh.
25. We continue to work to support the successful evacuation for two of our other students/scholars from Gaza who we aim to support to join our [Education Beyond Borders](#) community of over fifty displaced and at-risk students and academics at the University.
26. The latest news on progress with the [Teviot Row House](#) upgrade is captured in a joint video with Ash Scholz, Edinburgh University Students' Association President, and Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students, who recently visited the site to see some of the completed building works on the top floor.
27. Related events:
  - Regular monthly meetings with our Students' Association Sabbatical Team and monthly one to one, meetings with the Students' Association President.
  - Participated in the launch of the Sir Chris Hoy Scholarship.
  - Met with representatives from the Union of Jewish students.
  - Welcomed students attending the Edinburgh Clinical Academic Track Programme Induction session and took part in a tutorial for MSc Clinical Education students for their Policy, Leadership, & Management course.
  - Participated in the Edinburgh BioQuarter summer internship celebration.

- Enjoyed supporting the team at the University of Edinburgh Men's Scottish Varsity Rugby Match at Murrayfield, which we won!
- Participated in the Sports Stars lunch, to recognise the contribution of our talented sporting students.

#### *Research and Innovation*

28. We continue to perform very strongly in terms of research funding. In 2024/25 academic year we submitted 2,878 applications with a combined value of £1.72BN. This is 15% higher than the application value achieved in the previous academic year (£1.5BN). We recorded £399.7M in total research awards, which is 18% lower than the awards value achieved in the prior academic year (£486.9M). This is primarily due to a change in the methodology for recording awards which has resulted in last year's award total (reported as £457m) increasing to £486.9m and this year's award total decreasing by the same amount. This 6% fluctuation is a one off and accounts for the 2024/25 awards figure being approximately 6% lower than the three-year average figure for total awards of £426.4M. Our underpinning data shows a continuing strong performance in research awards, a fact we should all be proud of.
29. Earlier in the summer, the University was involved in various discussions with Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), Universities UK, Universities Scotland (US) and the Russell Group about potential changes to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) proposals. These discussions revolved around growing HEI concerns about the scope of changes being proposed for REF2029 – especially around the People, Culture and Environment section, as well as potential changes to Impact and Engagement and Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding.
30. In response to these concerns Research England presented a series of proposals to a meeting of UUK, which Professor Christina Boswell attended, and these proposals were warmly welcomed by both UUK and US. As an institution, we were very supportive of them, noting they approximate closely to our initial preferences for REF2029, as set out in our responses to the earlier consultation. Aligned to this, in September, Minister Lord Patrick Vallance issued a statement calling for a 3-month pause to 'take stock, ensure alignment with government priorities... and reflect on feedback from the sector'. The key take-away for us is that we still expect the REF to be on course for 2029, with submission in 2028, and we anticipate that REF guidance is likely to broadly reflect the proposals as outlined above.
31. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Christina Boswell for her work as Vice-Principal Research and Enterprise over the last three years and welcome Professor Liz Baggs as Interim Vice-Principal Research and Innovation.
32. Breakthroughs and discoveries snapshot:
  - **Microbes transform plastic waste into paracetamol**  
Paracetamol production could be revolutionised by the discovery that a common bacterium can turn everyday plastic waste into the painkiller, a study reveals. The

new method leaves virtually no carbon emissions and is more sustainable than the current production of the medicine, which relies upon crude oil, researchers say. The breakthrough addresses the urgent need to recycle a widely used plastic known as polyethylene terephthalate (PET), which ultimately ends up in landfill or polluting oceans.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/microbes-transform-plastic-waste-into-paracetamol>

- **Health benefits of retirement not evenly shared**

The impact of retirement on mental health depends on income level, the nature of the job left behind, and the age at which people leave the workforce, a study suggests. Researchers found that although retirees' wellbeing generally improved once they finished work, some groups were at risk of dips in mental health.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/health-benefits-of-retirement-not-evenly-shared>

- **Key genetic differences found in people with ME/CFS**

Scientists have discovered that people diagnosed with ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) have significant differences in their DNA, offering the first robust evidence that genes contribute to a person's chance of developing the disease.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/key-genetic-differences-found-in-people-with-mecfs>

### 33. Related events:

- In July, EPCC at The University of Edinburgh was named as the UK's first National Supercomputing Centre, as part of the UK Government's Compute Roadmap. The new status for EPCC recognises its decades long experience and pioneering skill in advanced computing. We hosted two ministerial visits at the Centre: first the then minister for AI, Feryal Clark MP, and later the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, who had recently confirmed £750m of funding for the new national supercomputer after a year of patient diplomacy by Mark Parson, me and others.
- Participated in a meeting with Professor Christopher Smith, Executive Chair of AHRC and on a separate visit with Professor Jonathan Dawes, Deputy Executive Chair at the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.
- Participated in an Academy of Medical Sciences Task and Finish Group Roundtable.
- Participated in a dinner for Calum Semple, Chief Scientific Advisor to the Scottish Government, organised by Head of College and Vice-Principal Professor David Argyle.
- Participated in two League of European Research Universities Board of Directors meetings.
- Participated in a Scottish Taskforce for Green & Sustainable Financial Services update, and various events at the Global Ethical Finance Summit.

#### *Social and Civic Responsibility*

34. Court will hear more about the University's 3rd Community Plan, which launches on 8 October 2025, at the Court Seminar. This strategic University-wide plan sets out how staff, students and alumni will interact with our local communities. Our vision is that "By providing support to enable community-driven change, we will help to improve the lives of people living in our region". The plan also recognises the many existing and

developing local interactions with individuals, groups and organisations within communities that already exist across the institution.

35. The University's contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are explored through a new online publication [SDGs: Stories of Impact](#) which highlights 86 case studies and associated data across five areas of University activity: operations, community, teaching & learning, partnerships, and research. The activity highlighted explores links between the SDGs and University Strategy 2030 by celebrating impactful activities across a range of measures. The information also supports our strong position in key sustainability rankings: we are ranked 7th in the world in the 2025 QS World University Rankings for Sustainability and joint 1st in the world for contribution to SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure in the 2025 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.
36. The Forest and Peatlands Programme has helped secure a successful research income to support peatland restoration monitoring. Our own investment into baseline monitoring, along with partner in-kind contributions, at the Ardtornish peatland restoration sites (implemented by University academics and PhD students) has helped secure a further £60k funding for an extended three-year monitoring programme, funding innovative remote sensing, carbon measurements and biodiversity assessments (soil eDNA).
37. Related events (political and civic engagement):
  - Participated in a Future City Region Policy in Scotland through an Edinburgh & South East Scotland Lens workshop.
  - Participated in a meeting of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Leaders' Group meeting, and chaired a meeting of the HE/FE Strategy Group.
  - Co-hosted a reception with the Edinburgh International Festival to celebrate the University's links to one of our major cultural partners, attended by a large and engaged audience that included the Secretary of State for Scotland, local MSPs and councillors.
  - Welcomed the First Minister, the Rt Hon John Swinney MSP, and attendees of the Scottish Government conference on Poverty, which was being held in the Playfair.
  - Held an introductory meeting with Joe Griffin, Permanent Secretary, Scottish Government.
  - Participated in a Whitehall & Industry Group (WIG) CEO-Permanent Secretary dinner, attended by Gareth Davies, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Business and Trade, along with Jess Glover, Director General for Growth and Productivity at HM Treasury, and Sam Lister, Director General for Industrial Strategy.
  - Spoke at the Royal Northern and University Club, Aberdeen, on "Universities: Scotland's endangered jewels".
  - Participated in a strategy-development meeting of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland Board.
  - Attended the Military Tattoo as a guest of Air Officer Scotland.

- Welcomed Kate Forbes MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Gaelic, to the University during a visit to the Bayes Centre to launch Deep Tech Cluster pilot launch.
- Attended the Edinburgh Riding of the Marches Civic Reception as a guest of the Lord Provost.

38. Related events (global):

- Welcomed Chinese Minister Counsellor Zhou Wei to the University during her visit to explore further collaboration between the University and key Chinese partners, and to meet with Chinese students.
- Participated in a series of meetings over two days as Chair of the International Advisory Board for the University of Ljubljana.
- Participated in a reception at the Edinburgh Academy to celebrate the 76th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China.
- Participated in a reception to celebrate the Day of German Unity, hosted by Consul General Christiane Hullmann at the City Chambers.
- Participated in a number of meetings and receptions with alumni, donors and supporters of the University during a visit to Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing, accompanied by Vice-Principal Philanthropy & Advancement Chris Cox. I also participated in a series of meetings of the Tsinghua Medicine Advisory Council whilst in Beijing.

**Next steps/implications**

39. The Principal will be glad to answer any questions in the meeting. Further updates on topics covered will be provided to Court, as appropriate.



## University Court

17-22 July 2025

### Exception Committee Report

<b>Committee name</b>	Exception Committee	
<b>Date of committee meeting</b>	17-22 July 2025 (meeting by correspondence)	
<b>Action requested (if any)</b>	Court is asked to <b>note</b> the business conducted on behalf of Court by Exception Committee.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper. The membership of committees of Court is published on the University's website.	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Daniel Wedgwood, Head of Court Services
	Presenter:	Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member, Convener of Policy & Resources Committee
	September 2025	





## University Court

6 October 2025

### Policy & Resources Committee Report

<b>Committee name</b>	Policy & Resources Committee	
<b>Date of committee meeting</b>	15 September 2025	
<b>Action requested (if any)</b>	Court is asked to <b>note</b> key points from the meeting and to <b>approve</b> the reallocation of funding to cover additional costs for an electrical connection to the Advanced Computing Facility.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper. Minutes of PRC meetings are published at <a href="https://governance-strategic-planning.ed.ac.uk/governance/university-committees/court-committees/policy-and-resources-committee/minutes">https://governance-strategic-planning.ed.ac.uk/governance/university-committees/court-committees/policy-and-resources-committee/minutes</a>	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Daniel Wedgwood, Head of Court Service
	Presenter:	Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member, Convener of Policy & Resources Committee
	September 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Governance & Nominations Committee Report

<b>Committee name</b>	Governance & Nominations Committee	
<b>Date of committee meeting</b>	Meetings by correspondence: 4-13 August, 19-25 August and 18-24 September 2025	
<b>Action requested (if any)</b>	Court is asked to <b>note</b> recent decisions of Governance & Nominations Committee.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper. The membership of Court and its committees is published on the University's website.	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Daniel Wedgwood, Head of Court Services
	Presenter:	Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member and Convener of Governance & Nominations Committee
	September 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Audit and Risk Committee Report

<b>Committee name</b>	Audit and Risk Committee	
<b>Date of committee meeting</b>	11 September 2025	
<b>Action requested (if any)</b>	Court is asked to <b>note</b> the key points from the meeting including the Strategic Risk Report; and <b>approve</b> the updated Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Kirstie Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services
	Presenter:	Douglas Millican, Convener
	September 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Remuneration Committee: Revised Framework for Decision Making

<b>Description of paper</b>	This paper submits a revised version of the Remuneration Committee Framework for Decision Making document following a recent review by Internal Audit.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>approve</b> the revised version of the Framework for Decision Making document.	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	There are no resource implications associated with making the recommended changes.	
<b>EDI implications</b>	A key aspect of the Framework is to aid equality and fairness in decision making for senior staff remuneration, including considering equality impacts.	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	N/A	
<b>Consultation</b>	Remuneration Committee has considered the proposed updates and recommends these to Court for approval.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper – the current version of the document is published and, if approved, the updated version will replace it and similarly be published.	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Sheila Jardine, Senior HR Partner - Reward
	Presenter:	Hugh Mitchell, Convener of Remuneration Committee
	October 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Finance and Planning Update Report

<b>Description of paper</b>	This paper provides Court with the draft (unaudited) financial outturn position for 2024-25 and a financial sustainability update.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>note</b> the 2024-25 draft (unaudited) outturn;</li><li>• <b>note and discuss</b> the 2025-26 Quarter Zero forecast (Q0F);</li><li>• <b>note</b> the current (live) position in relation to 2025-26 student recruitment; and</li><li>• <b>note and discuss</b> the projects being progressed through cross-University Workstreams.</li></ul>	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	Court approved a two-year budget covering 2025-27 at its meeting in June 2025. Strategic decisions on resource allocations take account of our commitments around treasury cash, operating surplus and financial covenants.	
<b>EDI implications</b>	N/A.	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	Delivery of Net Zero is a clear commitment in Strategy 2030. Our ability to invest in this area remains fragile until we are generating sufficient annual operating surplus.	
<b>Consultation</b>	University Executive and Policy & Resources Committee have received earlier updates of this paper, and all budget holders are involved in quarterly budget forecast discussions.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper. This paper should not be included in open business as its disclosure could prejudice the commercial interests of the University.	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Andy Slater, Acting Deputy Director of Finance Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary, Governance & Strategic Planning
	Presenters:	James Gray, Chief Financial Officer and Kim Graham, Provost
	September 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Students' Association President's Report

<b>Description of paper</b>	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.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>note</b> the report and <b>consider</b> its contents as supporting other initiatives and projects designed to improve student satisfaction and enhance the student experience.	
<b>Appendices</b>	N/A	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	N/A	
<b>EDI implications</b>	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.	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	N/A	
<b>Consultation</b>	N/A	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	This paper is open, except for financial details and the details of an ongoing estates project.	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Ash Scholz, Students' Association President 2025-26
	Presenter:	Ash Scholz, Students' Association President 2025-26
	October 2025	

## Students' Association President's Report

### Summary

1. This paper includes:
  - President's introduction
  - Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2025-26
  - Key areas of current sabbatical work
  - Organisational activity update: Summer; Welcome Week; Semester 1 student-facing activity
  - Organisational strategy and finance update (includes Teviot Row House update)

### Background

2. 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

3. First, I would like to thank Court members for being so welcoming at the last meeting, and at the Subcommittees I have attended this far. Even if I just had the chance to briefly speak to you, it has been very helpful in making me feel like an integrated and valued part of Court.
4. The last Court meeting was mine and my fellow officers' third week in post, and much of our time since has been dedicated to deepening our understanding of our roles, getting to know senior University staff, and of course: learning many acronyms. By the time of writing this, we are much more confident in our roles and capacity to influence. The new semester beginning, and undergraduate students returning to campus means our work is about to get more intense, but equally more fulfilling as well, and we are excited for the year ahead.
5. Our first month in office also saw the Summer Graduations. As you may know, there were major disruptions during the ceremonies, of students protesting for Palestine and walking out of the hall. I fully understand the concerns that have been raised by the Senior Leadership Team about staff safety, and I think these protests underline the frustration students have been voicing over the past months. Since April, there has been very little communication or progress from the University on a timeline for the Responsible Investment Advisory Group, meanwhile a United Nations Report (A/HRC/59/23) has named the University of Edinburgh as deeply financially entangled in the genocide in Palestine. I would hope that Court is able to understand and share my serious concerns with this, not only legally and reputationally, but also conscientiously. It feels important for the University to be able to demonstrate significant progress on these discussions over the coming months.
6. Secondly, from day one on the job, we have had to get started reading up on the financial situation of the University and attended many meetings in which this was the priority. We are continuing to advocate for students to be considered important

stakeholders in the strategic decisions the University is making during this time. Whilst it has been important to manage immediate staff impacts carefully, students have received very little communication so far and have gotten their information from news articles and social media, rather than the University itself. Since Welcome Week, I have been approached daily by students expressing deep concern about the potential closure of courses, reductions in teaching provision, and the prospect of prolonged industrial action over the coming year. I am increasingly troubled not only by the anxiety and uncertainty this lack of clarity generates within the student community, but also by the potential implications it carries for the University's reputation as a world-leading institution.

#### *Sabbatical Officer Objectives*

7. As it's the start of our term, I feel it would be beneficial to Court to be introduced to our individual priorities for the year, as they serve as a good introduction to what current priority issues are to students. These are the issues we campaigned on, and our progress on them is held directly accountable to students through our Student Council.
8. Ash Scholz – President:
  - **Our Future:** The University is at a turning point, and decisions are being made which will fundamentally reshape the student experience now and in the future; it is vital students' voices are listened to in those decisions.
  - **Our Voice:** We must empower students to make their voices heard, whether through formal feedback mechanisms or protest, while also ensuring that we are open to receiving and responding to student feedback as an organisation.
  - **Our Lives:** Accessible and affordable on-campus spaces transport, and housing, so students can fully participate in student life.
9. Katya Amott – Vice President Education:
  - **Transparency:** From exam timetables to marking criteria, and average grades for courses, we need to give students the information they need to make informed choices about their studies.
  - **Curriculum Change:** This academic year, the University will be reviewing its programme portfolio, with the aim of reducing costs, but this is also an opportunity to respond to student demand for interdisciplinary courses that help students build transferable skills, alongside decolonisation of courses.
  - **Tackle the Degree Awarding Gap:** Ensuring that Widening Participation students have support for academic skills, careers progression, and sense of community at the University for their best opportunity to succeed.
10. Akrit Ghimire – Vice President Community:
  - **Access to Good Food:** Proper nutrition improves the ability to learn, but finding affordable and filling food options on campus is difficult, especially for those with



dietary requirements. While the University win awards for its food serving, it needs to be cheaper.

- **Support for Our Diverse Community:** We are a diverse student body, but this isn't always reflected in our spaces; we must work to ensure all students feel represented, on our courses, on our campaigns and especially on our campuses.
- **Accessible Housing and Transport:** If students are renting, their rights need to be respected; if they are sofa surfing, they should be able to access support; and if they are commuting, the University should be helping.

11. John Rappa – Vice President Activities and Services:

- **Year-long Taster Sessions:** Welcome Week is an amazing introduction to student life, but our message should be that it's never too late to meet you new people and get involved in the student community, a community that's here for all our members.
- **Lobby for International Students:** Around 50 per cent of our student body are international students, and they deserve the same access to opportunities and support, from the university and the government.
- **Material Support:** Expand the Free Breakfast scheme across the University, so that every student has access to free breakfast at least once a week.

12. Syjil Ramjuthan – Vice President Welfare:

- **Students First:** Ensuring holistic support for students, particularly those from marginalised communities, such as a Student Wellbeing One-Stop Tool.
- **Safer Spaces:** Working with students and staff to co-create online and on-campus communities that cultivate a sense of belonging for all, embedding a culture of dignity and respect, and empowering marginalised students' voices.
- **Accountability and Power to Change:** Centering student voices and priorities throughout upcoming and ongoing reform processes particularly around Student Code of Conduct, the Race Review, and in addressing the Degree Awarding Gap.

*Key areas of recent work*

13. What follows are summaries of key areas of work across the team. Going forwards, this is how I intend to summarise our work, rather than individual updates.

Student Voice

14. An issue for students, as reflected in NSS scores, is the University's feedback culture. The University is consistently trying to collect feedback from students but is inconsistent at responding to feedback in a way students would see, making students feel either ignored or undervalued, leading them to be less likely to engage in the future.
15. Over the summer, I have been engaged in the Student Survey Management Group, aiming to streamline surveys sent out to students and combat survey fatigue. We found that every year, there are more than 5 surveys active in October, and are hoping

to reduce this number by combining some of them, while also providing updates on what actions students can expect to come out of the surveys they complete.

16. Additionally, we have been working on Roundtable conversations between staff, including Senior Leadership, and students, providing direct avenues for student feedback leading to actionable change. For each Sabbatical Officer, we are working on having at least five of these in this academic year, with one of them confirmed for November on the university's strategic change during its current financial position.
17. We have also engaged with student groups and our part-time representatives on specific issues. Working with the Widening Participation Officer, Nazarii, VP Education Katya and VP Welfare Syjil are focusing on scaling foundational academic skills courses and improving the quality and quantity of informal staff support available for Widening Participation students. Syjil is also working together with students and staff in a focus group on improving support, conduct processes, and prevention of Gender-Based Violence. Furthermore, VP Activities John has talked to every single student society at our three-day Activities Fair, a huge achievement!

#### Student Life Affordability

18. As in previous years, affordability and the cost of living continues to be a big issue for students. VP Activities John has made progress on establishing free breakfasts across the university and is awaiting the next meeting of the Academic Contingency Group to confirm allocation of funding for Breakfast Clubs in more Schools and departments. In the meantime, they are coordinating with school reps to lobby for free breakfasts and help plan details.
19. VP Community Akrit and myself have been heavily involved with the National Students' Housing Campaign alongside Sabbatical Officers across Scotland to lobby Scottish Parliament on the Housing (Scotland) Bill that was debated on 23 September. Akrit and myself have also started work on looking at how the University can support students more with bus travel, especially which students may benefit most from additional support on bus passes.
20. Finally, the Higher Education funding crisis continues to make headlines, and VP Education Katya has started working with Sabbs from both universities and colleges across Scotland to put together a campaign on getting Further and Higher Education funding on as many party manifestos as possible ahead of the Scottish elections.

#### Processes, Spaces, and Policies

21. One last, but exciting point of key work that we have been involved in are procedural, spacial, and policy changes at the university. It is rare that students have the opportunity to contribute to such processes, and we appreciate the trust placed in us.
22. On her objectives around Gender-Based Violence, VP Welfare Syjil has helped to oversee the embedding of consent training into the matriculation process, and helped to co-create an informational set of slides on consent which has been circulated around teaching staff at the University. She and I have also advocated for students to

be included in the upcoming review of the Code of Conduct and the Dignity and Respect Policy.

23. VP Community Akrit has been able to feed into a project to establish a Dharmic Prayer Room. He has been working with the student societies that represent the three main faiths the room aspires to accommodate, and secured a £150 decoration support fund from the Association for the societies to spend on items that will make the room feel more student owned.
24. I have been very busy getting ready to reopen Teviot in Spring 2026! You can read more operational information below, but I am very happy to have started a heritage project, culminating in an exhibition of Teviot's brilliant history! This combines opportunities for students to volunteer in Heritage Collections, and collecting stories from Alumni, collaborating with different departments (Eg. Heritage Collections, and Development and Alumni).

#### *Organisational Activity*

25. **Welcome Week:** The Association hosted 8 days of activity, including Sports and Activities Fairs, a sold-out programme of See the City tours, and a diverse programme of social events, mixers and workshops to help students meet each other and find their feet. Societies organised over 300 tasters and introductory events, and our Advice Place was open and available from Saturday 6 September to support students with practical issues as they navigated their arrival. Our destination 'Gem' venue based in Bristo Square provided a central hub for Welcome Week, including an information hut enabling us to answer student FAQs and signpost new students around campus and the city. We had well over 40,000 visitors to the various Fairs, 1600 students taking tours with over 5000 attending our programmed social events and mixers – including live music, quizzes, and workshops including photography classes, Indian head massage techniques, tips from Communications coaches and much more. In addition, our partnership with Napier Students Union saw a further 1000 Napier students welcomed to an evening social in Potterrow.
26. **Summer Events Activity:** We ran a Postgraduate Summer Events programme to ensure Masters and Research students were catered to with a programme of mixers, picnics, and Fringe trips. This pilot programme aimed to support PG community at a time when our PG students can feel a little unseen as the standard undergraduate timetable has finished.
27. The Association once again hosted **Edinburgh Pride** activity in Bristo Square following the city march, with approximately 14,000 visitors joining in. We have had confirmation that future events will follow the same format and location which provides some certainty to our continued involvement, and with Teviot Row House available again will allow for an expansion of the programme.
28. Our **Festival Fringe** activity has broadly been positive across Pleasance, Potterrow, Edinburgh College of Art and Appleton Tower supporting festival partners Gilded Balloon and Pleasance. There were significant challenges this year with storm Floris

seeing closure of some outdoor sites for a day, and large-scale concert events bringing almost 300,000 additional visitors to the city although diverting from Festival ticket sales and creating accommodation challenges. In addition, we faced significant planning permission challenges including neighbour noise complaints. This is a large-scale operation for the Association and with over 176 student hospitality jobs created for the period and numerous opportunities for students in arts industry roles. Whilst Festival operators were indicating ticket sales were down by up to 30% because of the additional events in the city, our performance remained steady to last year (although down on budget). The financial result will be close because of very close control of costs.

29. **Semester 1 – key student activity:** We are now entering our busiest time of year, as our members return to campus, almost 400 student groups return to term time activity, all our buildings and spaces re-open to students, and our annual cycle of support and representation of students begins. Some key headlines include:
- We are supporting over 2,000 society meetings/activities/events in our spaces during semester 1.
  - Our ‘Skill Yourself Up’ workshop series provides up to 50 workshops covering everything from public speaking, social media influencing, sustainable events, disability inclusion, leadership – supporting any interested students to develop personally and professionally.
  - Support for student leaders and volunteers: core induction and role specific training for 1,400 programme representatives, over 3,000 society and peer learning and support leaders.
  - Nominations will open for our Student Awards, and Teaching Awards – last year students submitted over 2,200 nominations across both schemes.
  - Cycle of student representative and democracy opportunities, including monthly Student Council meetings bringing students and reps together for thematic discussions and policy making; round-table activities to bring student representatives and University senior leadership together
  - We also recognise the likelihood of substantial industrial action this year, along with continued student campaigning on divestment, and Palestine, with this informing student representation work, and (in the case of industrial action) generating substantially increased demand for advice, particularly on academic impacts and processes, through our Advice Place.

#### *Strategy and Finance*

34. The Association is reaching the end of our current **Strategic Plan** and during the autumn will be undertaking work with key stakeholders to support development of our next Strategic Plan which will begin from April 2026. We are also reflecting on the progress and achievements during the lifespan of the current plan. Some early indications of future priorities have already emerged and we have some current work that will ultimately align into our future plan. This includes a Democracy Review with exploratory work starting in October.

*Paragraphs 31-33: closed section*

**Risk Management**

- 35. Financial risks are highlighted in the report.

**Next steps/implications**

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



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Edinburgh University Sports Union Report

<b>Description of paper</b>	This paper is to note developments at Edinburgh University Sports Union (EUSU) since the last Court meeting, providing updates on current work and strategic process.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to note the impact that University Sport has on the student experience and sense of belonging as detailed in this report.	
<b>Appendices</b>	N/A	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	N/A	
<b>EDI implications</b>	N/A	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	N/A	
<b>Consultation</b>	Consultation for this paper was sought from Katherine Duncan (Interim Head of Sports Development Programmes), Mark Munro (Director of Sport and Active Health), and Polly Pearce (Sports Coordinator- Competitions).	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Open paper	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Liv Stevens, Sports Union President
	Presenter:	Ash Scholz, Students' Association President
	September 2025	

# Edinburgh University Sports Union Report

## Summary

- EUSU continues to strive to engage as many students in physical activity as possible, with particular emphasis on engaging more students from International and Postgraduate communities, with the aim of growing a more representative membership base.
- Welcome Week was an overwhelming success for EUSU with more student engagement at Sports Fair and more taster sessions and events on offer than previous academic years.
- EUSU is grateful for the increased financial support from the University enabling us to continue to provide exceptional student sporting experiences.

## Background

1. The focus of EUSU at the start of the 2025/2026 academic year is on engaging with new students at the start of their university journey and reengaging with our returning students. EUSU aims to promote the value of Sport in enriching the university experience ensuring that students are aware of the opportunities available to them at the outset. In the Sport at Edinburgh community, we believe that sport has the power to change lives through providing a sense of belonging, alongside allowing individuals to flourish through learning and development opportunities. This paper outlines the priorities, goals, and strategic direction of EUSU as we enter the 2025/2026 academic year.

## Discussion

### *Welcome Week Reflections*

2. Welcome Week was an overwhelming success for EUSU, with strong presence across campuses across the week to meet as many students as possible.
3. Sports Fair took place on Monday 8 September with over 7760 students entering the Gem at Bristo Square throughout the day. The extended operating hours, coupled with quiet hour, allowed us to create a welcoming environment whilst maximising the number of people the 70 clubs were able to engage with. The Gem continually provides an excellent venue for Sports Fair as it allows the Pleasance to be fully utilised for club taster sessions and gym tours.
4. EUSU offered an increased number of taster sessions and welcome events on the University of Edinburgh Events app totalling 340. This enabled our clubs to streamline their activity and maximise the number of students they were reaching.
5. The wider Sport at Edinburgh Welcome Week offering was hugely successful with a suite of new events being added to this year's calendar, including the high-in demand Welcome to Edinburgh Run delivered in partnership with EUSA and Lululemon allowing 60 (event capacity) new students to explore Edinburgh whilst being active.
6. The 2024/2025 season once again resulted in increased membership for EUSU with 8,976 club memberships and 1,911 intramural memberships. As of 17 September, we

had 1633 Sports Union members which tracks above membership as of 17 September this time last year (a 12% increase).

#### *Intramural and Competitive Sport*

7. As of 17 September, 111 teams have entered into our Intramural Program. This year we have increased our offering to 10 sports with the inclusion of Volleyball. We have increased our representation across schools in the University with 37 directly engaging in the program, with more schools fully funding their intramural teams. 12 schools have dedicated School Sport Coordinators for the academic year.
8. The BUCS (British Universities & Colleges Sport) season commences on the week commencing 29 September, with Edinburgh taking part in 57 fixtures that week. This season we will have 118 teams competing in BUCS competition with 18 of those teams competing in the BUCS Premier League tiers!
9. The annual Men's Scottish Varsity Rugby Match between the University of Edinburgh and the University of St Andrews took place at the Hive Stadium on 20 September 2025 (after submission of this report). The attendance is anticipated to be higher than last year, highlighting its positive engagement with the University community.

#### *Coaching and Volunteering Academy*

10. Ahead of the new season, we held our annual Club Conference on 3 September, with attendance from 112 representatives across 62 clubs. This included an insightful presentation from Shelagh Green on the link between volunteering in Sport and Career next steps, alongside discussions around Club Culture and an increased emphasis on November this year.
11. The Coaching & Volunteering Academy (CVA) continues to run vital training for committee members with at least 3 committee members taking part in Active Bystander Training again this year alongside other training around Concussion, Water Safety and First Aid.

#### *Good news!*

12. With regard to the increased connection between Development & Alumni and Sport, at the end of September the new Sir Chris Hoy Sports Scholarship Fund was announced. This fund will gather donations from alumni and supporters and be annually distributed to elite scholarship athletes to support them to excel in academics and sport. It is an honour to have the support of one of our greatest alumni for this fund.
13. In terms of Performance Sport, the recent Women's Rugby World Cup has displayed Edinburgh's talent in helping Scotland achieve quarter final qualification. Current student Alex Stewart and recent graduate Rhea Clarke both played alongside 8 alumni.
14. After an unbeaten season, becoming the first Men's Edinburgh University side to win the Scottish Cup, the Men's Hockey First Team took home the BUCS Team of the Year award at BUCS Conference.



#### *Direction of Sport at Edinburgh*

15. EUSU has adjusted swiftly to a new look staff team. Polly Pearce is departing her role as Sports Coordinator- Competitions at the end of September after 3 years at the University. Everyone new to the team has brought fresh ideas and a wealth of experience and perspectives to the organisation. As such, we are confident that EUSU will continue to thrive in its new landscape.
16. Edinburgh Sport has undertaken a rebrand in which the formally known Sport and Exercise has become Edinburgh Sport. This is to move in line with the new values of ambition, belonging and belief as well as new uniform to streamline all Sport staff to be wearing the same, overall making us more accessible for students.
17. Structurally, the EUSU staff team have moved to sit more formally within the wider Edinburgh Sport team. The move reflects the direction of travel with our rebrand and the desire for all areas of Sport at the University to work more closely together. The Sports Union remains an independent entity representing the student voice led by the critical Sports Union Executive and its trustees.
18. Edinburgh Sport has gained new partnerships over the Summer including a partnership with Netball Scotland in which Edinburgh becomes a High-Performance Centre for Netball.
19. Edinburgh Sport announced a new three-year partnership with Grilla Energy, one of the largest commercial agreements secured in UK Higher Education Sport.
20. University facility space continues to be a limiting factor for our 70 sports clubs and EUSU activity. In order to be able to expand clubs' offerings to allow greater participation, increasing facility space remains on EUSU's agenda.
21. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the University for increasing the Sports Union grant this academic year, with further thanks considering the financial climate the University is in more broadly. The University's desire to keep promoting the student experience does not go unrecognised. There are undoubtedly continued financial challenges for our sports clubs. The additional funding has allowed us to increase club grants by £11,000 and increase resources such as our Representation Fund. This enables clubs to be able to further subsidise core club activity making important strides in keeping sport accessible and affordable for all students.

#### **Risk Management**

22. No major risks.

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

23. The Sports Union President leads the Executive Committee, who all oversee the strategic direction of the Sports Union. Please reach out if you have any follow up questions or would like to explore collaborative opportunities.



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Student Experience Update: Student Surveys 2025 Results

<b>Description of paper</b>	This paper reports the findings from the 2025 national student surveys (NSS, PTES and PRES) and presents points for discussion on how we respond to the outcomes.
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>note</b> the findings of the survey results and endorse ongoing work to respond.
<b>Resource Implications</b>	There are no specific resource requests in this paper. However, proposals to improve the student experience are likely to require investment. This is expected to be managed through the work of the Learning & Teaching Workstream priorities and student-focused plans for changes.
<b>EDI implications</b>	The student surveys are assessed with key EDI indicators and details available on our Insights dashboards. The work undertaken will support greater equality, diversity and inclusion for students within our community.
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	N/A
<b>Consultation</b>	The analysis presented in this paper is based on data provided by the Student Analytics and Insights Team in Student Experience Services. Consultation took place with the Provost and members of University Executive, including the EUSA President, and members of the Academic Strategy Group (Heads of Schools, Colleges and College Registrars).
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper – commercial in confidence [Note: information on the University’s NSS results is available at <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/students/2025/national-student-survey-2025">https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/students/2025/national-student-survey-2025</a> and through the <a href="#">Discover Uni website</a> .]
<b>Further information</b>	Author: Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students  Presenters: Colm Harmon, Vice Principal (Students) Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students

September 2025



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Teviot Row House Compliance Works

<b>Description of paper</b>	This paper provides an update on the Teviot Row House Compliance Works project and seeks University Court approval of additional funding in order to complete the project.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>approve</b> additional funding to complete the project.	
<b>EDI implications</b>	N/A	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	The project was assessed against the University's sustainability targets using the Edinburgh Sustainability Model Evaluator (ESME) Tool. This assessment, undertaken at RIBA Stage 3 (Concept Design), confirmed that the proposals complied with good practice, University design guidance and the benchmarks set for a refurbishment project of this type.	
<b>Consultation</b>	The Teviot Row House Compliance Works Project Board have been fully consulted ahead of making this funding request. Capital Projects Group on 7 August 2025 agreed that the request could proceed to Estates Committee. Estates Committee on 27 August 2025 agreed to recommend approval of the additional funding to Policy and Resources Committee (PRC). PRC on 15 September 2025 agreed to recommend approval of the additional funding to University Court.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper – commercially sensitive information.	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Iain Logan, Director of Construction, Procurement & Delivery
	Presenter:	Damien Toner, Director of Estates
	September 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Microsoft Agreement

<b>Description of paper</b>	The new Microsoft agreement will fix the costs and prices of the licences and services, allowing us to predict future spend and constraining cost uplift during this period.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>approve</b> a new Microsoft agreement, subject to conclusion of negotiations in line with expectations; and delegate authority to the Vice Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University to sign the contract.	
<b>Appendices</b>	N/A	
<b>EDI implications</b>	EqIAs will be performed for any relevant service changes. By using a standard procurement framework, we ensure that suppliers adhere to appropriate E&D requirements for their services.	
<b>Climate &amp; SDGs</b>	University sustainable procurement processes will be used.	
<b>Consultation</b>	Presented to IT Committee (May 2025 and August 2025); Knowledge Strategy Committee (May 2025); and Policy and Resources Committee (September 2025). The project team has engaged with appropriate service owners and Heads of College/Professional Service Group IT to determine product requirements. There has been ongoing discussion with the Chief Information Security Officer on the required cyber protection to be provided by this agreement. The Head of Corporate and Commercial Finance has also reviewed and is content with the financial implications of the agreement.	
<b>Freedom of Information</b>	Closed paper – commercial confidentiality.	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Tony Weir; Director of IT Infrastructure, ISG
	Presenter:	Gavin McLachlan; VP, CIO & Librarian to the University
	September 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Consideration of the Investigation into Financial Oversight and Decision Making at the University of Dundee

Description of paper	This paper sets out the University’s current position in relation to the general lessons for the sector identified in the Report of the Investigation into Financial Oversight and Decision Making at the University of Dundee (‘Gillies Report’), to provide assurance that existing practices at Edinburgh are already in line with the key points identified in the report and highlight broader issues for consideration.	
Action requested	Court is asked to <b>note</b> the assurances provided in the paper and points raised by the University Executive, Governance & Nominations Committee and Audit & Risk Committee.	
Appendices		
Resource Implications	The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is an arms-length body of the Scottish Government and is the single largest funder of the University, currently providing approximately £209m a year. The financial memorandum sets out requirements that institutions are expected to comply with in return for funding and accountability is underpinned through adhering to reporting requirements and full participation in the Outcomes Framework & Assurance Model process. Additional ring-fenced funding, including strategic funding and funding for the provision of national or regional activity via the University of Edinburgh acting as hub or co-ordinating institution, is subject to additional conditions of grant and reporting requirements.	
EDI implications	N/A	
Climate & SDGs	N/A	
Consultation	Colleagues in Human Resources, Internal Audit and Finance were consulted in the development of this paper, which was subsequently considered by University Executive, Governance & Nominations Committee and Audit & Risk Committee, with their observations incorporated into the paper.	
Freedom of Information	Closed paper	
Further information	Author:	Kirstie Graham, Dan Wedgwood Court Services
	Presenter:	Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal and University Secretary
	September 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Award of University Benefactor

<b>Description of paper</b>	The paper proposes candidates for the award of University Benefactor.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to approve donors for University Benefactor status.	
<b>Appendices</b>	N/A	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	The cost of awarding is met from existing budgets.	
<b>EDI implications</b>	N/A	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	N/A	
<b>Consultation</b>	All nominees have been reviewed and recommended for approval to the Principal by the Vice-Principal Philanthropy and Advancement.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper until all awards have been offered and accepted by the recipients.	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Katie Littlefair Head of Donor Engagement and Events & Protocol
	Presenter:	Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor
	September 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### The University of Edinburgh Cross & Salmon Trust: Appointment of New Trustee and Re-appointment of Continuing Trustee

<b>Description of paper</b>	The paper requests approval for the appointment of a new trustee and the re-appointment of a continuing trustee to the University of Edinburgh Cross & Salmon Trust. The proposed appointment and reappointment are at the request of the existing trustees.
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>approve</b> the appointment of Leigh Chalmers as a new trustee from August 2025, and the back-dated reappointment of Chris Cox as a continuing trustee with effect from 1 October 2024, for respective five-year periods.
<b>Resource Implications</b>	N/A
<b>EDI implications</b>	The Trust will become a grant-making trust upon the death of the Settlers, to provide scholarships to undergraduate students at the University who would not normally consider going to university although academically able.
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	The Trust supports Sustainable Development Goals by supporting prospective students who require financial assistance to study at Edinburgh and so enhance their potential contributions to wider society.
<b>Consultation</b>	This paper has been reviewed by the Director of Advancement Operations and Secretary to the University of Edinburgh Development Trust. The deed of appointment and re-appointment having been signed by all the trustees has been sent for registration by solicitors. The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator has been notified.
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper - legacy confidentiality
<b>Further information</b>	Author: Morag Murison Head of Legacies & Planned Gifts  September 2025



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Legacy Loans Recommendation

<b>Description of paper</b>	The paper seeks approval to offer to gift a collection to the National Museums Scotland, where the collection has already been held and displayed on long-term loan for 99 years.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>approve</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• an offer to gift the collection to the National Museums Scotland; and,</li><li>• delegation of authority to the Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer &amp; Librarian to the University to sign any relevant documentation, in consultation with the General Counsel &amp; Director of Legal Services.</li></ul>	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	None, if the offer is approved.	
<b>EDI implications</b>	57 items from the collection are on long-term display in a public museum and can viewed free of charge for 364 days of the year.	
<b>Climate &amp; SDGs</b>	N/A	
<b>Consultation</b>	The action requested is the recommendation of the University Collections Advisory Committee, following professional collections management and academic advice received. Consultation has also taken place with Legal Services, Governance & Court Services and tax specialists in Finance.	
<b>Freedom of Information</b>	Closed paper.	
<b>Further information</b>	Authors:	Daryl Green, Associate Director, Heritage Collections (Research & Curatorial), Lewis Allan, Governance & Court Services
	Presenter:	Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University

September 2025





## University Court

6 October 2025

### Updates to Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

<b>Description of paper</b>	This paper sets out the proposed changes to the University's Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy & Procedure.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>approve</b> the proposed changes.	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	N/A	
<b>EDI implications</b>	No major equality impacts arise from the proposed updates.	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	N/A	
<b>Consultation</b>	The proposed updates were initiated by Finance at the request of Audit & Risk Committee and informed by legal advice, with draft changes proposed by Legal Services in consultation with: Governance and Strategic Planning, Internal Audit, the University Secretary, Human Resources. The Policy was discussed at the University's Policy Consultation Forum on 27 August	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper. <i>Note: The revised Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy is available through the University's <a href="#">Policy Directory</a>.</i>	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Esther Duncan, Solicitor, Legal Services
	Presenter:	Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary
	September 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Anti-Fraud Policy 2025-26

<b>Description of paper</b>	This paper provides a revised version of the University's Anti-Fraud Policy.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>approve</b> the revised Policy.	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	N/A	
<b>EDI implications</b>	N/A	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	N/A	
<b>Consultation</b>	The revised policy was drafted in consultation with staff from Finance, Internal Audit and Legal Services. The revised policy has been reviewed by University Executive. Audit & Risk Committee reviewed an earlier version of the policy on 5 June 2025 and reviewed this version on 11 September 2025. The policy was also shared with Policy & Resources Committee on 15 September 2025.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper. <i>Note: the revised policy is available at <a href="https://uoe-finance.ed.ac.uk/for-staff/financial-regulations-policies-and-procedures/anti-fraud-policy-and-procedures">https://uoe-finance.ed.ac.uk/for-staff/financial-regulations-policies-and-procedures/anti-fraud-policy-and-procedures</a></i>	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Lorna McLoughlin, Head of Finance, Development & Improvement
	Presenter:	James Gray, Chief Financial Officer
	September 2025	



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Development & Alumni Donations and Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity

<b>Description of paper</b>	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 April 2025 to 31 July 2025 and an update on current alumni relations activities.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>note</b> the legacies and donations received and current alumni relations activities.	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	N/A	
<b>EDI implications</b>	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.	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	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.	
<b>Consultation</b>	This paper has been reviewed and approved by Chris Cox, Vice-Principal Philanthropy & Advancement and Executive Director of Development & Alumni.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper – commercially sensitive	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	Lipa Hussain, Projects Administrator Emily Gwiazda, Alumni Relations Project Officer David Scott, Head of Research
	Presenter:	Chris Cox, Vice-Principal Philanthropy & Advancement

September 2025



## University Court

6 October 2025

### Remuneration Committee: Approach to 2026 Review of Senior Leadership and Principal Remuneration

<b>Description of paper</b>	The paper outlines Remuneration Committee's proposed approach to the Annual Remuneration Review of both the Senior Leadership Team and the Principal.	
<b>Action requested</b>	Court is asked to <b>approve</b> the approach to the review of both the Senior Leadership Team and the Principal's salary.	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	Fully costed proposals will be presented to the Remuneration Committee in January 2026. All work associated with this exercise can be accommodated within normal workload.	
<b>EDI implications</b>	The recommendations reflect the principles that underpin the Remuneration Committee's decision making; specifically, to ensure that the process for reviewing the reward of senior staff reflects robust equality practice and that the reward of senior staff is fair, equitable and responsive in a highly competitive environment. Based on current salaries, there is no urgent need to address any gender pay gaps.	
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Sustainable Development Goals</b>	Our senior team have a direct role in enabling better delivery of our climate and sustainability goals, so recognising their performance and rewarding achievements is important to maintaining the focus. Furthermore, fair and equitable pay contributes to improved staff engagement.	
<b>Consultation</b>	The proposed approach to the review of senior staff remuneration has been endorsed by the Remuneration Committee.	
<b>Freedom of Information status</b>	Closed paper	
<b>Further information</b>	Author:	James Saville, Director of HR
	Presenter:	Hugh Mitchell, Convener of Remuneration Committee
	October 2025	