



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

University Court

1 December 2025

St Cecilia's Hall, Niddry Street, Edinburgh

Agenda

OPENING ITEMS

- | | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | Minutes | A1 |
| | To <u>approve</u> the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2025 | |
| 2 | Matters Arising & Review of Action Log | A2 |
| | To <u>raise</u> any matters arising and <u>review</u> the Action Log | |
| 3 | Principal's Report | B |
| | To <u>note</u> a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal | |
| 4 | Committee Business | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy & Resources Committee C1 • Governance & Nominations Committee C2 • Audit & Risk Committee C3 • Remuneration Committee Annual Report C4 • Senate C5 | |

KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

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| 5 | Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report | D |
| | To <u>note</u> the annual report presented by Douglas Millican, Convener of Audit & Risk Committee | |
| 6 | Risk Management Post Year-End Assurance Statement | E |
| | To <u>note</u> the assurance statement presented by Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services | |
| 7 | Student Intakes Update | F |
| | To <u>note</u> a paper presented by Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning | |
| 8 | Finance and Planning | |
| | To <u>note</u> papers presented by James Gray, Chief Financial Officer, and Kim Graham, Provost, and to <u>approve</u> the Annual Report & Accounts, US GAAP Financial Statements and associated letters of representation | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Planning Report G1 • Q1 Finance Report G2 | |

- Draft Annual Report & Accounts 2024-25 **G3**
- United States Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP) Financial Statements 2024-25 **G4**

9 Students' Association and Sports Union Reports

To note reports presented by Ash Scholz, President of the Students' Association

- Students' Association Report **H**
- Sports Union Report **I**

10 Student Experience Update **J**

To note a paper presented by Lucy Evans, Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students

11 Annual Court Internal Effectiveness Review **K**

To note a paper presented by Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary

12 Amendment to the Delegated Authority Schedule: Strategic IT Committee **L**

To approve amendments to the Delegated Authority Schedule. Paper presented by Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary

13 Annual People Report **M**

To note a paper presented by Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

14 Donations & Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity **N**

To note

15 Laigh Year Regulations **O**

To approve

16 Senate Election Regulations **P**

To approve

17 Health & Safety Annual Report **Q**

To note

18 Chair Resolutions **R**

To approve

19 Any Other Business

20 Date of Next Meeting

23 February 2026, 9.30am-5pm (including Court seminar)



University Court

6 October 2025

John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls

Minutes

- Members Present:** Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member
Simon Fanshawe, Rector
Katya Amott, Students' Association Vice-President Education
Morag Angus, Co-opted Member
Richard Blythe, Senatus Assessor
Sandra Cummings, Co-opted Member
Alastair Dunlop, Chancellor's Assessor
Ruth Girardet, Co-opted Member
Neil Johnston, Trade Union Professional Services Staff 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
Christopher Morson, Co-opted Member
Kathryn Nash, Trade Union Academic Staff Member
Ash Scholz, Students' Association President
Kavi Thakrar, Co-opted Member
Sarah Wolffe, General Council Assessor
- Member Apologies:** Rushad Abadan, Co-opted Member
Robert Aldridge, City of Edinburgh Council Assessor
David Ovens, 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
Liz Baggs, Interim Vice-Principal Research & Innovation
Fiona Boyd, Chief of Staff & Head of the Principal's office
Lucy Evans, Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students
Iain Gordon, Head of College, Science & Engineering

James Gray, Chief Financial Officer
Kim Graham, Provost
Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students
Louise Kelso, General Counsel and Director of Legal Services
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
Daniel Wedgwood, Head of Court Services (clerk)
Liv Stevens, President of the Sports Union (item 6)
Damien Toner, Director of Estates (item 8)

OPENING ITEMS

Opening and Welcome

Simon Fanshawe, Rector, opened the meeting, noted the apologies received and welcomed members and attendees. He extended a particular welcome to the following new members and attendees:

- Neil Johnston, Trade Union Professional Services Staff Member of Court;
- Morag Angus, Sandra Cummings and Chris Morson, Co-opted Lay Members of Court;
- Liz Baggs, Interim Vice-Principal Research & Innovation;
- James Gray, Chief Financial Officer
- Lucy Evans, Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students

The Rector noted that he had been contacted by Lord Mann, the UK Government's independent adviser on antisemitism. It had been confirmed that the University had a positive reputation in relation to this issue. The Rector noted that he was involved in planning events aimed at encouraging constructive dialogue on campus, drawing on successful initiatives at other institutions.

1 Minutes

Paper A1

Court approved the minutes of the meeting of 23 June 2025.

2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log

Paper A2

Matters Arising

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary, noted that the Responsible Investment Advisory Group (RIAG) had been established and was to hold its first meeting very soon. The Convener of RIAG, Ruth Girardet, gave an overview of the group's initial priorities and noted that communications about the group would follow as soon as possible. It was recognised that there was substantial interest in the group and that there was significant strength of feeling in the University community regarding relevant current issues, as reflected in a petition that had recently been received by Court. However, communications needed to be timed to avoid pre-judging any aspect of the group's work.

It was also noted that the report of the University's academically-led Race Review had been published and a response group had been established to consider its recommendations.

Action Log

The Action Log was noted.

3 Principal's Report

Paper B

Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, introduced the report and additionally noted recent announcements regarding the intention to introduce a levy on international student fees in England. The implications of this proposal for Scottish higher education remained unclear.

The following points were made in discussion:

- There was a need to balance the freedom to protest with the experiences of those attending graduation ceremonies. The nature of protests at recent ceremonies had had a significant negative impact on staff and visitors. Some changes had been made to ceremonies and further changes would be implemented if necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those attending.
- It would be important for the Race Review Response Group to consult widely, recognising that the review represented the views of its academic authors and that a variety of views on relevant issues were held in the University community.
- Staffing changes following the University's voluntary severance scheme and uncertainty during the period of strategic change and budgetary re-balancing had inevitably had an impact on staff morale. In order to minimise this impact, the University's senior management wished to effect necessary changes quickly and transparently.
- Relations between the University management and the recognised trade unions were constructive despite significant disagreements, primarily over the potential use of involuntary redundancy, which had led to recent industrial action. It remained the position of senior management that involuntary redundancy would be avoided if possible but that none of the potential means of effecting necessary cost savings could be wholly ruled out.

4 Committee Business Exception Committee

Paper C1

The report contained details of the appointment, made on behalf of Court, of an external member of Audit & Risk Committee. The report was noted.

Policy & Resources Committee

Paper C2

The report was noted.

On the recommendation of Estates Committee and Policy & Resources Committee, Court approved the reallocation of funding to cover additional costs, which had arisen unavoidably under statutory contractual conditions, for an electrical connection to the Advanced Computing Facility.

Governance & Nominations Committee

Paper C3

Court noted the report, which contained details of appointments to the Responsible Investment Advisory Group and decisions made relating to the process for recruitment of the next Senior Lay Member.

Audit & Risk Committee

Paper C4

Douglas Millican, Convener of Audit & Risk Committee (ARC), introduced the report. He noted that the committee had requested a progress report in relation to the management of the University's financial sustainability risk and that such a report had not been available at the committee's most recent meeting. It had been agreed that the committee would engage directly with executive leaders through a deep-dive workshop in the lead-up to the December meeting of Court, to gain a detailed understanding of this progress.

He also noted that the Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement had been presented to Court, but the financial risk appetite was for noting only, as this was subject to ongoing work. Noting this caveat, Court approved the Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite Statement.

ARC had noted progress made by the Finance team that, it was hoped, would result in an improved year-end process for the completion of the audited Annual Report & Accounts.

The committee had found the work of Internal Audit to be effective in illuminating areas for further improvement. It was noted that overdue audit actions remained a significant issue, although it was recognised that there was work in progress to address this.

Remuneration Committee

Paper C5

Hugh Mitchell, Convener of Remuneration Committee, introduced the paper, noting that changes to the Remuneration Committee Framework for Decision Making document had been made following a recent review by Internal Audit.

Court approved the revised Remuneration Committee Framework for Decision Making.

KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

5 Finance and Planning Update Report

Paper D

James Gray, Chief Financial Officer, presented the report.

Kim Graham, Provost, provided an overview of the workstreams focused on strategic change and the delivery of the savings required to achieve the two-year budget. Projects had been prioritised and work had been accelerated on a number of projects within the Staff workstream. Associated tools and guidance were being developed within HR and consultation with the recognised trade unions would be carried out accordingly.

The following points were made in discussion:

- There was a desire in the staff community for more information on the intended outcomes of staff-related changes. This would help staff members who were considering their career options, among others. It was noted that the need to

provide clarity as soon as possible was recognised but there were unavoidable constraints on the availability of information as work developed.

- To carry out the intended scale of organisational change would require significant dedicated resource and particular capabilities. It was observed that this had been assessed carefully and there had been investment in relevant areas, including relevant training. The organisation and resourcing of the workstreams took account of lessons learned from the review of the implementation of the People & Money system.
- Relatedly, the empowerment of decision-makers at different levels of the organisation would be important. The role of Heads of School was discussed in particular. The Heads of College outlined processes that were in place for engaging Heads of School in planning and implementing change.
- The outcomes of the currently open voluntary redundancy and retirement options would affect the overall remaining budgetary challenge. By the time of the planned November engagement with ARC, these outcomes should be clearer and planning would continue on this basis.
- Clarification was sought regarding the methodology used to derive narrative aspects of the management accounts, including the underlying financial position. In response, it was noted that work was underway to provide greater clarity on some elements of the University's finances, including interactions between operating and capital transactions.

6 Students' Association and Sports Union Reports

Students' Association President's Report

Paper E1

Ash Scholz, President of the Students' Association, introduced the report, highlighting a successful start to the academic year, including high engagement in Welcome Week activities. A number of concerns within the student community were also highlighted, including a desire to see progress in relation to campaigns for divestment and uncertainty surrounding the University's plans for strategic change and cost saving and their potential implications for education and the student experience.

In discussion, the hope was reiterated that all parts of the University community could work together to ensure that future graduation ceremonies would be positive experiences for the graduands, their family members and supporters and the staff involved.

Sports Union President's Report

Paper E2

Liv Stevens, President of the Sports Union, introduced the report, highlighting some of the Sports Union's priorities for the current academic year. These included a particular focus on engagement with international and postgraduate students. The year was also to include a review of the Sports Union's governance structures. The Union had a substantially refreshed staff team, who were working within new management structures, alongside University staff, under new branding as Edinburgh Sport.

The Sports Fair during Welcome Week had attracted high numbers of students and memberships of sports clubs and intermural sports were on course to show an increase on the previous year.

The Sir Chris Hoy Sports Scholarships had recently been launched, a very positive and high-profile development.

In discussion, the social media output of the Sports Union was commended.

7 Student Surveys 2025: Results and Responses

Paper F

Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students, and Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students, introduced the paper, noting the overall pattern of improvement in the University's survey results but minimal change in relative rankings, as a result of improvements also in other institutions' results. It was noted that the largest improvements in the University's results were in areas that had been subject to active prioritisation and significant work, including the area of assessment and feedback. There was reason to expect continued improvement in future years, as cohorts of students who had benefitted over a number of years from recent changes became survey respondents, the National Student Survey (NSS) being a survey of final-year students.

Variation in the results for different parts of the University was notable. This was taken to reflect the positive impact that could be made at the local level but also suggested a continuing need to standardise practices.

Continued efforts across the University would be required to maintain progress and effect any change in the University's rankings.

The following points were made in discussion:

- While improvement in the survey results was welcome, it should be borne in mind that the student experience as a whole encapsulated more than the matters covered in the national surveys. The focus of work to enhance the student experience, and that reported to Court, should therefore be suitably broad. It was noted that the work of the current Learning & Teaching workstream for strategic change would be beneficial in developing different dimensions of the student experience.
- Given the significant variation in results across different parts of the University, there might be substantial value in exchanging good practice. It was noted that efforts were already made to facilitate dialogue across Schools. There were distinctive factors in different academic disciplines that could limit direct exchange of practice. Sharing practice across institutions, by academic discipline, could also be valuable.
- There could be value in publishing internal variation in survey results to encourage awareness of relative performance and incentivise improvement.
- The University had seen increased student numbers in some areas, largely as a result of the 'conditional offer' process for rest of UK students. Care was taken to ensure any expanded intakes were accommodated without detriment to academic standards.
- Reporting results to Court with more years of historical comparison would allow for more meaningful assessment of trends.

- The NSS survey question concerning the Students' Association was specifically focused on support for academic activity. While the Association was committed to improvement in this area, it was recognised that responses to this question were likely to be influenced by wider institutional context.

8 Teviot Row House Compliance Works

Paper G

Damien Toner, Director of Estates, gave an overview of additional work that had been required to complete the Teviot Row House refurbishment, resulting in the need to request the allocation of additional funds. There was discussion of the unusual background to the project, which had involved a re-scoping in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, with consequences for planning and budgeting processes. Future projects would therefore not run according to the same processes and timelines. Additional lessons had been drawn from analysis of the project, reducing the risk of future projects over-running or exceeding budget. It was noted that the required additional funding in this case was expected to be taken from underspend in other Estates projects.

The concern was noted that overspend on Estates projects could negatively affect staff morale in the context of the reduction of expenditure across the University. It was noted that it was rare for a project to exceed its budget and that lessons for the future were always considered very carefully in such cases. It was emphasised that capital and revenue expenditure were drawn from separate budgets and could not be compared directly.

Works had progressed well under the revised timescale and it was hoped that the building would re-open early in 2026. It was noted that the refurbishment would result in significant improvements to the student experience, in addition to improved energy usage, accessibility and safety.

Court approved additional funding to complete the project.

9 Microsoft Agreement

Paper H

Court approved the new three-year Microsoft agreement and delegated authority to the Vice Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University to sign the contract.

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

Paper I

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary, summarised the purpose of the paper, which was to provide Court with assurances in relation to the 'lessons for the sector' that had been stated in the report into the University of Dundee, and to help identify any areas for improvement. It was noted that versions of the paper had been considered by the University Executive, Governance & Nominations Committee and Audit & Risk Committee. In broad summary, the University's existing processes had been found to address the stated 'lessons for the sector' and that there were significant contrasts between the University's approach to financial management and governance and those reported to have been taken at the University of Dundee. It was also recognised that good governance was dependent on cultural and behavioural factors and that it was appropriate, in a spirit of continuous improvement, to seek areas for improvement at

these levels. It was observed that the ability of members of Court and governance committees to question and challenge decisions was well evidenced in meetings.

11 Award of University Benefactor

Paper J

Court approved the award of University Benefactor status to the Nippon Foundation, and David and Molly Pyott Foundation.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

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

Paper K

Court approved 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 a five-year term in each case.

13 Legacy Loans Recommendation

Paper L

Court approved the proposal for handling of a legacy collection and delegated authority to the Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University to sign any relevant documentation, in consultation with the General Counsel & Director of Legal Services.

14 Updates to Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Paper M

On the recommendation of Policy & Resources Committee, Court approved changes to the University's Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy & Procedure.

15 Anti-Fraud Policy 2025-26

Paper N

On the recommendation of Audit & Risk Committee, Court approved revisions to the Anti-Fraud Policy.

16 Donations & Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity

Paper O

Court noted the report, including the high level of philanthropic income received. The Principal commended the work of Development & Alumni and, in particular, that of Morag Murison, Head of Legacies & Planned Giving.

17 Any Other Business

The Senior Lay Member thanked Colm Harmon for all his contributions to the University and to Court, as a regular attendee of Court, noting that this was to be his last Court meeting before leaving the University.

18 Date of Next Meeting

1 December 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Principal's Report

Description of paper	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.
Action requested	Court is asked to note the contents. Any questions will be addressed during the Court meeting.
Appendices	N/A
Resource Implications	N/A
EDI implications	N/A
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	Generally, no consultation is required as the paper is a report of recent news/activity however, where subjects covered require specialist input then consultation with the lead contact has taken place.
Freedom of Information status	Open paper
Further information	Author: Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor Presenter: Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor 24 November 2025

Principal's Report

Summary

1. The paper updates Court on key University activity in the period from the start of October 2025 to end of November 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 four key areas of Strategy 2030: Our People, Learning, Teaching & Students, Research & Innovation, Social & Civic Responsibility.
3. Topics covered include: the latest political affairs activity, staff engagement and the Principal's key meetings.

Discussion

General

4. Following a number of meetings and staff forum events held previously within the Colleges and Professional Service groups to discuss the changes that are being delivered in specific budget areas, a revised approach to all staff meetings was adopted this autumn. Much thought was put into the organisation of the new style in-person facilitated information sessions by colleagues in Communications and Marketing, with the aim of establishing an open atmosphere where staff felt able to participate and ask questions in a respectful environment.
5. The sessions worked well with short presentations and open discussion with a particular focus on the changes impacting Academic and Professional Services staff and services.
6. The main takeaway was that staff wish to hear more detail on the changes so that they can understand the likely impact on them and in what timescale. A follow up email has gone out to all staff with further information which takes into account the latest decisions at University Executive. We will continue to update staff as plans are developed and agreed.
7. The third in-person meeting this year of the Leaders Forum, a defined group of 170 key leaders from across the University, took place in early November. The key sessions were led by the Chief Financial Officer, James Gray, who covered our budget position, the latest information on admissions and tuition fee income led by Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning Rona Smith, and consideration of staff behaviours led by Vice-Principal Corporate Services, Dr Catherine Martin. I also addressed the Forum and we invited questions from the floor to the Senior Leadership Team. These in-person sessions are augmented by online update calls that take place in the months when there is not an in-person meeting. Engagement with all of these sessions continues to be high with attendance numbers at around 130 at every session. They are a key way to enable a two-way flow of information between senior staff from across the University.

8. The University Executive Strategy Day on 3 December will follow Court and will feature discussion focused on our International Strategy, current projects impacting the Student Lifecycle, and a session on financial literacy.
9. The UK Government announced on 20th October 2025, via the Post-16 Education and Skills White paper, that they will ‘increase undergraduate tuition fee caps for all higher education providers in line with forecast inflation in academic years 2026-27 and 2027-28...[and] then legislate when parliamentary time allows to increase tuition fee caps automatically for future academic years.’ The uplift will be confirmed by the UK Government during or following the Budget on 26 November 2025. The Scottish Government has very recently given us permission to implement the increase for new and continuing students once the UK Government announces the new fee rate. On other key matters in the White Paper, we await with interest to see developments related to the international student tuition fee levy, to be implemented initially in England but with undoubted implications for Scotland, likely after the Holyrood elections in May 2026.
10. I was delighted to have the opportunity to welcome the Directors of the USA Development Trust for the University to the campus this month, and to host a dinner with colleagues to thank them for their tremendous commitment as volunteers.
11. This group serves a vital fiduciary function for the Trust, ensuring that gifts from alumni, philanthropists and organisations in the US can be made to benefit the University’s work in a tax-efficient manner. They are also personal supporters of the University and encourage others to follow their lead. This was the Trust Board’s first formal visit to campus as a group, during which they held their annual AGM. Development & Alumni colleagues organised a thorough and varied programme demonstrating our excellence across teaching, research and culture, and highlighting the impact of gifts from the US across campus. The programme included visits to the Bayes Centre, Usher Institute, Edinburgh Futures Institute, St Cecilia’s Hall, and the University Collections. Feedback has been extraordinarily positive: one member told me that his “mind had been blown” by the quality of people and work that they had seen illustrated.
12. EDINA, the income-generating directorate within the Information Services Group who develop and deliver award-winning products and services to the UK education sector, are fostering great interest from the sector regarding the Edinburgh Large Language Model (ELM) GenAI innovation platform – a central gateway providing safer access to Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) via access to Large Language Models (LLMs). ELM is unique among commercial GenAI products as it has been developed within an institutional setting and provides safe, ethical, sustainable for all AI access for staff and students at the University, with key advantages including lower power usage plus the fact that all data is held on our servers and not relinquished to a third party, unlike standard GenAI applications. These characteristics give us an excellent platform to exploit on a commercial basis across the UK and Europe.

Related Events

- Welcomed attendees of Scotland's first Global Investment Summit to the closing reception held in the Edinburgh Futures Institute.
- Participated in the UK Dementia Research Institute dinner.
- Attended a poignant memorial service for Sir Geoff Palmer at St Giles' Cathedral.
- Led a Universities Scotland delegation of Scottish Principals on a two-day visit to Brussels for high level meetings with various European Parliament representatives, Swiss and Norwegian delegations, UK Ambassador to the EU. We also held a Scottish Alumni event, with multiple universities represented, at Scotland Europa.
- Participated in a Universities UKi Security Risks in Higher Education meeting, and a Universities UK-organised Roundtable with the Ministry of Defence on the Defence Universities Alliance.
- Spoke on behalf of LERU, the League of European Research Universities, at the EU Research Security Conference, held over two days in Brussels and met with many other members of a surprisingly large UK contingent, given that the conference was originally aimed at member states only.
- Participated in two Russell Group Board meetings, and was a member of the interview panel for their next Chief Executive.
- Participated in a Universities Scotland Main Committee and Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Liaison meeting.
- Participated as a Board member in several Scottish Funding Council Board meetings, including an SFC Strategy Discussions and dinner with Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Jenny Gilruth.
- Participated online as a panel member at the UK National AI Policy, Infrastructure and Skills Summit.
- Participated in a National Leadership Forum organised by the Leadership College for Government in London.
- Welcomed students and staff for the University's Christmas Tree lights switch-on in Old College Quad.

Strategy 2030 Themes

Our People

13. With regard to the All-Staff information sessions referenced above, over 400 staff attended across the three sessions in the Edinburgh Futures Institute, King's Buildings and the BioQuarter. Attendance numbers were 270, 88 and 68 respectively. 73% of staff who shared feedback after the sessions said that they found the meeting valuable. Building attendance at these sessions, so that a greater number of staff participate, is a key objective for the future.
14. On union engagement UCU Edinburgh (UCUE) have a continuous dispute regarding the threat of compulsory redundancies and this has involved action short of strike (ASOS) since 20 June and three periods of strike action, the latest running over 17--19 November. The action was particularly disruptive on the first day where Old College was also targeted by students protesting about divestment in relation to Palestine: they joined with striking workers to block the entrances. A rally was held on the 19th, which coincided with the first day of graduations. Overall, behaviour and

disruption to staff and students was managed well with planned mitigations proving effective.

15. Negotiations continue with UCUE, with an offer made on 13 November to commit to no staff member redundancy as a result of the cost savings during the UCU current mandate (before 28 April 2026) in exchange for no industrial action during the same period. Work on planning and developing the future changes would continue. A voluntary severance scheme targeted at Academic staff was also proposed as a means of ensuring some savings can still be achieved during the period. A late attempt to call off the strike action on 17 and 18 November, because negotiations were ongoing, was rejected by the branch on 14 November and strike action went ahead as planned. We are resuming negotiations on Monday 24 November to seek to resolve the dispute.

Related events:

- Celebrated staff long service milestones at a reception in the Playfair Library. 170 staff were recognised for their contribution to the University over 20-50 years.

Learning, Teaching and Students

16. I was pleased to participate in a “Representative Roundtable” session, organised by our Sabbatical officers, which was attended by a mix of School and College student Representatives at both undergraduate and postgraduate taught and research level and representatives from the senior team. The session focussed on aspects of the current strategic change projects and implications for the student experience. Outcomes from the session included options to make information on the University’s change programme activities, particularly on finances, more widely available for students. Improving communication to students on related activity, such as changes to delivery of courses, would be beneficial from a university and School level – e.g. through established Student Staff Liaison Committees.
17. Our Winter Graduation programme is currently underway with 16 ceremonies taking place. A celebratory atmosphere has been evident at the ceremonies to date. We have made changes to the format of the ceremonies following significant protests and disturbance at some of the summer graduations. While we will always tolerate the right to protest, we also believe that it should be proportionate and respectful of all and have reminded both staff and students of that position, to do all we can to ensure the ceremonies are rightfully celebratory and inclusive.
18. As we are now in a period of Industrial Action, as noted above, we have student-focussed information available on our website clarifying our position with regard to such issues as: why the action is taking place, how it might impact studies/assessment, where to access support and picket lines.

Related events:

- Participated in the regular online UUK discussions on various student-focussed topics including campus tensions, UCAS and current issues.

- Participated as a panel member at the Times Higher Education Student Success conference in Edinburgh.
- Participated in a meeting with the President and Managing Director of Prosper, an entirely student-led community interest company that invests £50,000 of real money to show how socially responsible investing can be done.

Research and Innovation

19. On 30th October we were delighted to host a visit by Professor Anne Ferguson-Smith, Executive Chair of the Biotechnology and Biology Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), and her colleagues, enabling us to showcase our research and innovation activities and to emphasise our strong contribution to UK bioscience. Led by Professor Liz Baggs, Vice-Principal Research and Innovation (Interim), the visit followed the Roslin Institute's mid-term review of its strategic investment, which evidenced the Institute's role as a national capability for animal bioscience and its extensive connectivity. Their time with us included supportive discussions with early career researchers, focused discussions around engineering biology, innovation and the BioQuarter, a visit to the Genome Foundry, and a presentation from Anne on BBSRC's strategy and funding priorities. As Scotland's leading university for bioscience innovation, we are pleased to have a strong and receptive relationship with the BBSRC as one of their trusted strategic partners.
20. Edinburgh was represented at COP30 this year by a delegation of experts including Professor Liz Grant, who represented the University and Scotland Beyond Net Zero at the British Council Panel Session on 11 November. Professor Margaret Graham led a session on the role of partnerships for universities to make a difference on climate action. The University collaborated with partners across the U7+ Alliance of World Universities to host a panel event, Higher Education as a Critical Global Partner for Enabling and Accelerating Climate Action. More information here: [Edinburgh experts head to COP30 | News | The University of Edinburgh](#)
21. Supported by Edinburgh Innovations, the University secured £112.6m in combined industrial and translational awards in 2024/25, attracted £113m investment into university associated companies, generated 172 new patents, 62 new licenses, 132 disclosed inventions and launched 64 companies.

University of Edinburgh spinout Trogenix, which is developing innovative cancer therapies, starting with brain cancer, has completed Series A financing of £70 million. The funding will enable the rapid advancement of its pipeline of potentially curative cancer therapies across multiple aggressive, treatment-resistant solid tumours into the phase 1 in-human clinical trials. More information here: [Edinburgh Innovations | £70 million investment in biotech spinout](#)

22. Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre (EPCC) has won EU and UK Government funding to establish and operate the €10m (£8.6m) UK AI Factory Antenna (UKAIFA). The initiative, led by the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC JU), will focus on helping organisations take their first steps in AI, increasing literacy in the technology and its use, and showing how it can help increase

productivity and deliver economic growth. More information here: [€10m project to accelerate AI use in UK | News | The University of Edinburgh](#)

23. We are approaching the end of our current Research Cultures Action Plan period at the end of 2025. At our September 2025 reporting deadline 80% (62.5) of the actions set out in our plan in 2023 are complete, with another 15% (11.5) actively progressing. Highlights of our 2023-25 Research Cultures Action Plan include:

- Development of a suit of resources to [support and develop our Principal Investigators](#)
- The publication of a specific [Postgraduate Research Cultures Plan](#)
- The development and publication of [advice and guidance for those experiencing online harassment](#) because of their work at the University
- Becoming a signatory of the [UK Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research & Innovation Practice](#)

24. Discussion and feedback has been ongoing with our research community over the last six months to develop our next Research Cultures Action Plan 2026-28. The new plan will build on the work and investments undertaken in our last plan to improve our research cultures. Once approved our new plan will be shared in January 2026

Related events

- Provided the vote of thanks at the Euan MacDonald Centre dinner.
- Welcomed delegates of the MEMRISYS2025 conference to the Gala Dinner.

Social and Civic Responsibility

25. The University of Edinburgh has been ranked 4th in the world, 3rd in Europe and 2nd in the United Kingdom (UK) in the QS World Sustainability Rankings. This builds on the University's performance in last year's rankings, when the University was ranked 7th in the world. A total of 2,002 institutions are included within this iteration of the ranking, an increase of approximately 300 institutions compared to last year. The University's overall ranking has been determined by the three categories used by the QS to assess institutions: environmental impact, social impact, and governance. Lund University, University of Toronto and UCL were ranked in the top three.

26. Edinburgh Earth Initiative have published "Advancing Action: Edinburgh's Research and Reflections for COP30" presenting a curated set of contributions that showcase the University's broad climate and environment research and innovation strengths, framed by the UN Action Agenda for COP30.

27. The University is the first UK Further and Higher Education institution to train its marketing and communications staff to deeply embed sustainability into their work, this approach has been recognised by the annual UK Green Gown Awards. Organised by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) in association with UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), the awards recognise the exceptional efforts and innovations of educational institutions to address environmental and sustainability challenges. The University won the "Tomorrow's Employees" Category

which recognises institutions which are taking pioneering and innovative steps to embrace the green skills agenda.

Related events:

- Sir Malcolm Rifkind, former Foreign Secretary and University alum, delivered the annual JP Mackintosh Lecture at St Cecilia's Hall on the topic of 'The Decline of the West?' which was hosted by the Provost, Professor Kim Graham.
- I hosted the visit to the Bayes Centre by the new Minister for Higher and Further Education, Ben Macpherson MSP, to discuss a new report on the importance of Scotland's research and innovation links.
- I hosted the Montague Burton Lecture and Dinner, with guest speaker Dr Corinna Hawkes of the UN. Mairi Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs also attended, welcomed the speaker and attended the dinner.

Related events political and civic engagement:

- Welcomed attendees to an event at the Edinburgh Futures Institute to launch the University's Community Plan.
- 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.

Related events global:

- Participated online, as a Board member, in a Talloires Network Steering Committee meeting.
- Welcomed delegations to the University from several Foundations including the Karlsson Jativa Charitable Foundation and the Nippon Foundation.
- Participated in the Una Europa General Assembly. Hosted by the University of Madrid.
- Participated in a United States–Scotland Business Reception hosted in Edinburgh by the Ambassador of the United States of America, and attended by First Minister of Scotland, The RT. Hon. John Swinney MSP.
- Welcomed Professor Nancy Ip, President, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, on a visit to the University.
- Participated in various League of European Research Universities meetings, as a Board member and in the Rectors' Assembly hosted by Leiden University.
- Participated online, as a Board member, in a Universitas 21 Executive Committee meeting.
- Welcomed Brian Davidson, Hong Kong Consul General and Chris Woodward, Director General, Trade & Investment, to the University during their visit to Edinburgh as part of a UK-wide trip.



University Court

1 December 2025

Policy & Resources Committee Report

Committee name	Policy & Resources Committee
Date of committee meeting	PRC meeting 10 November 2025 PRC additional session on finances, 21 November 2025
Action requested (if any)	Court is asked to note key points from the meeting. Approvals recommended by PRC are put forward elsewhere in the Court agenda.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper. Minutes of PRC meetings are published at https://governance-strategic-planning.ed.ac.uk/governance/university-committees/court-committees/policy-and-resources-committee/minutes
Further information	Author: Daniel Wedgwood, Head of Court Services Court@ed.ac.uk Presenter: Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member, Convener of Policy & Resources Committee November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Governance & Nominations Committee Report

Committee name	Governance & Nominations Committee
Date of committee meeting	10 November 2025
Action requested (if any)	Court is asked to note recent decisions of Governance & Nominations Committee.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper. The membership of Court and its committees is published on the University's website.
Further information	Author: Daniel Wedgwood, Head of Court Services Court@ed.ac.uk Presenter: Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member and Convener of Governance & Nominations Committee November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Audit and Risk Committee Report

Committee name	Audit and Risk Committee
Date of committee meeting	18 November 2025 and additional Financial Sustainability Risk session on 19 November 2025
Action requested (if any)	Court is asked to note the key points from the meeting and the additional session
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper
Further information	Author: Kirstie Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services Presenter: Douglas Millican, Convener November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Remuneration Committee: Annual Report to Court 2024-25

Description of paper	This is an annual report from the Remuneration Committee. In order to align with the University's financial year Court agreed that it be submitted to the last Court meeting of the calendar year and reflect activities in the previous academic year.
Action requested	Court is invited to note the contents of the report.
Resource Implications	There are no resource implications, as this is a report on previous activity.
EDI implications	The principles that underpin the Remuneration Committee's decision making 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.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	This paper has been written on behalf of the Convener of the Remuneration Committee, Hugh Mitchell, who has agreed its content.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper
Further information	Authors: Sheila Jardine, Senior HR Partner Reward James Saville, Director of Human Resources Presenter: Hugh Mitchell, Convener of Remuneration Committee November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Senatus Academicus (Senate) Report to Court

Description of paper	<p>This report informs Court of the confirmed minutes of the Senate meetings held 24 April 2025 and 20 May 2025.</p> <p>This report also provides a summary of Senate business undertaken at the following meetings of Senate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The e-Senate meeting held 27 August – 10 September 2025, including the confirmed e-Senate report• The Ordinary meeting held 1 October 2025
Action requested	<p>Court is asked to note the confirmed minutes of the Senate meetings held 24 April 2025, 20 May 2025 and the confirmed e-Senate report of 27 August – 10 September 2025.</p> <p>Court is asked to note the summary of Senate business covering the period August to October.</p>
Appendices	<p>The confirmed minutes of the special Senate meeting held 24 April and ordinary Senate meeting held 20 May, and the confirmed report of e-Senate held 27 August – 10 September, are available on the Court wiki site.</p>
Resource Implications	<p>Senate is responsible for considering the resource implications of its decisions during the course of its business.</p>
EDI implications	<p>Senate is responsible for considering the EDI implications of its decisions during the course of its business.</p>
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	<p>N/A</p>
Consultation	<p>This paper has been reviewed by the Academic Registrar.</p>
Freedom of Information status	<p>Open paper</p>
Further information	<p>Author: Olivia Hayes, Senate Clerk</p> <p>Presenter: Professor Sir Peter Mathieson, Principal</p> <p>November 2025</p>

Senatus Academicus (Senate) Report to Court

Summary

1. This report provides Court with the confirmed minute for the following meetings of Senate:
 - Special meeting held 24 April 2025
 - Ordinary meeting held 20 May 2025
 - e-Senate meeting held 27 August – 10 September 2025.
2. This report also provides Court with a summary of business undertaken at the following meetings of Senate:
 - The e-Senate meeting held 27 August – 10 September 2025
 - The Ordinary meeting of Senate held on 1 October 2025

Background

3. Senate regularly reports to Court on its business undertaken. This is the first Senate report for the 2025/26 academic year.

Discussion

Confirmed minute of Senate meetings held 24 April 2025 and 20 May 2025

4. At its 23 June 2025 meeting, Court received a summary of Senate business undertaken at the Special Meeting of Senate held on 24 April 2025 and the Ordinary meeting of Senate held on 20 May 2025.
5. The approved minutes of the 24 April 2025 meeting are provided in Appendix 1. The approved minutes of the 20 May 2025 meeting are provided in Appendix 2.

e-Senate meeting held 27 August – 10 September 2025

6. Senate approved the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus/Emerita on 31 retiring professors. Ten members commented on the item.
7. The approved report of the e-Senate meeting held 27 August – 10 September 2025 is provided in Appendix 3.

Key points – 1 October 2025

Report of the Senate Business Committee

8. Senate received a verbal report of the Senate Business Committee. The Business Committee agreed that seven of the eight papers submitted should be included on the agenda. One paper submitted for the 1 October Senate agenda did not advance, with the Provost writing to the paper author on behalf of the Business Committee to propose handling. That paper was titled *Senate's Role in the Recruitment and Appointment of Vice-Principals*.
9. Senate was informed that a late paper was submitted for the agenda. This paper was titled *Senate Role in Board of Examiner Policy and Regulations*. The paper was

considered in line with the terms of reference of the Senate Business Committee and it was agreed that the paper would not advance as the paper was not considered to be urgent, noting the full agenda and time available for additional papers.

Minutes and e-Senate Reports

10. Senate approved the minutes of the meetings held on 24 April 2025, 20 May 2025 and the e-Senate report of 27 August – 10 September 2025.

Matters Arising

11. Senate received a motion during the meeting in response to the late paper not advancing to the agenda:

Any regulation change relating to the operation of Boards of Examiners in the academic year 2025/26 must come to full Senate for approval.

Any change to the operation of Boards of Examiners in academic year 2025/26 that does not require changes to the regulations also requires approval by full Senate. Proposals for potential mechanisms for delegation of approval of minor changes are welcomed; such mechanisms would also require explicit approval by full Senate.

12. Senate approved the motion by a majority vote of 102. 16 members did not approve, 8 members abstained and 27 members stated there was not enough information.

EUSA Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2025/26

13. Senate received the EUSA Sabbatical Officer Priorities for 2025/26 as presented in Paper S 25/26 1E.

Amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations

14. Senate recommended that Court approve the amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations, as presented in Paper S 25/26 1F, without requiring a vote.

Senate Assessor Election Arrangements for 2025/26

15. Senate approved by majority vote to bring forward the Senate Assessor election, presented as Option 3 within Paper S 25/26 1H. The successful candidate for the non-professorial position would fill the current vacancy until 31 July 2026 and then serve a new four-year term from 1 August 2026 (a 'double' election for that position). The successful candidate for the professorial position would take office on 1 August 2026 as originally envisaged. 107 members approved Option 2, 5 members approved Option 1, 2 members approved Option 3 and 24 members abstained.
16. By a majority vote Senate approved the following amendment to the Senate Assessor Election Regulations. 105 members approved, 41 members did not approve and 10 members abstained:

Amend paragraph 10 of the Senate Assessor Election Regulations by re-adding: 'elected' and removing 'and are not Vice-Principals or the Provost', to give the following sentence:

“Only those members of the electorate, as defined in paragraph 6, who are elected academic staff, shall be eligible for nominations and nominations may be made only by members of the electorate.”

17. Without requiring a vote, Senate approved the amended Senate Assessor Election Regulations and the Senate Assessor Nomination Form.

Amendments to the Senate Election Regulations

18. Senate considered amendments to the Senate Election Regulations as presented in Paper S 25/26 1I. Senate considered a proposal for handling the membership of non-Professorial members on Senate when they are promoted to Professor during their term of office. Senate approved Option 3 contained within the paper: that there be no change to existing practice for handling members who are promoted to Professor during their term on Senate. Members will continue as a ‘non-professorial’ member until the end of their current term of office. 62 members approved Option 3, 40 members approved Option 1, 21 members approved Option 2 and 20 members abstained.
19. Without requiring a vote, Senate recommended that Court approve the changes to the Senate Election Regulations.

Senate External Review Task and Finish Group – Final Report

20. Senate noted the report, Paper S 25/26 1J.

Senate External Review Task and Finish Group – Recommendations

21. Senate received Paper S 25/26 1K outlining a proposed approach to holistic review. An amendment to the paper was received and Senate noted that paper authors will work with the proposers of the amendment to bring a revised paper to the December meeting.
22. Senate will receive a paper at its December 2025 meeting outlining proposals for taking forward the work.

Portfolio Review and the Size and Shape of the University’s Curriculum

23. Senate received Paper S 25/26 1L seeking information on Portfolio Review and the size and shape of the University’s curriculum.
24. By a majority vote, Senate approved Motions 1, 2 and 3 as contained in the paper and provided below. 103 members approved, 15 members did not approve and 11 members abstained.

Senate requests that University and/or College leadership provide the following documents, for review and approval by Senate, and for the information of Schools, prior to Schools being requested to formalise programme closures via Portfolio Review Academic Year 25/26:

- a. Motion 1: A modelling of the 25/26 Portfolio Review Framework, inclusive or any new UG thresholds, which includes

a. Anticipated loss of incomes as a result of implied programme closures.

b. Estimated savings in Professional Service and Academic Staff costs associated with Course and Programme closures.

c. Assessment of the potential academic harm arising from the closure of the proposed programmes, including protecting opportunities for specialist study (even if in small numbers), consideration of current and future industry needs for particular specialist programmes, and the overall disciplinary context.

b. Motion 2: Any cost/income metrics proposed to inform School or College level decisions about programme sustainability, as might be used to support maintenance or closure of courses and programmes.

c. Motion 3: Should the UG 25/26 Portfolio Review UG framework not include measures to assess Joint Programme enrolment on the basis of clustered cognate programmes, a specific risk analysis of widespread closure of Joint Programmes, including:

a. Anticipated loss of incomes as a result of implied programme closures.

b. Estimated savings in Professional Service and Academic Staff, informed by

c. An assessment of applicant behaviour (i.e. likely rates of retention through recruitment to single-honours degree).

d. Assessment of the potential academic harm arising from the closure of the proposed programmes, including protecting opportunities for specialist study (even if in small numbers), consideration of current and future industry needs for particular specialist programmes, and the overall disciplinary context.

25. Senate's interest in these matters was noted, however the responsibility for oversight of the portfolio remains with colleges.

Risk Management

26. There is a risk to the University's governance and reputation if the University Court is not kept informed of the work and decisions of the senior academic body of the University.

Next steps/implications

27. The next steps for individual items of business are stated under the summary of each item.

28. Senate will receive the unconfirmed minutes of the 1 October meeting at its 10 December meeting for approval. Court will be informed via the next Senatus Academicus Report of the status of the 1 October 2025 minutes.



University Court

1 December 2025

Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report to Court

Description of paper	This paper addresses the requirement for the Audit and Risk Committee to provide an annual report to Court.
Action requested	Audit and Risk Committee is asked to consider and note the report to support approval of the financial statements.
Appendices	N/A
Resource Implications	N/A
EDI implications	N/A
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	The report has been reviewed and approved by Audit and Risk Committee
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper
Further information	Author: Kirstie Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services Presenter: Douglas Millican, ARC Convener November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Risk Management Post Year-End Assurance Statement

Description of paper	This paper reports on risk management post year-end assurances in support of the Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25.	
Action requested	Court is asked to note the information presented.	
Appendices	N/A	
Resource Implications	N/A	
EDI implications	N/A	
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A	
Consultation	Each College and Professional Services Group has been contacted to obtain updates to inform this report.	
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper	
Further information	Author:	Ashley Shannon, Director of Operations, Corporate Services Group
	Presenter:	Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services
		November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

2025-26 Student Intakes

Description of paper	This paper summarises and comments on 2025-26 matriculated student intake numbers, at University and College level, in context of planning round targets, and compared against settled intakes for 2024-25.
Action requested	Note the intakes position as context for finance and planning decisions
Resource Implications	Student tuition fee income, particularly from overseas fee status students, is a substantial component of the University’s funding. Student intake targets are set during the planning round, and the degree to which these have been met, exceeded or missed can materially affect overall income. A full updated fee forecast based on settled 31 October 2025 matriculated student numbers – new and continuing – is reflected in the Quarter 1 (Q1) figures in the Finance and Planning Update paper also on this agenda.
EDI implications	Despite the challenges of demand and selection, the University remains committed to widening participation. We will continue to focus on recruitment and positive outcomes for students from less-well represented backgrounds including SIMD20. Aims to diversify our international recruitment markets aim to enhance the opportunities for students from other countries to study at the University. This may be expected to change the student backgrounds attending the University in coming years.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	Overseas/UK student population balance contributes to SDGs 4 (inclusive equitable quality education, promote lifelong learning opportunities) and 10 (Reduce inequality within/among countries).
Consultation	Colleagues from SRA and College recruitment; also discussed at University Executive in November 2025.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper - contains information which, if disclosed, would be likely to prejudice substantially the University’s commercial interests and ability to effectively conduct its affairs.
Further information	Author: Jim Galbraith, Head of Strategic Data Insight and Analysis Presenter: Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Finance & Planning Update Report

Description of paper	This paper provides an update on the following: (a) Financial Sustainability Risk workshops held with Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) and Policy & Resources Committee (PRC) members in November; (b) the latest management accounts as at the end of September 2025; and (c) the 2024-25 year-end report on Strategy 2030 key performance indicators. It also notes plans for the 2026-27 planning round.
Action requested	Court is asked to note the contents of this paper.
Resource Implications	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. Risk monitoring is provided through monthly budget holder meetings and quarterly forecast reviews.
EDI implications	EDI considerations are embedded in the planning process with this commitment reflected in the Strategy 2030 key performance indicators.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	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.
Consultation	This paper has been reviewed by the Chief Financial Officer, James Gray.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper. This paper should not be included in open business as its disclosure could prejudice the commercial interests of the University.
Further information	Author: Andy Slater, Acting Deputy Director of Finance Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Presenter: James Gray, Chief Financial Officer Kim Graham, Provost

November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Quarter One Forecast 2025-26

Description of paper	This paper provides an update on the 2025-26 University Group Quarter One Forecast (Q1F). Forecast submissions were received on 21 November 2025 with consolidation work taking place in the week commencing 24 November. This work has been expedited to allow Court to consider the most up to date information possible. In previous years, Court would receive the Q1F update at its meeting in February.
Action requested	Court is asked to note the contents of this paper.
Resource Implications	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. Risk monitoring is provided through monthly budget holder meetings and quarterly forecast reviews.
EDI implications	EDI considerations are embedded in the planning process with this commitment reflected in the Strategy 2030 key performance indicators.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	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.
Consultation	This paper has been reviewed by the Chief Financial Officer, James Gray.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper. This paper should not be included in open business as its disclosure could prejudice the commercial interests of the University.
Further information	Author: Andy Slater, Acting Deputy Director of Finance Presenter: James Gray, Chief Financial Officer November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Draft Annual Report & Accounts 2024-25

Description of paper	This paper presents the draft Annual Report & Accounts (ARA) for the year ended 31 July 2025 and the associated Letters of Representation (including the back-to-back letter of representation addressed to Court members).
Action requested	Court is asked to approve the 2024-25 ARA and the associated Letters of Representation.
Resource Implications	There are no specific requests for resources in this paper. The 2024-25 ARA confirms that the University will continue operating as a going concern with the resources available to deal with our short- and longer-term commitments.
EDI implications	N/A
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	The Letter of Representation has been drafted by PwC and reviewed and recommended for approval by Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) at its meeting in November.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper. This paper cannot be included in open business. The release of the ARA is covered by the University publication schedule.
Further information	Author: Andy Slater, Acting Deputy Director of Finance Presenter: James Gray, Chief Financial Officer November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

United States Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (US GAAP) Financial Statements 2024-25

Description of paper	This paper contains the results for the University Group for the 2024-25 restated under US GAAP.
Action requested	Court is asked to approve the draft US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements for 2024-25.
EDI implications	N/A
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	The US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements has been prepared in consultation with stakeholders, and the figures have been reviewed by our external auditors.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper. This paper cannot be included in open business. The release of the US GAAP Management Commentary and Financial Statements is covered by the University publication schedule.
Further information	Author: Andy Slater, Acting Deputy Director of Finance Presenter: James Gray, Chief Financial Officer November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Students' Association President's Report

Description of paper	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.
Action requested	Court is asked to note the report and consider its contents as supporting other initiatives and projects designed to improve student satisfaction and enhance the student experience.
Resource Implications	This is a regular update report, there are no resource implications outlined.
EDI implications	N/A
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	N/A
Freedom of Information status	This paper is open, except for financial details and the details of ongoing estates project.
Further information	Author: Ash Scholz, Students' Association President 2025-26 Presenter: Ash Scholz, Students' Association President 2025-26 November 2025

Students' Association President's Report

Summary

1. This paper includes:
 - President's introduction
 - Key areas of current sabbatical work
 - Organisational activity update: 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 want to highlight our ongoing work this semester, which has seen an increase in student engagement across the board this year, which is amazing!

Elections

4. Our October elections saw a good uplift in engagement this year. These elections focus primarily on electing both Postgraduate taught and Postgraduate research representatives for every school, as well as 2 University-wide positions respectively. This year 2543 voters cast 5696 votes in these PG-specific elections, an uplift in voters of 84%, and an uplift in votes of 51% votes. Results were announced on Friday 17 October, and a training conference event held the following weekend to get new reps off to a good start.
5. It was great seeing the campaigning of the candidates, and they have been a very engaged cohort already. Our postgraduate representatives also participate in Student Council, our monthly decision-making and accountability forum, and some representatives also came along to the roundtable on the university's finances, which will be detailed later. Our attention now turns towards the March elections, which includes the Sabbatical Officer elections.

Student community and student development

6. We are in the midst of over 4500 hours of society activity taking place across Association buildings this semester. From dance classes to newspaper writers' meetings, football club appreciation, to board gaming and music practice and theatre rehearsals and performances, facilitating student-led activity for students in person is a core part of what we do. In addition, our programme of entertainment activity and community-building has included Diwali celebrations, weekly breakfast club (with an average of c.300 attending every Wednesday in our Student Community Lounge), and our regular programme of popular quiz nights. Our Tandem language programme and Buddies scheme both remain popular with international students, and we are piloting a series of new activity-focussed community-building activities under the banner of Blether Together.

Alongside this, we have now registered over 1400 programme representatives from Schools across the University and have trained c.1200 of these during October. Our core activities to support student leaders have been ongoing, including induction, skills workshops, and supporting schemes for reward and recognition, including the Edinburgh Award. 362 student leaders have registered to work towards the University's Edinburgh Award through their Association role – an uplift of 19% on last year.

Key areas of recent work

7. Since the last Court meeting, we have continued to be engaged a lot with the financial situation of the university. The Students' Association has been collecting feedback from students on the changes being made, particularly where these changes have been having an impact on their student experience. Through this initial round of changes, the following themes are arising:
 - **Courses/teaching:** There are concerns over the sizes of some classes in this new model. Some programmes are now too large for the University's physical estate and are having to utilise two lecture theatres to host the class on campus. Similarly, PhD students are particularly worried about the reduction in teaching opportunities. Teaching experience is a major motivation for undertaking that level of study, and there is now increased competition for less opportunities. Some students have also reported that their assessments are being condensed, leading to increased anxiety over the lack of chances to learn and improve based on feedback, before submitting final assessments.
 - **Cancelled provision:** Smaller electives are being cut by Schools if they aren't deemed to be large enough to be an effective use of resources. In many instances, courses are being cut after being promoted to students, and after they have been selected, causing a lot of frustration and disappointment amongst students. A few field trips have been reported to be cut in the School of GeoSciences due to a lack of funding, limiting how Geography students are able to engage with their programmes and utilise first-hand experiences in their studies.
 - **Access to physical spaces:** This can be crucial for learning in some practical courses, and access to this is being restricted to reduce the staffing costs required to open them. For example, art studio access has reduced, despite the high demand for these spaces. Similarly, students studying Textiles have been moved to a smaller studio space and are losing printer access, meaning they must work from elsewhere. Given the nature of their work and projects, this is logistically challenging and detrimental to their experience.
 - **Service provision:** Students have reported a significant reduction in free period product provision across campus, particularly in spaces with high footfall. Staff departures have resulted in students noticing that the remaining administrative and academic staff are overworked, leading to delays in communication and a higher frequency of errors (e.g. Double-booked rooms)
8. Divestment continues to be a key concern for students and priority for the Sabbatical Officer team, and we are pleased to see some movement on this topic through the creation of the Responsible Investment Advisory Group (RIAG). However, initial

conversations have highlighted the need for a clear remit, proper routes for governance, and a proactive approach to communication with the wider institution. This Group has been positioned as a response to the feedback provided in the Responsible Investment Survey, but it needs additional institutional support to meet the University community's expectations.

9. More broadly, students have contacted the Sabbatical Officer team to raise concerns regarding the University's approach to freedom of expression, in the context of campaigning on Palestine. Specifically, some students felt the recent guidance regarding protests at graduation ceremonies was unclear and intimidating, and similar concerns were raised about the University's handling of the display of posters in the windows of PhD offices in George Square, which culminated with a [police presence on campus](#).
10. In the wider context of a challenging student experience, we are keen to see the University commit to responding meaningfully to student feedback, and protecting students' right to free expression, in and out of the classroom.

Student Voice

11. The last month has seen very positive engagement between student representatives and staff, including Senior Leadership. In roundtables, the Sabbatical Officers have worked on providing direct avenues for student feedback leading to actionable change. In October, VP Welfare Syjil and VP Education Katya held a roundtable on the Degree Awarding Gap with students directly affected, discussing foundational academic skills courses, feelings of belonging through mentoring programs, and improving part-time work and development opportunities.
12. The beginning of November saw another roundtable with a wide variety of student representatives and Senior Leadership of the university, on the university's strategic change during its current financial position. Students were invited to contribute issues they were facing due to budget restraints, such as course cancellations, or service reductions. We have gotten positive feedback from students on these forms of engagement with Senior Leadership and are planning more for the next semester. I am following up on the actions that came out of the meeting now, and I would really like to see engagement with them from Senior Leadership.
13. Furthermore, we have engaged with our newly elected Postgraduate Representatives, who increase our cohort of representatives to over 1400! VP Activities John has engaged with School Representatives on establishing free breakfast offers in Schools and departments across the university to build community and support students' access to good food! VP Welfare Syjil has been continuing to work with students and staff in a focus group on improving support, conduct processes, and prevention of Gender-Based Violence and we are participating the United Nations 16 Days of Activism.
14. Finally, I am speaking at the Times Higher Education Student Success Conference in Edinburgh on Student Voice, and specifically how to engage students in the creation

and governance of their learning. This is a very exciting opportunity, and I am looking forward to the discussion at the conference!

Student Life Affordability

15. As in previous years, affordability and the cost of living continues to be a big issue for students. As said above, VP Activities John has made progress on establishing free breakfasts across the university, as our Free Breakfast offer in Potterrow is more popular than ever.
16. During the autumn, 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. Together with students, we emailed Lothian-based MSPs over 160 times in the lead-up to the debate, and we feel quite positive about the provisions in the bill and positive impacts for students.
17. VP Activities John and myself are travelling to Westminster to speak to MP Chris Murray about the government's introduction of a levy on international student fees, which we are opposing. We hope for productive conversations.
18. Finally, the Higher Education funding crisis continues to make headlines, and VP Education Katya has been working on the "Save Our Scottish Education Campaign" together with Sabbatical Officers across Scotland, advocating for better Further and Higher Education funding on as many party manifestos as possible ahead of the Scottish elections.

Processes, Spaces, and Policies

19. One last, but exciting point of key work that we have been involved in are procedural, spatial, 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.
20. On her objectives around Student Mental Health, VP Welfare Syjil has successfully advocated for an online student training hub. Such a platform does not exist in any form currently, and a future platform would serve as a strong host of Public Health Scotland training on Suicide Prevention for students, alongside any other forms of student-facing training.
21. VP Community Akrit has spearheaded a new space in the university – the Green Hub. It is located in Appleton Tower and brings together communities on sustainability and climate action. Furthermore, the Green Hub is home to a community fridge, a recycling station, and heat and eat facilities, which is an amazing development for the university!
22. Working with the Race Review Response and Implementation Group, Syjil has taken part in a panel discussion with other Response Group members and Race Review authors to provide a student perspective on the review. In the group, she has advocated for the Degree Awarding Gap and other recommendations immediately

affecting the student experience to be prioritised and how EUSA could be embedded in collaborations to improve the diversity of campus look and feel.

23. Finally, we are making a lot of progress in Teviot! You can read more about the operational aspects below, but John and I have been involved in naming a bar space within Teviot, something that I did not expect to do during my year as President. Furthermore, the Teviot Heritage Project saw great attendance in two “Archive-athons”, in which students could gain experience working with archives, while also finding out very interesting stories about Teviot's past!

Semester 1 Student-facing Activity

Student welfare support

24. Our Advice Place service continues to report an uplift in both enquiries, and casework – with a YoY 40% uplift in enquiries during Welcome Week. September alone saw an 11% YoY uplift in casework. We have reshaped our frontline service to provide more triage and access to immediate advice, now that over 50% of our first contact is in person. This enables us to resolve more enquiries immediately or on the day via a dedicated frontline team, which so far has improved the experience for students and enabled more effective management of complex casework by the caseworker team. We did see an uplift in enquiries as a result of industrial action, as students seek alternative routes to answers, and anticipate this will continue through any future industrial action – particularly as we know from previous experience any extended action, and particularly any marking and assessment boycott will begin to generate substantial and complex student enquiries about potential academic impacts and navigating university processes in relation to these.

Strategy and Governance update

25. The organisation is now part-way through our Strategic Plan Development process, working with an external consultancy, ‘Thinking Out Louder’, through a series of workshops. We are considering a wide range of insights from and about our students, stakeholders and our wider context as we go. By December we will have a draft plan, and actions roadmap, to inform and shape our annual planning process for completion during January and February.
26. At the same time, we have 2 other reviews in progress, both of which will contribute to our strategic plan approach. Firstly, a Democracy Review, which aims to recognise the substantial changes in context since our last review 10 years ago, including: impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic on students, their priorities, and on ways of working; developments in university approaches to and prioritisation of Student Voice. There are also some specific challenges we know we want this review to address, including: our representation of substantial cohorts, including online learners, postgraduate, and international students; conflicts and duplication between our various democratic decision-making processes, including our Student Council and online ballot processes; the relationship between our different levels of student representative, and their ability to effectively escalate and collaborate on issues. Secondly, we have also commissioned a sustainability review, to audit and recommend priorities for Association development and support in this area.

27. At this time, we are also highlighting to Court that we are preparing for our next Quinquennial Review of our constitution in 2026 – this being an Education Act requirement on the University. The Association has developed a plan for addressing the requirements of this review, noting some earlier work during 2024-25 will contribute to this, and other elements are being addressed through the Democracy Review, and a Board Governance Review. We anticipate updating Court in due course through a future Education Act Compliance update prepared in collaboration with the Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students.

Paragraphs 28-32: closed section

Risk Management

33. Financial risks are highlighted in the report.

Next steps/implications

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



University Court

1 December 2025

Edinburgh University Sports Union Report

Description of paper	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.
Action requested	Court is asked to note the impact that University Sport has on the student experience and sense of belonging as detailed in this report.
Resource Implications	N/A
EDI implications	N/A
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	This paper contributes to the following SDGs; a. 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing. All the work we do at EUSU is focussed on enhancing the health and wellbeing of our university community. b. 4 – Quality Education. We believe our student/volunteer development efforts contribute to a more complete and expanded education for students.
Consultation	Consultation for this paper was sought from Mark Munro (Director of Sport and Active Health) and Angelica Oparinde (Sport Workforce Activator).
Freedom of Information status	Open Paper
Further information	Author: Liv Stevens, Sports Union President Presenter: Ash Scholz, Students' Association President November 2025

Edinburgh University Sports Union Report

Summary

1. Edinburgh University Sports Union (EUSU) has experienced another successful start to the academic year, with engagement and publicity of our offering continuing to promote the student experience. The International Sports Club continues to grow, highlighting how we are catering towards different demographics of the Edinburgh community.
2. Particular emphasis has been on leading campaigns such as Movember and Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Week. The fundraising and awareness raising power of the Clubs and Intramural teams highlights the impact of EUSU both on and off the pitch.

Background

3. The start of the 2025/26 academic year for the Sports Union has gone smoothly and successfully, with high levels of participation and engagement. Welcome Week was the catalyst for new and returning students to gain access to the wide range of sporting opportunities we have on offer, all contributing to promoting the student experience. The Sports Union has engaged in UK wide sporting campaigns such as Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Week and Show Racism the Red Card, as well as continuing to engage students with learning and development opportunities. The presence of Edinburgh Sport continues to grow through spectator events and through its social media following. This paper outlines the initiatives, priorities, and strategic direction of the Sports Union.

Discussion

Coaching and Volunteering Academy

4. The Sports Union has put greater emphasis on Movember this year, which has already helped to make the fundraising total for the wider University higher. At the end of the first week of the campaign the University wide total is £8,500. For comparison, the campaign total by the end of the month last year was £10,000. 30 of our Sports Clubs have teams for the Movember campaign, in which the Men's Football Club, Engineers Rugby Intramural Team and Cricket Club have fundraised the most to date.
5. In Semester 1, we have hosted 3 Wellbeing and Inclusion Forums. These forums are focused towards students in wellbeing, inclusion and welfare roles within student sport club committees. Expert staff across the University and external organisations provided insightful talks about how to create a welcoming and inclusive environment within our sports clubs. As part of Black History Month, we invited Show Racism the Red Card organisation to deliver a workshop, covering how we can recognise forms of racism and discrimination and how we can respond when we witness this. In collaboration with the Movember campaign we invited Andy's Man Club and the Oddballs Charity to raise awareness about the issues involved in Movember: men's mental health, prostate and testicular cancer. We have continued to engage our volunteers in ConcussEd and Active Bystander training.

6. The three General meetings that EUSU hosts per semester with a minimum of two representatives per club in attendance have been used to educate members on the changes to our Code of Conduct to ensure club members are aware of our reporting and investigation procedures.

Recreational, Intramural and Competitive Sport

7. As of 12 November, we are sat 6th in the BUCS points table with 793 points. We have also completed 415 Intramural fixtures across 10 sports.
8. The International Sports Club continues to be one of EUSU's most impactful activities. 3 new sports clubs have engaged with the offering. 9 sessions have taken place so far this year with 207 students attending, an increase from 136 students last year. We are encouraging clubs to offer Stressbuster sessions during exam season, to help students stay active during exam season.
9. It is imperative that we continue to engage students joining us for the first time in Semester 2 thus planning is underway for our 70 clubs to host Give it a Go Sessions during Week 1 of Semester 2.
10. Sport at Edinburgh had a prominent presence at the two recent Open Days, at central campus, King's Buildings, and Pleasance. 93 prospective students were interested in becoming performance athletes at Edinburgh, with all of them currently competing at a top age-group or international level. This is an increase from 70 interested students last year.

Events and Good News!

11. The Sports Union hosted its annual President's Ceilidh on Thursday 23 October. The event brought together 125 of our committee members rewarding them for all the hard work over the Summer and at the start of the Academic year. It offered the opportunity for networking across clubs.
12. Edinburgh Sport has rolled out its new 'Main Event' Series. The Main Event is the main focus fixture each Wednesday afternoon in which we are seeking to boost the spectator experience. This involves DJs, £1 Burritos and increased publicity including pre-match and post-match interviews. We held our Women's Rugby Varsity Fixture against Cardiff University winning 76-15.
13. The Sports Union is back to full staffing capacity with Scott Ball being recruited into the Sports Coordinator- Competitions role. Katherine Duncan has been appointed Head of Development Programmes on a permanent basis as well as being appointed Assistant Director of Sport & Active Wellbeing.

Direction of Sport at Edinburgh

14. EUSU memberships have been growing as more students get involved in sport throughout the semester. We currently have 6044 unique Club members, including record numbers in our Intramural Programme with 2031 unique members.

15. With 497 (up from 378 last year) participation grants awarded for Sports Club applications; it shows the vast impact this has on the ability of our students to participate in EUSU activity.
16. At Edinburgh Sport we have hosted the USA, All Blacks, Tonga and Argentina National Rugby Teams in our Performance Gym Facility. The All-Blacks Head of Performance remarked “We’ve been lucky enough to use the University facilities this week, we love the high-performance gym- it is definitely world class.”
17. In terms of performance, the Men’s Rugby 1s have continued their winning form from Varsity and are currently unbeaten in BUCS Premier North, seeking promotion to BUCS Super Rugby.
18. Edinburgh Sport has been succeeding in its goal to grow its social media presence and brand. Since the start of September, we have had 1.9 million views on our Instagram @uoesport.

Risk Management

19. No major risks.

Next steps/implications

20. The Sports Union President and Executive Committee 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

1 December 2025

Student Experience Update

Description of paper	This paper provides an overview of activities related to improving the student experience.
Action requested	Court is asked to note the report and provide comment on the activities underway.
Resource Implications	There are no specific resource requests in this paper. Student experience improvements are expected to be part of business as usual and continuous service improvement. Major change projects that require investment are identified and managed through the work of the Learning & Teaching Workstream.
EDI implications	Relevant Equality Impact Assessments are completed for projects. The work undertaken will support greater equality, diversity and inclusion for students within our community.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	This paper supports the SDG “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” as part the strategic objective to improve student experience.
Consultation	The work captured in this report is overseen by various groups including: Learning and Teaching and Staff Workstreams and supporting project boards, Senate and Senate Sub-Committees, Student Lifecycle Management Group and Strategic IT Committee. Consultation regularly takes place with: members of University Executive, including the EUSA President, and members of the Academic Strategy Group (Heads of Schools, Colleges and College Registrars).
Freedom of Information status	Open
Further information	Author: Lucy Evans, Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students Presenter: Lucy Evans November 2025

Student Experience Update

Summary

1. This report includes areas of focus identified by Court members at previous meetings and key priorities of the Learning and Teaching workstream for Court to be aware of.
2. The University has a wide landscape of student experience activities. Our update clarifies how some of the main projects are captured within our University change programme. All activities within the Learning and Teaching Workstream are identified as core to student experience, our future sustainability and ways of delivering and working, and prioritised accordingly.
3. These major projects are complemented by an ongoing set of continuous improvement activities focused on areas raised regularly by students and staff, and have smaller development work dedicated to 'getting the basics right'.
4. The report includes an update on student living through the University's provision of accommodation and residential life.
5. This paper also includes clarification of the nature of the University's student survey results, as reported to the previous meeting of Court, with new analysis confirming the key message that the University needs to build upon this year's gains and make further progress.

Background

6. Making improvements to our student experience is a core priority for the University, directly referenced in the University Strategy 2030: "Our teaching will match the excellence of our research. We will improve and sustain student satisfaction and wellbeing." Our research excellence, as demonstrated in the results of the last REF, places us firmly in the top tier for research in our community of UK dual-intensive institutions. We have made the commitment to match this excellence in our teaching and student experience. The Learning and Teaching Workstream serves to capture and monitor implementation of major initiatives to deliver on this commitment.
7. As Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), we measure progress in responding to this priority by student feedback in the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).
8. As presented in our paper to Court in October, the results of these surveys in 2025, while reflecting overall improvements, show strengths and weaknesses across the different measures and we remain at the bottom of the Russell Group in most of our satisfaction ratings. The challenge remains to build on this year's positive gains and continue to make significant progress.

Discussion

9. Considered within our Learning and Teaching Workstream, our Academic Size and Shape and implementation of our Learning and Teaching Strategy and our Future Students priorities will respond to expected deliverables:
 - A rationalised teaching portfolio, ensuring it is fit to future needs, and that Edinburgh students remain highly employable in a rapidly changing job market;
 - A reformed shape, design, and delivery of our curriculum;
 - identified targeted opportunities for student growth, where there is clear potential to build on our current sector competitiveness.
10. Our Timetabling and Course Selection, Board of Examiners and Student Administration Review, Tuition Fee Improvements, planning for a new Student Records System and digital efficiencies enablement, will respond to deliverables, including: avoidance of duplication and inconsistent practice in our teaching support functions, enabled via improved processes and systems. We will enhance the quality and consistency of student-facing services, improving student experience from pre-arrival to post-graduation.
11. Our improved student experience extends across the entire portfolio of services for student life, as well as supporting a drive for academic success. This includes student living provision through our residences and corresponding support structures.

Student Surveys – follow up from October University Court

12. Court members have raised the issue of whether the low relative ranking of Edinburgh is down to 'bunching' of scores which are not statistically significantly different, in a ranking that is highly compressed between the top and bottom scores.
13. We have tested this formally across all three Surveys. For PTES and particularly NSS most of the differences are statistically significant (in effect that the probability of the score not being different between institutions is zero). PRES shows little statistical difference between institutions.

Paragraph 14: closed section

Risk Management

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

Next steps/implications

16. Areas highlighted in this report continue to be the focus of on-going work. University Court will continue to receive regular updates on work to enhance the student experience.



University Court

1 December 2025

Court Internal Effectiveness Review

Description of paper	This paper provides the internal review of Court’s effectiveness for the 2024/25 academic year. This is part of our compliance with external requirements and general good governance practice.	
Action requested	Court is invited to consider and approve the annual internal effectiveness review for 2024/25.	
Appendices	N/A	
Resource Implications	N/A	
EDI implications	N/A	
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A	
Consultation	The paper has been reviewed by Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary.	
Freedom of Information status	Open version	
Further information	Author:	Anda Nicolson, Projects Officer & Policy Adviser to the Vice-Principal & University Secretary
	Presenter:	Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary.
		November 2025

Court Internal Effectiveness Review

Summary

1. The internal review of Court's effectiveness for the 2024/25 academic year has been completed, in line with the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.
2. This paper summarises the review process and the main points raised by Court members in their annual meeting with the Senior Lay Member and the Vice-Principal & University Secretary. These points range from practicalities, such as the length of Court papers, to broader issues facing the University.

Background

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

Discussion

Contents

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

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

5. A review undertaken in 2025 provided assurance that the University was compliant over 2024/25 with the 8 high-level principles and 106 underlying provisions in the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

Summary of annual discussions with Court members.

6. The Senior Lay Member and/or University Secretary held individual discussions over the course of the summer, and into the autumn, with most Court members who have had a year or more of experience on Court, as well as with departing members.
7. These meetings were an opportunity for individual Court members to reflect on where they felt they were contributing most effectively; what challenges, if any, they had encountered; role; values; induction; understanding; where relevant, experience of

Committees; relationships with senior team, staff, students and external stakeholders; individual interactions; and how Court is currently supported and run.

8. The following main points were made:
 - Comments were made about brevity in Court papers, as well as the volume of information for members to read before each meeting. This will hopefully be addressed in this academic year with the introduction of the new templates.
 - New members were happy with the induction that they were given.
 - Many members expressed concern for the ongoing financial sustainability of the University.
 - Messaging to the wider University community is important to ensure that there is clarity around the role of Court as a governance body.
 - The Court minutes should reflect, as far as is practicable, the discussions that have taken place, especially when there has been a lot of discussion around a topic.
 - It is important to remember that papers that have been passed to Court from subcommittees have been through robust governance, and reopening discussions on those issues may not make the best use of Court's time.
 - Some members expressed that it would be helpful to hear from members of Senior Leadership Team who attend Court in response to questions that relate to their areas of expertise.
 - While appreciating that there is a devolved decision-making structure in the University, some members commented that this can slow down necessary change. Hearing from Heads of College at Court, when appropriate, would help to provide assurance that all parts of the University are taking forward necessary changes.
9. Other, more individual comments were:
 - Better agenda management on the day of the meeting could help ensure that important matters are not side-lined by "hot topics".
 - Some Court members mentioned the impact of direct lobbying on them personally.
 - More information about the role of Senate in the governance process would be helpful.
10. The next External Review of University Court is due before the end of the 2028/29 academic year. The next External Review of Senate is due before the end of the 2027/28 academic year. There is an expectation that there will be no more than five years between these reviews. The last External Review of Senate was brought forward by one year, meaning that the reviews are out of cycle. This has no bearing on the ongoing review processes.

Risk Management

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

Next steps/implications

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



University Court

1 December 2025

Amendment to the Delegated Authority Schedule: Strategic IT Committee

Description of paper	The paper updates on the establishment of a Strategic IT Committee and the proposed approach to reflect this in the Delegated Authority Schedule.
Action requested	Court is asked to note the establishment of the Strategic IT Committee and approve corresponding amendments to the Delegated Authority Schedule.
Appendices	
Resource Implications	N/A
EDI implications	N/A
Climate & SDGs	N/A
Consultation	The creation of the Strategic IT Committee follows Court approval in June 2025 for the disbandment of Knowledge Strategy Committee and for its three thematic committees, including IT Committee, to move to report to the University Executive. Consultation with IT Committee members was undertaken as part of this proposal, with the suggestion that this could be an opportunity to rationalise the management groups in the IT area, including reconciliation of the Digital Estate Prioritisation Group structure with IT Committee portfolio groups, as has now been done. The University Executive approved the creation and terms of reference for the Strategic IT Committee at its meeting on 7 October 2025 and agreed to recommend to Court that it be granted a delegated authority approval limit of £2m, as Knowledge Strategy Committee previously had. Policy & Resources Committee reviewed and agreed with this recommendation at its meeting on 10 November 2025.
Freedom of Information	Open version
Further information	Author: Lewis Allan, Governance & Court Services Presenter: Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary November 2025

Amendment to the Delegated Authority Schedule: Strategic IT Committee

Summary

1. A Strategic IT Committee has been created following the disbandment of Knowledge Strategy Committee. It is proposed that amendments be made to the Delegated Authority Schedule to grant the Strategic IT Committee a £2m approval limit, matching the limit that Knowledge Strategy Committee had previously. Without these amendments, there would remain an approval gap for IT expenditure between £1m and £2m. A further minor update is proposed, to update job titles.
2. For information, there is also an update on the Development Trust's signing authority delegations, which do not require a change to the Delegated Authority Schedule.

Background

3. In June 2025, following earlier Senate support, Court approved a proposal to disband Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC), effective from 1 August 2025, with its three thematic committees, including IT Committee, then to report to the University Executive. Any matters that would previously have been escalated by KSC to the Court and/or Senate committee structure would continue to be so escalated.
4. Consultation with IT Committee members was undertaken as part of this proposal, with the suggestion that IT Committee and its sub-committees and the Digital Estate Prioritisation Group and its sub-groups be rationalised and succeeded by a new Strategic IT Committee with portfolio sub-groups. Following Court approval for the proposal to discontinue KSC, terms of reference for a new Strategic IT Committee and sub-groups were developed and then approved by the University Executive on 7 October 2025, with key points being:
 - Remit and Responsibilities: To provide strategic leadership for the University's IT landscape. This includes ensuring strategic alignment of IT with the University's mission, recommending IT policies to the University Executive, providing oversight for significant IT investments and resource allocation, identifying and mitigating IT-related risks such as cybersecurity, and monitoring the performance of IT services. To support the committee in achieving its purpose, there shall be four Portfolio Groups covering (i) Learning, Teaching & Student Experience; (ii) Research; (iii) Professional Services; and (iv) Digital Infrastructure, Cyber and Web.
 - Membership and Meetings: Convened by Professor David Argyle, Vice Principal & Head of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, with Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University, as Vice-Convenor. Members include the four Conveners of the portfolio groups, a student member nominated by the Students' Association, an external IT specialist who is also an external member of Estates Committee (Sue Currie), a member nominated by each College and Professional Services Group for three-year terms, the Chief Financial Officer, the Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning and the Deputy Chief Information Officer. The committee will meet at least three times per academic year.

- **Authority:** Subject to Court approval, the Committee will have delegated authority to approve business cases for IT investments up to £2m. For projects exceeding this amount, the committee will review Business Cases and recommend for onward approval to Estates Committee via Capital Projects Groups. The committee can also establish ad-hoc, time-limited groups to address specific IT issues.

Discussion

5. The winding up of KSC left a known £1m to £2m approval gap for IT expenditure in the Delegated Authority Schedule. With the Strategic IT Committee now established, approval is sought for the £1m to £2m gap to be filled by Strategic IT Committee. The proposed amendments to the Delegated Authority Schedule to achieve this are summarised below.

Change	Location	Comments
Add: “Strategic IT Committee (SITC) has delegated authority to approve projects up to £2m within its Terms of Reference and for which the relevant Budget Holder confirms the appropriate resources are available within budget.”	Page 3, Section 2, Revenue Budgets and General Expenditure and an equivalent reference for capital budgets on Page 4	Similar text to that previously used for Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC)
Add: Strategic IT Committee with approval of £2m (digital) revenue	Page 11, Appendix 2 Revenue Budget and General Expenditure Delegations	As above
Change: Signing authority for physical or digital estate or infrastructure projects within revenue budget from £1m to £2m for relevant main budget holder	Page 12, Signing authority for Appendix 2 Revenue Budget and General Expenditure Delegations	Allows for main budget holder to sign projects approved by Strategic IT Committee, a simplification as previously would have to seek delegation of signing authority for each proposal in this category or take to the Principal

Add: Strategic IT Committee with approval for £2m within capital budget for IT projects/equipment/infrastructure and signing authority for Chief Information Officer for these	Page 13, Capital Budget and Expenditure Delegations	Similar text to that previously used for Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC) plus adding signing authority for Chief Information Officer for these as a simplification, as above
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Other minor change – change in job title

6. One other minor change is proposed: replacing references to ‘Director of Finance’ to the new title of ‘Chief Financial Officer’ throughout the Delegated Authority Schedule to reflect this change in job title.

Update for information – Development Trust signing authority

7. At the June 2025 Court meeting a proposal to amend the Development Trust’s Deed of Trust was approved (Paper K: Development Trust – Amendments to the Deed of Trust and Update on the Development Trust). This included a power for the Development Trust Trustees to delegate signing authority for the acceptance of donations. Although the paper noted that the nature and level of delegation would be a matter for Trustees, we would like to report that the levels below have been proposed to the Trustees, which are similar to those within the Delegated Authority Schedule:

Proposed delegation of signing authority for acceptance of donations

Amounts	Development Trust signatories:
£0-£149,999	Secretary to the Development Trust <i>or Vice Principal (Philanthropy and Advancement) in their absence</i>
£150,000 - £499,999	Vice Principal (Philanthropy and Advancement) <i>or Trustee signature in their absence</i>
£500,000+	Trustee signature

Risk Management

8. Clear documentation of approval and signing authority in a publicly available Delegated Authority Schedule aids good governance and risk management. It is made clear that all expenditure approvals must be within the Court-approved budget (or else escalated to Court), with each budget-holder ultimately accountable to Court for the management of their budget.

Next steps/implications

9. If approved, the updates will take immediate effect. A revised version of the Delegated Authority Schedule will be published on the [Policy Directory](#) pages of the University website.



University Court

1 December 2025

Annual People Report 2024-2025

Description of paper	This paper presents the Annual People Report for the 2024–2025 academic year, the third annual report describing institution-wide progress in delivering the University’s People Strategy. It highlights contributions made by Colleges and Professional Services Groups towards strengthening our community, developing staff potential and enhancing our working environment.	
Action requested	Court is asked to note the Annual People Report	
Appendices	The Annual People Report 2024-2025 is available on the University website.	
Resource Implications	This report covers the past academic year, so there are no resource implications. Costs to produce the graphic designed report were met by HR.	
EDI implications	The report includes information on work underway on our EDI strategy.	
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A	
Consultation	The Annual People Report was reviewed and endorsed by the Director of HR, the Vice-Principal Corporate Services and all contributing areas. It has been reviewed and approved by the Staff Experience Committee, University Executive and Policy & Resources Committee.	
Freedom of Information status	Open paper	
Further information	Author:	Denise Nesbitt, Director HR Organisation Development George Shannon, Senior HR Partner, Governance, Compliance and Risk
	Presenter:	Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services
		November 2025

Annual People Report

Summary

1. This paper presents Court with the Annual People Report for academic year 2024-2025, highlighting University-wide progress in delivering the People Strategy and strengthening our culture, community and working environment. The report reflects:
 - The impact of the current environment, including financial challenges on planning and future activity
 - Continued implementation of People Strategy commitments
 - Progress against the University's values and strategic themes of leadership, sustainability, equality, diversity and inclusion
 - University-wide achievements and staff-focused initiatives developed across Colleges and Professional Services

Background

2. The Annual People Report was introduced in 2023 as an institution-wide account of progress against People Strategy aims. It has since become a means of both recording achievements and communicating our people-focused culture to colleagues and prospective staff. The 2024/25 edition has been coordinated by HR. To ensure a holistic view, all areas of the University were invited to contribute to the report throughout its development. The report aligns content with the People Strategy's three themes:
 - Strengthen our Community
 - Develop our Potential
 - Enhance our Working Environment
3. The report serves two purposes: it brings into focus the significant progress and achievements delivered in the past academic year; and presents a positive narrative to bring the People Strategy to life and demonstrate our commitment to continuing that progress, which is especially important in the context of the current challenges facing the University and sector.

Risk Management

4. The University actively works to create a stimulating and safe place to work and an environment that supports and motivates staff to do their best work and to achieve the University's goals. It recognises that we must accept some risk in order to deliver our strategic and operational responsibilities. It has low appetite for deviation from its standards. The activity described contributes to mitigation of institutional people-related risks, including:
 - Staff engagement and retention
 - Capability, leadership and organisational effectiveness
 - Wellbeing, workload and health and safety
 - EDI compliance and culture improvement

Next steps/implications

5. The Annual People Report will be published online following completion of the Court governance cycle and promoted through internal communication channels, including CAM Bulletins and Essential Updates.



University Court

1 December 2025

Development & Alumni Donations and Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity

Description of paper	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 August 2025 to 30 September 2025 and an update on current alumni relations activities.
Action requested	Court is asked to note the legacies and donations received and current alumni relations activities.
Resource Implications	N/A
EDI implications	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, the Black British Scholarships programme, the Nyerere Scholarship and specific PhD scholarships to attract candidates from under-represented groups.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	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.
Consultation	This paper has been reviewed and approved by Chris Cox, Vice-Principal Philanthropy & Advancement and Executive Director of Development & Alumni.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper – commercially sensitive
Further information	Author: Mariana West, Senior Project and Engagement Manager Lipa Hussain, Projects Administrator Emily Gwiazda, Alumni Relations Project Officer David Scott, Head of Research

November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations

Description of paper	This paper seeks Court approval for amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations. The Regulations apply to students seeking to take a year out of study to take up a position as a sabbatical officer in Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) or Edinburgh University Sports Union (EUSU).
Action requested	Court is asked to approve the proposed amendments to the Regulations.
Appendices	The Laigh Year Regulations are available on the University website
Resource Implications	The proposed amendments transfer responsibility for providing a report regarding whether an individual student meets the Laigh Year Regulations from the Student Adviser or supervisor to the Director of Students or Postgraduate Director/Head of Graduate School (as appropriate). Directors of Students and Postgraduate Directors/Heads of Graduate School have been consulted on the proposed amendment and have raised no concerns regarding the additional workload this entails for them. The requirement to provide such a report relates to only a small number of students across the University each year.
EDI implications	N/A
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	<p>The proposed amendments have been consulted upon with Edinburgh University Students' Association, Edinburgh University Sports Union, Colleges, and relevant staff in Schools (Directors of Students and Postgraduate Directors/Heads of Graduate School). The amendments presented for approval take account of feedback received during the consultation process.</p> <p>Senate recommends to Court that the proposed amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations be approved.</p>
Freedom of Information status	Open paper
Further information	Author: Olivia Hayes, Senate Clerk Presenter: Lucy Evans, Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary, Students.

November 2025

Amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations

Summary

1. Senate has recommended approval of amendments to the Laigh Year Regulations. The Laigh Year Regulations are University Regulations which allow student sabbatical officers in the Edinburgh University Students' Association and the Edinburgh University Sports Union to matriculate as students of the University without having to fulfil the normal academic requirement of their programme of study during the relevant academic year.
2. The proposed amendments:
 - Clarify the academic requirements (the "Laigh Year Requirements") that must be fulfilled by students seeking approval of a Laigh Year;
 - Reallocate to a more senior member of staff the responsibility for providing a report regarding whether a student meets the Laigh Year Requirements;
 - Amend the wording regarding payments to students in receipt of a Laigh Year to align with sector norms and to avoid the need for frequent updates to the Regulations.

Background

3. The Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students has proposed some amendments to the Regulations based on recent experience of cases where requests for Laigh Years have proven problematic due to issues with students' academic standing at the point of application, leading to potential uncertainty for students.
4. The Laigh Year Regulations are approved both by Senate and by Court. Senate approved the proposed amendments to the Regulations at its 1 October meeting.

Discussion

5. The proposed amendments to the Regulations are outlined below. The detailed Regulations are provided in Appendix 1, with these amendments tracked.

Requirements for Laigh Year approval (1.3)

6. The Laigh Year Regulations currently require that a student seeking a second Laigh Year demonstrate that the break from studies will be "compatible with successful reintegration into the programme, and that no professional body rules or impediments will apply". This is not a requirement when applying for an initial Laigh Year. It is reasonable to expect, however, that these requirements may also have relevance to applications for a first Laigh Year. As such, the proposed amendment to the Regulations applies these requirements to both the first and second applications for a Laigh Year alongside the existing requirement that a student be in "good academic standing", referring to these together as the "Laigh Year Requirements".
7. Aside from professional body requirements (where these apply to a student's programme), factors which may affect the judgement as to whether a Laigh Year may be "compatible with successful reintegration into the programme", include, for

example, where a student's application for a Laigh Year will follow on immediately from a period of authorised interruption of study.

Provision of report regarding Laigh Year Requirements (1.4; 2.1 – 2.3)

8. The Director of Students or Postgraduate Director in the relevant School will be asked to provide a report to the University Secretary stating whether the student meets the Laigh Year Requirements. This would move the responsibility for producing the report from the Student Adviser or supervisor in order to ensure that it rests with someone with an appropriate level of seniority. The Regulations note, however, that the Student Adviser or supervisor will be consulted in the production of the report.
9. The revised wording clarifies that the University Secretary will request the report from the Director of Students or Postgraduate Director on receipt of a Laigh Year application, rather than the student needing to request the report. This reflects current practice.

Payment to students during a Laigh Year (3.1)

10. A further minor amendment to the Regulations removes the reference to a specific amount paid to students in receipt of a Laigh Year, in order to avoid this requiring an update annually. By agreement between EUSA and the University, Laigh Year payments will no longer be increased annually in line with the percentage increase applied to the UKRI National Minimum Doctoral Stipend, but instead will increase in line with the University's annual pay award. Previously alignment with the UKRI National Minimum Doctoral Stipend has led to officer stipends becoming significantly out of step with the rest of the sector. The intention is for the level of payments to be reviewed on a five-yearly basis.

Provisional approval (3.3)

11. The Regulations clarify that, when provisional approval of a Laigh Year is not followed by firm approval (i.e. because the Laigh Year Requirements have not been met), the Laigh Year will end on 30 September, or when the student demits office, whichever is earlier. This reflects existing practice.

Risk Management

12. The proposed amendments mitigate against the risk of students standing for election and proceeding to be elected where their academic standing is not compatible with taking a year out of study to take up a sabbatical position. The amendments provide greater transparency for students regarding the considerations involved in the approval process and will help to manage students' expectations regarding the process.

Next steps/implications

13. If the proposed amendments are approved by Court, they will come into effect from 1 January 2026. The University Secretary's office will maintain records of requests for Laigh Years, including data regarding rates of approval of Laigh Year applications.



University Court

1 December 2025

Senate Election Regulations

Description of paper	This paper seeks approval for amendments to the Senate Election Regulations recommended by Senate.
Action requested	Court is asked to approve the proposed amendments to the Senate Election Regulations
Resource Implications	<p>Changes to permit more evenly distributed Senate meetings should contribute to improved allocation of resources in the preparation of Senate documentation and arrangements. It is possible that requiring non-professorial members, who are promoted to professor during their term, to demit office and stand for election may necessitate the need for an election to be held.</p> <p>Elections incur financial and staff costs, with further information being provided as part of papers detailing annual election arrangements.</p>
EDI implications	An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted and is available on the Equality and Diversity webpages . This assessment assumes a regular rotation/refreshment of members and the filling of most elected vacancies.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	Senate approved the proposed amendments to the Senate Election Regulations at its 1 October 2025 meeting.
Freedom of Information status	Open version
Further information	<p>Author: Olivia Hayes, Senate Clerk</p> <p>Presenter: Professor Sir Peter Mathieson, Principal and Convener of Senate</p> <p>November 2025</p>

Senate Election Regulations

Summary

1. Senate recommends that Court approve the following amendments to alter the text within the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations:
 - Paragraph 17: addition of text
 - Paragraph 24: removal of text (where specified)
 - Paragraph 25: alteration of specified text
2. Court is invited to note updates to the Senate Ex Officio membership contained in Appendix 1 of the Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations.

Background

3. Under University Ordinance 212 (Composition of the Senatus Academicus) academic staff elect from their own number 200 members of the Senatus Academicus.
4. The Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations govern the election of academic staff to Senate. A copy with track changes is provided in Appendix 1.
5. An externally facilitated review of Senate and its committees by AdvanceHE took place in 2022/23, and it was suggested that a proposal for four Senate meetings a year be discussed. At its meeting of 18 June 2024, Senate approved a proposal to adopt a meeting format of four, three hour long, meetings. This increased the number of meetings held within an academic year from three to four, and was implemented in 2024/25.
6. An additional Senate meeting was added in December 2024, with the other meeting dates set on a like-for-like basis with the 2023/24 academic year. A consequence of this approach was that there was significantly less time than usual to prepare for the February 2025 Senate meeting. Arrangements were also affected by the proximity of the University's closure period and staff annual leave.
7. Separately, at its meeting of 11 December 2024, Senate approved the formation of the Senate Business Committee. The remit of the Senate Business Committee includes scrutiny of Senate papers; and Senate papers are now required at least five weeks prior to a Senate meeting. This would mean papers for a meeting in early February would be due soon after the December Senate meeting.

Discussion

Addition of text (paragraph 17)

8. During the 2024-25 academic year, there were five Senate members who held non-Professorial membership positions and who had been promoted to Professor during their term of office. During the year there was no agreed process for revising a non-Professorial member's position if they were promoted to Professor during their term on Senate. This was highlighted by one such member at the February 2025 meeting of

Senate, and they queried whether provision could be made within the Senate Election Regulations for staff who are promoted during their term of office.

9. For context, the election of academic staff members to Senate occurs once per year. As such, a vacancy arising mid-year in either the ‘Professorial’ or ‘non-Professorial’ membership categories would not be filled until the next scheduled election. Consequently, a Senate member who has been promoted to Professor would not be preventing the election of a ‘non-Professorial’ Senate member during that year. However, they may prevent the election of a ‘non-Professorial’ member should they continue in Senate membership as a ‘non-Professorial’ member into a second or third year of their term of office.
10. At its 1 October 2025 meeting, Senate received three options for managing the membership of non-Professorial members promoted to Professor during their term of office. These options are outlined in Senate Paper S 25/26 11.
11. By a majority vote, Senate approved Option 3: that there be no change to existing practice. Members promoted to Professor during their term of office would continue as a ‘non-professorial’ member until the end of their current term of office. To ensure this decision is captured within the Regulations, Senate agreed that the following text should be added to the Regulations:

“Where a non-Professorial member of Senate has been awarded the title of personal or established chair, they will continue as a ‘non-professorial’ member until the end of their term of office.”

12. 62 members approved Option 3, 40 members approved Option 1, 21 members approved Option 2 and 20 members abstained.

Proposed changes to existing text (paragraph 24)

13. To address concerns relating to meeting timings, in 2025-26 Senate meeting dates have been set more evenly throughout the academic year. See table 1 below for a comparison with prior years. To facilitate this change, an amendment is required to paragraph 24 of the Senate Election Regulations.

Table 1 Senate meeting schedule

Meeting (Work days since last meeting)	1	2	3	4
2023-24	11-10-2023 (101 days)	-	07-02-2024 (78 days)	22-05-2024 (76 days)
2024-25	09-10-2024 (101 days)	11-12-2024 (46 days)	05-02-2025 (33 days)	20-05-2025

				(75 days)
2025-26	01-10-2025 (97 days)	10-12-2025 (51 days)	04-03-2026 (53 days)	19-05-2026 (55 days)

14. Paragraph 24, extract below, specifies that Senate will agree the deadline for the submission of nomination forms following 31 January each year.

“The call for nominations for each election will be made after 31 January each year, normally at the next Senate meeting. No nominations will be accepted before this date. At this meeting, Senate will agree a deadline for the submission of nomination forms.”

15. It is proposed that the text “*At this meeting, Senate will agree a deadline for the submission of nomination forms*” be removed. Removal of this text would enable Senate to approve arrangements at its December meeting, and would allow a more evenly distributed meeting cycle. See table 1 above.
16. In addition, it is proposed that the text “*normally at the next Senate meeting*” be removed as this does not reflect contemporary practice. Senate has approved different timescales for the past three years, as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2 Senate election schedule

	2023	2024	2025
Nominations open	01-03-2023	28-02-2024	26-02-2025
Nominations close	29-03-2023	27-03-2024	26-03-2025
Voting opens	19-04-2023	17-04-2024	16-04-2025
Voting closes	26-04-2023	01-05-2024	30-04-2025

Proposed changes to existing text (paragraph 25)

17. Paragraph 25, extract below, refers to elections occurring on a single date. Recent practice has been for elections to take place online and over an extended period, most recently two weeks. See table 2 above.

“The elections will be conducted on **a date** which will be determined by the Senate in each year and all elections to Senate will usually take place on the **same date in a given year**. The elections must take place in time to communicate the results to

Senate before its final meeting of the academic session, and the results must be communicated to Senate no later than 30 June each year.”

18. It is proposed that the highlighted text be replaced with *“Each year, elections will be conducted to a timescale that has been approved by Senate”*.
19. Senate approval of dates for the nomination and election periods, and approval of the Returning and Deputy Returning Officers, will be requested at the December meeting of Senate.

Updates to the Ex Officio membership of Senate – Appendix 1 of the Senate Election Regulations

20. Paragraph four of the Election regulations states that *“Staff ex officio roles are detailed in Appendix 1. This list may be amended by the University Secretary from time to time, to reflect changes in organisational structures and job titles. Any changes will be notified to Senate at the next meeting of Senate.”*
21. The Associate Principal is to be added to the list of ex officio members, this has necessitated the following change within the Election Regulations:
 - Appendix 1: the ‘membership breakdown’ column has been amended as follows:
Addition of *“Associate Principal”*
22. The organisation structure for the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine changed on 1 August 2025, with the move to six schools – previously there were three deaneries within the Medical School plus the Vet School. Consequently, two additional ex officio positions for Heads of School were created.
23. The revised organisation structure has necessitated the following changes within the Election Regulations:
 - **Table 1:** The ‘membership’ associated with ‘Heads of School’ increased from 21 to 23.
 - **Appendix 1:** the ‘membership breakdown’ column has been amended as follows.
“Heads of School (Required under Ordinance 212) and Heads (Deans) of the Deaneries of the Edinburgh Medical School.”

Risk Management

24. The specification of arrangements for non-professorial members who are promoted during a term of office will help to clarify University practice.

Next steps/implications

25. Changes approved will take immediate effect. Revised Senatus Academicus (Senate) Election Regulations will inform arrangements for the 2026 election process.



University Court

1 December 2025

Health and Safety Annual Report

Description of paper	The Health and Safety Annual Report provides Court with information on the current management of health and safety along with the H&S Annual Objectives for 2025-26.
Action requested	Court is asked to note this report, to assist in fulfilling its responsibilities as set out in the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
Resource Implications	N/A
EDI implications	N/A
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	Management of health and safety contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 8 – Good Health and Wellbeing and Decent Work and Economic Growth.
Consultation	The information in this paper has been reviewed through the quarterly health and safety reports to University Executive, which are also forwarded to Audit and Risk Committee and the report itself was considered by Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 18 November 2025.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper (ongoing enforcement activity or cases may be highlighted)
Further information	Author: Suzanne Thompson, Director of Health and Safety Presenter: Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services November 2025



University Court

1 December 2025

Chair Resolutions

Description of paper	This paper invites Court to approve Resolutions to establish Chairs (i.e. professorial positions) in accordance with agreed arrangements and the requirements set out in the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966.
Action requested	Court is asked to approve the Resolutions presented in final format
Appendices	Appendices: Resolution No.88/2025: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Thoracic Oncology and Imaging Resolution No.89/2025: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Philosophy of Education
Resource Implications	Resource implications associated with establishing a Chair are considered as part of the University's approval processes. These Resolutions have been created and backdated to 1 August 2025 as they arise from the central academic promotions process in 2024/25. As previously notified, there has been a pause on academic promotions effective from 1 August 2026.
EDI implications	Equality and diversity best practice and agreed procedures are adopted in promoting individuals to chairs.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	Senate and the General Council are asked for observations on draft Resolutions. Draft Resolutions are available on the University website: Notices and Draft Resolutions Governance and Strategic Planning to enable any other body or person having an interest to express observations.
Freedom of Information status	Open paper
Further information	Author: Governance & Court Services Presenter: Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary November 2025

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Resolution of the University Court No. 88/2025

Foundation of a Personal Chair of Thoracic Oncology and Imaging

At Edinburgh, the First day of December, Two thousand and twenty five.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to found a Personal Chair of Thoracic Oncology and Imaging:

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

1. There shall be a Personal Chair of Thoracic Oncology and Imaging in the University of Edinburgh.
2. The patronage of the Chair shall be vested in and exercised by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh.
3. Notwithstanding the personal nature of this Chair, the terms and conditions of appointment and tenure which by Statute, Ordinance and otherwise apply to other Chairs in the University shall be deemed to apply in like manner to the Personal Chair of Thoracic Oncology and Imaging together with all other rights, privileges and duties attaching to the office of Professor.
4. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 August Two thousand and twenty five.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Resolution of the University Court No. 89/2025

Foundation of a Personal Chair of Philosophy of Education

At Edinburgh, the First day of December, Two thousand and twenty five.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to found a Personal Chair of Philosophy of Education:

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

1. There shall be a Personal Chair of Philosophy of Education in the University of Edinburgh.
2. The patronage of the Chair shall be vested in and exercised by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh.
3. Notwithstanding the personal nature of this Chair, the terms and conditions of appointment and tenure which by Statute, Ordinance and otherwise apply to other Chairs in the University shall be deemed to apply in like manner to the Personal Chair of Philosophy of Education together with all other rights, privileges and duties attaching to the office of Professor.
4. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 August Two thousand and twenty five.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary