THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

University Court

20 April 2026

Pentland Suite, John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls

Agenda

OPENING ITEMS

1	**Minutes** To *approve* the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2026	**A1**
2	**Matters Arising & Review of Action Log** To *raise* any matters arising and *review* the Action Log	**A2**
3	**Principal's Report** To *note* a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal	**B**
4	**Committee Business**	
	• Policy & Resources Committee	**C1**
	• Audit & Risk Committee	**C2**
	• Senate	**C3**

KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

5	**Students' Association and Sports Union Reports** To *note* reports presented by Ash Scholz, President of the Students' Association	
	• Students' Association Report	**D**
	• Sports Union Report	**E**
6	**Student Experience Update** To *consider* a paper presented by Lucy Evans, Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students	**F**
7	**Finance and Planning Update Report** To *consider* a paper presented by James Gray, Chief Financial Officer	**G**
8	**Strategy 2030 Strategic Performance Framework mid-year report 2025-26** To *consider* a paper presented by Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning and *approve* a revision to one KPI.	**H**

9 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Data Report 2025 **I**

To *note* the content of the reports and *approve* the reports for publication. Paper presented by Fiona McClement, University Lead, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

10 Responsible Investment Policy: Representations Process Update **J**

To *approve* the process. Paper presented by Kim Graham, Provost

11 IT System Replacement **K**

To *approve* funding in principle. Paper presented by Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian

12 Computer Room 4 Supercomputer Preparation Project, ACF **L**

To *approve* the project proceeding, with drawdown of grant funding. Paper presented by Damien Toner, Director of Estates

13 Small Works and Statutory Compliance Programme Budget Allocation **M**

To *approve* the Small Works and Statutory Compliance Programme 2026/27 allocation and additional funding. Paper presented by Damien Toner, Director of Estates

14 Committee Effectiveness Reviews **N**

To *approve* adoption of a new process. Paper presented by Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary

15 Development & Alumni Annual Report 2024-25 **O**

To *note* a paper presented by Chris Cox, Vice Principal Philanthropy & Advancement

16 Alumni Club Recognition Process **P**

To *approve* the proposed changes. Paper presented by Chris Cox, Vice Principal Philanthropy & Advancement

17 Award of University Benefactor **Q**

To *approve* the proposed awards. Paper presented by Peter Mathieson, Vice Principal & Vice-Chancellor

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

18 Forest and Peatland Programme: Third Annual Report and Future Oversight **R**

To *note*

19 Donations & Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity **S**

To *note*

20 Resolutions

To *approve*

- Degree Regulations **T1**
- Chairs **T2**

21 Any Other Business

22 Date of Next Meeting

15 June 2026

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

A1

University Court

23 February 2026

Pentland Suite, John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls

Minutes

Members Present:	Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member Simon Fanshawe, Rector Rushad Abadan, Co-opted Member Katya Amott, Students' Association Vice-President Education Matt Bell, Senate Assessor Richard Blythe, Senate 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 Hugh Mitchell, Co-opted Member Christopher Morson, Co-opted Member Kathryn Nash, Trade Union Academic Staff Member David Ovens, General Council Assessor Ash Scholz, Students' Association President Kavi Thakrar, Co-opted Member Sarah Wolffe, General Council Assessor
Member Apologies:	Robert Aldridge, City of Edinburgh Council Assessor Morag Angus, Co-opted Member Jock Millican, General Council Assessor
In Attendance:	Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary Gale Macleod, Rector's Assessor

Presenters & Observers: Lewis Allan, Senior Governance Advisor to the Vice-Principal & University Secretary
David Argyle, Head of College, Medicine & Veterinary Medicine
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
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)

OPENING ITEMS

Opening and welcome

Simon Fanshawe, Rector, opened the meeting, noted the apologies received and welcomed members and attendees. On behalf of Court, he congratulated Toby Kelly on his recent appointment as Director of the University's Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities.

Also on behalf of Court, the Rector expressed sorrow at the death in January 2026 of the Former Deputy First Minister Rt Hon Jim Wallace, Baron Wallace of Tankerness, an alumnus of the University.

1. Minutes **Paper A1**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2025 were approved, subject to minor amendments to clarify the participants in the General Council event that had been hosted by the Rector and to correct the sources of certain assessments of limited assurance that had been noted in the Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report.

2. Matters Arising & Review of Action Log **Paper A2**

Matters Arising

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary, updated Court on the process for appointment of the next Senior Lay Member, noting that candidates for election had been identified by the Selection Panel and that details of the candidates and the election process would be circulated to Court in due course.

Action Log

The Action Log, unchanged since the last meeting, was noted.

3. Principal's Report **Paper B**

Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, summarised notable points from the report and highlighted the following developments since the paper had been issued:

- University College London (UCL) had reached a settlement regarding a legal claim from former students who had made a claim relating to the education they had received during the Covid pandemic.
- While there was an agreement in place between the University and the trade union UCU that there would be no industrial action under the union's current mandate, the UCU Edinburgh branch was now seeking a new mandate for industrial action. The agreement would not apply to any new mandate.

4. Committee Business

Policy & Resources Committee **Paper C1**

Janet Legrand, Convener of Policy & Resources Committee (PRC) introduced the report, noting that the majority of the matters covered there appeared elsewhere in the Court agenda.

On the recommendation of PRC, Court approved the transfer of approximately 0.35 acres of land from the University to Scottish Power Energy Networks by way of a ground lease, noting that in exchange Scottish Enterprise would transfer land of approximately 0.45 acres to the University by way of a disposition.

Governance & Nominations Committee **Paper C2**

Janet Legrand introduced the report, as Convener of Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC). The majority of committee membership decisions would be made later in the year, following the election of the next Senior Lay Member. However, the following appointments had been recommended immediately, in one case to help establish the membership of Court ahead of other decisions and in the other case to address an earlier conclusion to a current term of office.

On the recommendation of GNC, Court approved:

- the re-appointment of Douglas Millican as a member of Court for a term of four years, from 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2030; and
- the re-appointment of David Argyle as a Curator of Patronage, from 1 April 2026 to 31 July 2027.

Audit & Risk Committee: Note of workshop sessions **Paper C3**

Taken under item 6, below.

Senate **Paper C4**

Peter Mathieson introduced the report, as Convener of Senate. He noted that Senate had passed a number of motions, as set out in the report, which indicated the strength of feeling of Senate members regarding the impacts and risks of current cost reduction programmes. The University Executive had been informed of the motions that touched on work under the Executive's purview, in line with undertakings made to Senate.

Richard Blythe, Senate Assessor, drew particular attention to the Senate motion on the Academic Contribution Framework (ACF) and clarified that Senate members' position was that some elements of the ACF entailed a change in strategy regarding academic activity and that Senate should have authority in the relevant areas of strategy.

It was noted that Court was unambiguously the University's supreme governing body and that work to clarify the responsibilities of Senate was in progress and would be brought to Court at a future meeting.

KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

5. Students' Association and Sports Union Reports

Students' Association President's Report **Paper D**

Sports Union Report **Paper E**

Ash Scholz, President of the Students' Association, introduced the two reports, drawing particular attention to the following points:

- A briefing had been supplied to Court which summarised students' perceptions of the impacts of current cost reduction activities, as expressed through a recent survey.
- A new Students' Association strategic plan was in development and would be shared with Court in due course.
- There were now breakfast clubs across all of the University's main campuses. University colleagues, in particular the College of Science & Engineering, were thanked for their help in facilitating this.
- The Teviot Row House student union was soon to re-open. Celebrations were planned and there was excitement in the student community to make use of the refurbished building and improved facilities.
- With the assistance of colleagues in Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling in Registry Services, data had been drawn together that showed an association between engagement in sport and academic attainment.
- The University continued to achieve good results across a range of competitive sports, maintaining fifth place in the UK-wide BUCS ranking.

In discussion, it was observed that industrial action had been the factor most often cited in the student survey as a negative impact associated with the cost reduction programme. It was noted that the refurbishment of the Teviot union exemplified the direct benefits of the University's capital investments for students.

Recent rent increases for University accommodation were discussed. It was noted that these rents remained below private sector levels and lower than at some peer institutions. The increases had been approved by a majority decision of the University Executive in recognition of the need to fund investment in the accommodation, to maintain capacity and quality.

It was observed that the data on engagement in sport and academic attainment, while only associative, demonstrated that many members of the student community were able to succeed in sport and academic study at the same time, which reflected well on those individuals and the environment created by the University.

It was noted that an Edinburgh graduate, Megan Keith, had recently set a new European record for the 10 kilometre road run.

6. Finance and Planning

Audit & Risk Committee: Note of workshop sessions **Paper C3**

Douglas Millican, Convener of Audit & Risk Committee, summarised concerns expressed at the recent ARC workshop on the University's financial risk. It had been noted that the £140m of cost saving measures that underpinned the Court-approved budget were not being delivered to the required timescale. While greater clarity had been provided on progress to date and its financial implications, and this clarity was welcome, the committee had expressed concern regarding the University's ability to achieve its financial sustainability goals and the impact on students and staff of a prolonged cost reduction process. There was to be a further ARC workshop before the April meeting of Court and the committee would seek further clarity and reassurance at that stage, with a particular focus on indicators of financial precarity, including the University's debt covenant headroom.

Finance and Planning Update Report **Paper F**

James Gray, Chief Financial Officer, summarised key points from the report, recognising that delivery of cost savings was behind schedule, as identified at the ARC workshop, and noting that sector-wide trends in international student recruitment had brought the expectation of a shortfall in income relative to budget.

The following points were made in discussion:

- It had been stated by ARC that greater clarity on cost-saving plans was required in order to inform detailed financial projections and this clarity was also sought by members of Court in order to provide assurance of future financial sustainability.
- Given the need to deliver the originally planned savings and recover a shortfall, a change in approach might be required. A greater degree of agility was likely to be needed and a greater departure from business-as-usual. The capacity to deliver should be examined and augmented as required.
- Objective assessment of progress was required in order to inform Court's oversight of delivery. It was noted that external consultants were already contracted to assist with delivering required savings in relation to one College and it was requested

that this support should be extended to the other Colleges and the external consultants should produce independent reporting on progress.

- The strategic parameters used to drive savings in each budget area should also be clarified, to provide reassurance of alignment with both the University's strategic objectives and best practice, as informed by the external consultants' knowledge and experience.
- The consultants' knowledge and experience should also be used to examine whether all savings were being achieved as quickly as possible and whether any other opportunities to make cost savings were being missed.
- Appropriate consultation and engagement, with careful attention to academic staff concerns such as those expressed by Senate, might help avert industrial action by the UCU union.
- While extensive consultation and staff buy-in could be important to the success of change programmes, this should not unduly delay required decision-making. Rather, more meaningful and effective consultation might follow from the presentation of specific options and decisions. Clear 'milestones' in decision making would encourage this.
- Some of the work being pursued in the present context could have been fruitfully pursued in times of less financial restraint, within a culture of continuous improvement, and this might have eased the current pressure. Lessons might be drawn from this for the future.
- A commitment to the University's future should be balanced with a sensitivity to the impact of current measures on the present students and staff. A rescheduling of plans to meet the budgeted savings was appropriate in this context.
- It would be crucial to ensure that the cost savings achieved through the current work would recur sustainably. This might require re-examination of a number of the University's processes.
- The mission of the University, including its charitable mission as an educational institution, must underpin all relevant decision-making.
- In the context of the concerns expressed about the pace of delivery, it was noted that many University staff were highly engaged in the effort to deliver the required changes and that significant progress had been made, both in improved engagement across the workforce and in the delivery and implementation of plans.

Summarising, the Senior Lay Member noted that Court members' concerns regarding progress in achieving financial sustainability had been noted, and that the following would be taken forward:

- As already requested by ARC, a delivery plan with milestones for the two years of the present budget was to be presented to the next PRC and ARC meetings and then to Court.
- This should also provide a clear articulation of financial risk, including covenant risk, for subsequent years.
- The external consultants' remit should be extended, including reporting independently on progress across all Colleges. Heads of College would be asked to contribute to the next meeting of Court.

7. Responsible Investment Policy: Representations Process Update **Paper G**
Kim Graham, Provost, provided an overview of discussions of the representations process that was being developed by the Responsible Investment Advisory Group (RIAG), among the other tasks delegated to RIAG by Court. Key elements of the process, including how it should be resourced and supported, remained to be established.

Input had been taken from Policy & Resources Committee (PRC) and Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC), which had focused particularly on the publication of the outcomes of the representations process. It was noted that RIAG's independence was an important part of its effectiveness as an advisory body but also that the University's decision-making and oversight processes as a whole should issue clear and coherent outcomes. To this end, PRC and GNC had recommended an amendment to RIAG's terms of reference, to clarify that the published outcomes of applying the representations process would in all cases be the finalised University position.

It was observed that outputs from RIAG had been limited to date and that there was some frustration in the student community over the pace of RIAG's work. The contrary view was also noted: that it was appropriate to prioritise quality of outcomes when dealing with important and complex issues and that RIAG had made good progress in these terms.

It was proposed that the representations process should make reference to Court's responsibilities as the trustee of the University's endowment.

Court noted the update and approved the amendment to RIAG's remit, such that clause 2.5 of its terms of reference would read "To publish the University's response to submissions that meet the criteria within the Responsible Investment Policy's representations process".

8. Academic Staff Member Election Regulations 2026 **Paper H**
Court approved the regulations and approved an amendment to Court's Standing Orders to introduce a degree of flexibility into the length of terms of Court membership, where necessary to align the terms of different Court members. In line with this, it was agreed that the winner of the forthcoming Academic Staff Member Election should be granted a slightly extended term, from 1 June 2026 to 30 July 2030.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

9. Scottish Consortium for Rural Research **Paper I**
Court approved implementation of the necessary constitutional and governance changes to allow the transfer of governance oversight responsibility for the Scottish Consortium for Rural Research from Court to the Moredun Foundation.

10. Donations & Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity **Paper J**
Court noted the report.

11. Self-Evaluation Action Plan **Paper K**

Court noted the Self-Evaluation Action Plan. It was noted that the Plan, although prepared for external assurance purposes, was valuable to the Students' Association as a record of relevant activity and of the impact of the student voice in learning and teaching.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date of Next Meeting

20 April 2026

B

University Court

20 April 2026

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 & SDGs	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

Principal's Report

Summary

1. The paper updates Court on key University activity in the period from mid-February 2026 to mid-April 2026.

2. The first part of the paper includes information on general University activity. The second part of the paper provides updates on activity that is specifically related to the 4 key areas of Strategy 2030: Our People, Learning, Teaching & Students, Research & Innovation, Social & Civic Responsibility.

3. Topics covered include: the latest political affairs activity, staff engagement and the Principal's key meetings.

Discussion

General

4. In early March c.130 of the University's senior leaders met for the latest Leaders Forum and considered the progress with the cost saving work. This included a summary of Court's position as indicated at the March meeting of Court and an update on financial progress. At the same meeting there were sessions from Vice-Principal Research & Innovation Professor Liz Baggs on changes to UKRI funding policy and a discussion on developments and opportunities for Transnational Education initiatives.

5. In addition, we have continued to keep our broader staff body updated about projects within our change workstreams and the additional measures being implemented to help us reach our cost savings targets.

6. February and March saw a focus on engaging with staff locally within Colleges and Professional Services groups. At least ten 'town hall'-style meetings were held across budget areas, with approximately 2,000 staff engaging in these sessions. An additional 200 staff have also taken part in sessions aimed specifically at leaders.

7. Project leads have also been engaging with targeted groups of staff about how their projects are developing. For example, five meetings were held for staff to hear more about changes being developed around timetabling and course selection (attended by approx. 220 staff) and presentations have been given to the monthly Marketing and Communications staff forum (approximately 300 members) about the Marketing and Communications project.

8. There will be further opportunities for staff to speak to leaders about the University's finances and the changes we are making at all-staff information sessions in May.

9. The University's new Global Action Plan for 2026-28 has been published. It sets out international priorities across our learning and teaching, research and innovation, and civic mission over the next two years.

10. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) issued their indicative funding allocations on 25 March 2026. In line with the approved Scottish Budget for 2026-27, the university

sector will receive a £25 million increase (+3.2%) in resource budget for Higher Education, and a £26.8 million increase (+8.1%) in capital budgets, incorporating research and innovation funding. The announcement covers the main areas of formulaic grant funding, but institutional allocations have not yet been provided for the Research Excellence Grant, Research Postgraduate Grant, and Knowledge Exchange & Innovation Fund.

11. For Teaching, SFC has prioritised additional funding into increasing the 'unit of resource' which is the amount of funding provided per fundable student. For 2026-27 the University of Edinburgh will see a £2.2 million increase in teaching grants (+3.2%). We can additionally anticipate an uplift to our total research and innovation funding; our sector share of these grants is generally larger than that for teaching. Full allocations and institutional breakdowns of the research and innovation budgets will be provided in SFC's final funding announcement, expected in late May 2026.

12. When Court next meets, in June, we are likely to have a new Scottish Government in place. The Senior Team recently heard from one of our political experts, Professor Ailsa Henderson, on likely election scenarios. We are now observing the pre-election period and while we will still engage with politicians and candidates, in line with our elections protocol, our interactions in the next six weeks will be lower. We are preparing to welcome many new MSPs and will be engaging with them actively following the election.

13. Court will be aware of the recent process to elect our new Senior Lay Member and I congratulate Dr Frank Armstrong on his appointment and look forward to working with him in this new capacity from August.

14. I am sure that Court members will join me in wishing Vice-Principal Iain Gordon well, as we learn of his appointment as Senior Vice-Principal with the University of Glasgow. We will be sorry to see him leave us at the end of July and thank him for his service to Edinburgh, in various guises, since 2006. Recruitment plans are underway; we will initially be seeking an internal appointment for an Interim role.

    Related Events

    - Participated in a Scottish Funding Council Board meeting, and a Deep Dive session.
    - Received the Queen Elizabeth Prize for Higher and Further Education at the presentation ceremony and associated events in London, alongside the Lead Professor Luke Bisby and various colleagues and students involved in the work of the Edinburgh Fire Research Centre. The University was awarded this highly prestigious Prize for its long-running research in fire safety engineering.
    - Participated in a meeting of the Research Security Independent Advisory Board.
    - Welcomed guests to the launch event of the University's Regenerative Sustainability Strategy.
    - Participated in a Research Security Roundtable hosted by the United States of America Embassy in London.
    - Welcomed the Chancellor, HRH the Princess Royal, to the Ocean Leaders Dinner, held in the Playfair Library.

- Participated in the University's annual Anatomy Memorial Service.

Strategy 2030 Themes

Our People

15. Following UCU Edinburgh's (UCUE) ballot via an "e-vote", five consecutive days of strike action commenced on Monday 30 March. This broke the agreement made in December for no industrial action in exchange for a number of specific arrangements, including a commitment to no one at risk of redundancy prior to 28 April.

16. UCUE are now requesting an agreement that there be no letters indicating risk of redundancy until after 31 July 2026 and "meaningful consultation" including financial information, to call off the current action. This is simply further delaying necessary changes and would only result in another agreement, which UCUE have already demonstrated are meaningless. Despite this, we are engaging to explore the feasibility of finding a negotiated settlement to the dispute.

17. On 31 March UCUE confirmed their new ballot passed in favour of Industrial Action. Following the recent change to trade union legislation, this ballot will have a mandate for 12 months, rather than previous 6 months.

18. Unison and Unite currently remain engaged and committed to continue discussions with the aim of avoiding job losses and identifying improvements to workload and job security.

19. The latest voluntary severance offer (which was opened at the specific request of UCUE) for academic staff only has closed with 69 applications. This represents a maximum saving of £5.3m, at a cost of £2.6m. Applications will be assessed and outcomes confirmed at the end of April. Most staff will exit by 31 July 2026.

20. As part of our People Strategy and ongoing commitment to providing high-quality learning and development for staff, and improving University culture for people from under-represented backgrounds, an Anti-Racism Learning offer has been launched for all staff. The launch follows a successful pilot, a suite of e-learning material is now available that includes two in-house developed modules, an Anti-Racism SharePoint Hub and other support resources.

<u>Related events:</u>

- Participated in a meeting of the Leaders Forum.
- Delighted to welcome over 50 colleagues to the Professorial roll signing ceremony.

Learning, Teaching and Students

21. A number of my senior colleagues, led by Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary Students Lucy Evans, participated in a EUSA Representative Roundtable in March where there was a good discussion focused on the cost-saving activities and their current and potential future impact on our students. It was a valuable opportunity to hear directly from student representatives and highlight how and why decisions are being made. The two student fora organised by Ash and colleagues this academic year

have been constructive and worthwhile. A follow up communication has gone out to all students following the March event, which includes signposting to FAQs that will be kept under regular review. Noting the importance of local communications and engagement with students as reflected at the Roundtable, Heads of College are working with Heads of Schools to ensure they are communicating directly with students on changes in their Schools.

22. We have also been receiving email communication from some of our students, often using UCU template messages, showing support for the current industrial action. These messages are responded to, again signposting to the student-focussed FAQs that cover why action to address the financial situation is necessary and what the impact might be.

23. A group of protestors, citing pro-Palestine demands, staged an occupation of the Gordon Aitken Lecture Theatre on Tuesday 24 to Friday 27 March, and on the Friday also occupied Appleton Tower. They were served with a Sheriff's Court Order on Thursday and left both locations on Friday. These occupations did however result in disruption to thousands of students due to have teaching in those buildings. The team in Student Experience Services worked with School teaching offices to relocate teaching to minimise the impact. The same group blocked access to Old College on the morning of 1 April. Staff relocated to other buildings during that short disruption.

24. I participated in a debate at the Edinburgh Union on the motion "This house believes that universities have forgotten their purpose." I spoke against, alongside Lord Smith, Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. There was a good and lively discussion from both sides on the issues and the debate afforded a welcome opportunity to hear from our students and discuss these important issues. The event was well organised by our students, who also made good contributions to the debate. It was also particularly heartening and fitting to be in the newly refurbished Teviot Debating Hall following the reopening of the refurbished Teviot Row House.

Related events:

- Participated in regular meetings with the EUSA President and Sabbatical Officers.
- Spoke at the reopening event of Teviot Row House hosted by EUSA. We welcomed four Edinburgh councillors to the reception and gave them a tour of the renovated spaces.

Research and Innovation

25. UKRI undertook a series of events about their strategic direction at the end of March. The meetings for Scotland took place in Glasgow and I attended their Townhall session, which was led by Professor Louise Heathwaite, Executive Chair of Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). Vice-Principal Research & Innovation, Professor Liz Baggs also attended this session and a roundtable event on the same day. The main aim was to provide information and discussion time around the re-alignment of their strategy, which I noted in my last report to Court.

26. We were involved in coordinating an expression of interest for the Edinburgh and South East Scotland region to the Local Innovation Partnerships Fund (LIPF), focused on financial and professional services, led by FinTech Scotland. This was a highly competitive and political fund, with many more high-quality bids submitted than DSIT/UKRI were able to support. Our bid was unsuccessful, losing out to the Tay Cities Region proposition on creative tech. Whilst this is disappointing news, we have a suite of propositions for future development, and we have received constructive guidance from the panel, which will help optimise our approach to future opportunities for our region.

27. Edinburgh was announced in February as one of four New National Compute Resources funded by UKRI via an investment of £76 million. The first to launch is Edinburgh, where a £19.5 million investment will be used to enhance and expand the capabilities of our Cirrus supercomputer. This development is designed to complement the forthcoming national supercomputer, which will also be located at the University.

28. On 17 March, I welcomed leaders in engineering biology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to a US-UK Convening at the National Museum of Scotland on AI for Engineering Biology, in partnership with the UK's Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology (DSIT), supported by the Scottish Government. The event convened 80 international experts in engineering biology, AI, data engineering and research engineering, as well as philosophers, ethicists, social scientists, funders, and government officials from the UK and the US. The key topic of discussion was how to ensure that the collection, storage, and use of biological data support AI-enabled approaches at the forefront of engineering biology.

29. Other Research news:
    - £20m Investment in Quantum Software Lab (QSL): The UK Government will invest £20 million in a major new four-year programme called Quantum Advantage TurboCHarger (QATCH), led by QSL in collaboration with the National Quantum Computing Centre (NQCC). This programme aims to develop the algorithms, software systems, and verification tools necessary to utilise powerful quantum computers effectively and reliably. The funding will also support the development of applications across sectors such as healthcare, energy, finance, and cybersecurity, supporting economic growth.
    - Launch of the Carbon-Loop Sustainable Manufacturing Hub: A new sustainable manufacturing hub will utilise engineering biology techniques to transform carbon-based waste, typically destined for landfill, into next-generation materials, including pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. The hub will also establish the UK's first BioFactory, a dedicated platform for waste analysis, sustainability evaluation, and scale-up that will reduce emissions, cut landfill use, and help build a fossil-free manufacturing base. C-Loop is one of four UK-wide centres announced by the EPSRC, which is providing £11 million in funding.
    - A University of Edinburgh student start-up, health tech company Bioliberty, has secured £7.7m in a Series A investment round to accelerate product development

and international growth. Bioliberty, originating from the University's School of Engineering, develops technology to aid physical rehabilitation for the growing number of people recovering from mobility-limiting conditions or injuries.

- Marie Sklodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships Success: The University secured eight of these postdoctoral fellowship awards, a particularly impressive achievement given the published success rate of only 10%.
- Research Support Services Conference: Over 200 research support colleagues from across the University attended the conference on 25 March. This event provides an opportunity for attendees to come together as a community, share experiences and best practices, and learn from each other. The conference included nine parallel sessions, along with keynotes from the Vice Principal Research & Innovation and the Director of Edinburgh Research Office.
- Professors Brian Bigger and Ian Kunkler have been named among this year's TIME 100 Most Influential People in Health, a global list that recognises individuals whose work is transforming the future of medicine and public health. Prof. Bigger, from the Institute for Regeneration and Repair, is developing stem cell gene therapies for childhood dementias, and Prof. Kunkler, from the Institute of Genetics and Cancer, was recognized for his contributions to reducing unnecessary cancer treatments.

Social and Civic Responsibility

30. I was pleased to launch our Regenerative Sustainability Strategy at an event in mid-March. The bold 15-year plan will put us beyond action confined to damage limitation with targets to become environmentally regenerative, actively restoring nature to ensure a net positive environmental and social impact.

31. The launch event was very well attended by over 270 people who explored 30 information stalls in zones dedicated to Learning and Teaching, Research and Innovation, procurement, estates, forests and peatlands and a showcase of spin out companies. Feedback has been extremely positive both to the event and the strategy.

32. In early March, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy Gillian Martin MSP wrote to all University and College Chairs, in addition to Council Leaders and other Public Bodies, highlighting the publication of updated statutory guidance for public bodies in relation to their responsibility for climate change duties. From 2026-27 onwards, Scotland's environmental governance oversight body Environmental Standards Scotland will actively monitor public sector delivery of climate activity, including compliance with climate change duties.

33. We have established a sub-committee of University Executive, the Regenerative Sustainability Strategy Board, chaired by a member of SLT, to ensure delivery of our new Regenerative Sustainability Strategy and adherence to our public bodies duty. A revised KPI for climate action is proposed in Paper H and a high-level implementation plan has been agreed, with active monitoring of our strategy commitments.

Political and civic engagement:

34. As part of the celebrations for the Edinburgh Medical School 300 programme, the University worked with Martin Whitfield, MSP for the Lothians, to lodge a Motion of congratulations in the Scottish Parliament. It gained cross-party support which allowed it to be debated in the main parliamentary chamber on 12 March with five MSPs speaking fondly of the Medical School's contribution to Scottish society. A delegation of the EMS300 team was in attendance.

35. Wes Streeting MP, the UK Government's Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, visited the University for the first time on 5 March, where he toured the BioQuarter campus and spoke to Vice-Principal & Head of College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine Professor David Argyle and other colleagues about the plans for a Scottish Health and Biomedical Institute as well as visiting the labs of the Brain Tumour Trust in the Institute for Regeneration and Repair (IRR).

36. The University supported and hosted the Scottish Government's AI Strategy for Scotland launch event at EFI on 20 March. This was the last external engagement for both the Deputy First Minister, Kate Forbes, and Minister for Business Richard Lochhead – who have both often been supportive of the University in office and are both standing down as elected members ahead of the Scottish Parliament election.

37. We also organised and hosted a follow-up to this launch a week later focussed on the University's prowess in Data and AI, which attracted over 100 attendees from the public and private sectors with representation from across the University and local authority partners from the City Region Deal. There will be a report with a set of policy recommendations for both Scottish and UK governments framed around the discussions from this event.

38. The University worked with James Gillespie's High School and other local Edinburgh schools to host a hustings on 30 March ahead of the Scottish Parliamentary election. Seven candidates from the major parties were present answering students' questions on climate and sustainability.

39. At the end of March, Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) was awarded a Civic Trust Award and Special Award for Reuse and Adaptation. Data-Driven Innovation (DDI) initiative & EFI team members coordinated with Bennetts Associates in production of a highlights video shown at the award ceremony, a press release and internal communications to highlight the achievement.

<u>Related events, political and civic engagement:</u>

- Participated in a meeting with the First Minister
- Participated in the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee meeting.
- Participated in a site visit to the Forest & Peatlands programme at Drumbrae with Professor Sir Gerry McCormac, Principal of the University of Stirling.
- Participated in the City of Edinburgh Council's Edinburgh Medal Ceremony.

Related events, global:

- Participated in the interview panel for the next Una Europa Secretary General.
- Spoke at THEREALME Leadership Summit 2026 (online, hosted from Abuja) on the topic of Global Competence: management and leadership in the intelligent age.
- Participated in several League of European Research Universities Board meetings.
- Welcomed His Majesty's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway Jan Thompson and Embassy colleagues during their visit to the University.
- Participated in the inaugural meeting of the University of Freiburg International Strategic Advisory Board.
- Participated online in the U7+ Presidential Summit.

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

C1

University Court

20 April 2026

Policy & Resources Committee Report

Committee name	Policy & Resources Committee
Date of committee meeting	30 March 2026
Action requested	Court is asked to **note** key points from the meeting. Recommendations for Court's approval are dealt with elsewhere in the agenda of the present meeting.
Freedom of Information status	Minutes of PRC meetings are published at https://governance-strategic-planning.ed.ac.uk/governance/university-committees/court-committees/policy-and-resources-committee/minutes

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

C2

University Court

20 April 2026

Audit and Risk Committee Report

Committee name	Audit and Risk Committee
Date of committee meeting	2 April 2026
Action requested (if any)	Court is asked to **note** the key points from the meeting.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

C3

University Court

20 April 2026

Senate Report to Court

Description of paper	This report informs Court of the confirmed record of the Senate meeting held on 10 December 2025. Court previously received a summary of the 10 December meeting in the Senate Report presented to the February meeting of Court. The report also provides a summary of Senate business undertaken at the following meetings of Senate: • the e-Senate meeting held 28 January – 11 February, including the confirmed e-Senate report; and • the Ordinary meeting held on 4 March 2026.
Action requested	Court is asked to **note** the confirmed record of the Senate meeting held on 10 December 2025 and the confirmed e-Senate report of 28 January – 11 February 2026. Court is asked to **note** the summary of Senate business from the 4 March 2026 meeting.
Resource Implications	Senate is responsible for considering the resource implications of its decisions during the course of its business.
EDI implications	Senate is responsible for considering the EDI implications of its decisions during the course of its business.
Climate & SDGs	N/A
Consultation	This paper has been reviewed by the Academic Registrar.
FoI status	Senate minutes are available on the University website

D

University Court

20 April 2026

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 projects.

Students’ Association President’s Report

Summary

1. This paper includes:

- key areas of current sabbatical work, including on University Finances communication, Commuter Students, policy reviews, and Assessment and Feedback; and
- organisational activity, strategy and finance, noting the March Elections, a successful re-opening of Teviot, and the organisation’s current work for the Student and Teaching Awards.

Discussion

2. It has been an incredibly busy time at the Students’ Association! Thank you to everyone who attended the re-opening of **Teviot**, or if you have visited since! It has very quickly become a new (and old) student favourite on campus, and while not all the work is finished, we couldn’t be prouder of the teams across the Association and the University for making this happen!

3. However, the recent occupation by EUJPS of Gordon Aikman Lecture Theatre and Appleton Tower has undoubtedly caused significant disruption, affecting lectures, study spaces, and the day-to-day experience of many students. But, while this impact cannot be ignored, it also reflects a deeper frustration among parts of the student body about the pace of the University response, a year after passing the **Responsible Investment Policy**. We urgently need clearer and more transparent communication between the University and its students, as well as a willingness to engage meaningfully with the concerns, which I hope the Representations Process will provide.

4. The updates that follow provide an overview of our recent work. We have been actively engaging with student concerns regarding the University’s financial position, and UCU’s strike action. Katya, Syjil, and I attended a debate hosted by the Edinburgh Union, in which most students voted in favour of “Universities have lost their true purpose”, with a lot of speakers quoting the financial situation as a compounding factor with a poor student experience.

5. This shows that the university needs to become better at showing what ambitions and projects underpin an Edinburgh University that is prepared for the future, to equip students with skills and knowledge in areas such as artificial intelligence, financial literacy, and climate change, but also to be responsive to an ever-changing world. It is our strong view for students to be involved in this change, to ensure that the University continues to offer what they actually need.

Key Areas of Recent Work

<u>Student Voice</u>

6. Since the previous Court meeting, I have held a follow-up **roundtable** between student representatives and colleagues of SLT, where we discussed several issues

related to student experience in the university's change projects and finances. As a result, there has been an all-student email sent out by Lucy. I look to expand student voice in decision-making about the financial situation, especially considering cohorts of students who might be impacted in unique ways, such as Postgraduate Researchers.

7. VP Welfare Syjil and VP Education Katya co-hosted a roundtable in early March on the Degree Awarding Gap. This was received well by staff and had greater college representation than last semester, particularly from CAHSS, who were keen to take this work forward. Students appreciated the opportunity to engage with co-design elements of the Skills 2 Success Hub which is a central space for all resources for Widening Participation students that is currently being developed on MyEd. They hope to see the first iteration of the hub completed in this semester.

8. Together with the Student Voice team at the university, I am working on a **Student Voice Framework**, which will set out the process/journey student feedback should follow. It includes the main formal methods of gathering feedback, but the principles are aimed to extend to informal dialogue as well. This aims to improve on existing Student Voice policy.

9. The Southside community council are developing their **Local Place Plan** that feeds into Edinburgh Councils City 2040 Strategy. VP Community Akrit has set up consultations with students as they are an increasing demographic of Southside, and hopes to have student input on topics like transport, accommodation and lifestyle.

10. Another big issue for me has been divestment. March saw the third meeting of the **Responsible Investment Advisory Group**, where I have continued to advocate for more urgency and transparency in the process. I have worked with CAM and SRS to develop a Communications Plan, which includes balanced messaging that avoids greenwashing and explains legal/fiduciary considerations and the complexity of responsible investment.

Student Life Affordability

11. The first ever **commuter students' working group** meeting took place with staff from Accommodation, Estates, Student Experience, and our Commuter Students Representative. Akrit is now working closely with staff from the group on data gathering and discussing possible interventions.

12. VP Activities and Services John is continuing to support the Student Opportunities team in rolling out and delivering **Blether Together** and has helped program several free workshops in Teviot, such as guided meditations and clothes mending.

13. I have been involved in the **student fee setting process** for international and postgraduate fees. I advocated against raising the fees, and for keeping fees fixed. Furthermore, I also successfully lobbied for a more holistic fee setting process, which will consider the student accommodation rent and the cost of living in Edinburgh as factors.

14. The **Scottish Elections** are next month! VP Community Akrit has been involved in an informational campaign across Scotland to get students registered to vote, while both VP Education Katya and President Ash have started talking to candidates, for example about the Cost of Living, and are preparing a candidate directory on our website.

Processes, Spaces, Policies

15. If you were at the reopening of Teviot, you will have seen that my **Heritage Project** is completed! You can find the audio guide here, and the exhibition is up in the Gallery Cafe and Union Social! In the week of the Teviot reopening, I also had interviews with STV, The Scotsman, The Herald, Forth Radio 1, and the Student Newspaper, letting the wider community know about the return of Teviot.

16. The **Dharmic Prayer Room** will finally open on 9 April, and the sign is now on the door! Akrit is coordinating with faith groups on how the space will be used, and working on a booking system to make usage easier.

17. The theme of **Assessment and Feedback** is a big priority for Katya right now. In the aftermath of the Glasgow Case, Katya has been working with the University's Quality Assurance team regarding a review of grade boundary guidance, which attempts to create a standard framework for course organisers across the University. She is also a part of the panel which is reviewing assessment delivery in the School of Economics.

18. The **LGBTQ+ Thematic Review** consultations are starting three years after Ash advocated for this review as LGBTQ+ Liberation Officer. VP Welfare Syjil is currently running consultations for undergraduates and postgraduates on their experiences as LGBTQ+ students.

19. On **Tackling Gender-Based Violence** (GBV), Syjil worked hard alongside colleagues in the Association's Marketing team and CAM to promote the survey of student experiences and perceptions in seeking support for those who have experiences of GBV. The survey closed on 12 February with 630 responses and the University's Equally Safe team are looking to produce an analysis of the results this summer.

Elections

20. We were pleased to run a successful set of elections this year, with 86 students running for just over 40 positions, including 20 students running for 1 of the 5 sabbatical officer positions. 6183 students voted over 4 days casting over 40,000 votes, (over 6 votes each) suggesting voters are engaged beyond voting for students they know. These numbers are slightly down from 2025, but remain significantly up from 2024, so still provide a firm foundation to build upon. The results were announced at our candidates' celebration mixer and results evening at Pleasance on 6th March. In addition, the elections were characterised by a positive atmosphere, and no formal complaints.

21. The new Sabbatical Team joining us from the end of May will be:

- President: Bradley Stevens (he/him)

- Vice President Activities and Services: Vasil T (he/him)
- Vice President Community: Kate Chapman (she/her)
- Vice President Education: Joana Mends (she/her)
- Vice President Welfare: Syjil Ramjuthan (she/her) – for a 2nd year

22. The current team are of course still in post. The formal handover date to the new team is Friday 5 June. The new Sabbaticals-elect will join the Association on Monday 25 May for some initial induction, and handover with the current team, followed by core training, including 3 days of residential training and planning with our Senior Management Team the following week. We are currently organising the summer programme of training, development, planning and objective setting, and meetings with key teams and contacts both internally and in the University. At the same time our Student Voice team are focussed on induction and initial training of the various part time reps, including School Reps, Liberation Officers, including our Rep Training Conference before the summer break.

<u>Teviot re-opening update</u>

23. We were delighted to finally open the doors of Teviot to students on Wednesday 5 March, following a launch event the evening before bringing together students, staff and project stakeholders. The initial feedback from students, and in fact everyone who has visited since, has been incredibly positive with footfall and trading being ahead of that anticipated. The lead-up to the re-opening was incredibly busy, and there are some elements of the work that will require some short-term closures of spaces during quieter periods to have them completed. However, the benefit of introducing students to the space, and have 3 weeks of operation prior to the easter break has been clear. Our teams have worked hard to manage new systems, processes and operating procedures, with very little time for 'rehearsals' because of the completion of works running later than planned.

24. There was substantial media coverage of the opening, focussed on both the return of a much loved heritage building (including the Library Bar and Debating Hall), and the creation of new spaces appealing to our student members ('Union Social' – our key food/drink and entertainment space). There has been significant interest and use of what are now much more clearly defined spaces, from our 'quiet' West Reading Room to the Community Lounge, and our Gallery Studio with its programme of regular daily wellbeing activities including yoga, meditation, and social painting, crafting, and mending workshops.

25. We are now focused on planning and developing future activity – looking ahead to Graduations, Festival, and Welcome Week operations, and making our own additional investments to ensure the long-term financial viability and contribution Teviot will make.

<u>Students' Association Awards Celebration Season</u>

26. Nominations for our Student Awards and Teaching Awards have now closed, and we are looking forward to our celebration events in April. Over 400 nominations were submitted for our Student Awards, for a range of over 200 individuals and groups, and

these will be announced at our Student Awards Celebration on Wednesday 1 April, at Pleasance. We received over 2000 nominations in our Teaching Awards this year, and results will be announced on 22 April at our Awards Evening in Teviot.

Advice Place Quality Accreditation

27. The Advice Place team achieved re-accreditation under the national Matrix scheme. This is a well-recognised national quality improvement and quality benchmarking scheme for providers of information, guidance and advice, and acts for us as a clear indicator to students, internal and external partners, as to the continued quality and credibility of the service. In particular the assessor referenced particularly the strategic work we have done to reshape the service and the creation of a larger frontline service team to increase fast access to advice and improve triaging, and investment in a new casework and enquiry system to provide more efficient case management as well as easier and more intuitive access to trends and insight reporting from the service, and more scope to measure short and long term impact of the service. In addition, the focus on continued professional development of the team to a high level on a range of complex topics (including suicide, safeguarding, gender based violence, domestic violence, and housing and welfare benefit law) was also a point of success.

Paragraphs 28-30: closed section

Risk Management

31. Financial risks are highlighted in the report.

Next steps/implications

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

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

E

University Court

20 April 2026

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	This paper sought consultation from Scott Ball (Sports Coordinator-Competitions), Natasha Homer (Data and Insights Officer) and Mark Munro (Director of Sport and Active Health).
Freedom of Information status	Open Paper

Edinburgh University Sports Union Report

Summary

1. As Semester Two comes to a close, the Sports Union is beginning to reflect upon a successful year of competition, events and development. Women's Fencing became national champions, with Women's Lacrosse and Tennis claiming the National Trophy. Learning and Development Week and Intramural All Stars saw increased engagement from committee members and participants.

2. Wider Edinburgh Sport developments include the launch of the InspirED programme, research into the connection between being engaged in sport and graduate outcomes and the first ever Girls Night In.

Background

3. The BUCS season has concluded for the majority of clubs in which it is highly likely that Edinburgh will retain its fifth-place position in the table. With EUSU having a full staff turnover going into this academic year, we are proud of being able to continue business as usual, supporting our members to be able to achieve success on and off the playing field. Our continued efforts to build community and a sense of belonging through events such as Intramural All Stars and Girls Night In have had tangible impact.

Discussion

Competition Results and Events

4. We are proud to share that Edinburgh has completed another successful BUCS season. We were represented by more teams at Big BUCS Wednesday (four teams, an increase of two from last year) with Women's Lacrosse 1s beating Exeter, Women's Tennis 1s beating Loughborough and Women's Fencing 1s beating Nottingham. Women's Badminton 1s missed out to Loughborough taking home silver medals in the National Trophy. 12 teams have also won their BUCS leagues which is a remarkable achievement. This has all contributed to an anticipated fifth place in the BUCS table overall.

5. Intramural All Stars saw top intramural players take on club teams in a day of fixtures across Pleasance, Peffermill, and on UoESport.tv. The All Stars claimed 2 wins from 6 fixtures. The event brought together intramural and club communities, with great spectator turnout and energy throughout the day.

6. Following its success in increasing sense of belonging last year, the Edinburgh Games is returning on the 22 April. This event is aimed to increase international student engagement.

7. Liv Stevens and Naomi O'Brien contributed to the working group that saw the event delivery of Edinburgh Sport's Girls Night In. UoE Sport x Girls Night In was a relaxed, welcoming evening designed to make sport and physical activity more accessible for women and girls through female only gym spaces and classes. With over 300

attendees, feedback displays the event had a strong positive impact on participant wellbeing, confidence, and engagement in physical activity.

Learning and Development Week and Election Results

8. The Sports Union successfully delivered its annual Learning and Development Week, welcoming all incoming club committee members for the 2026/27 season. The week involved over twenty engaging and informative sessions, each designed to upskill and empower student leaders. Overall, the week had great engagement with over 450 students engaging with sessions throughout the week, sharing positive feedback highlighting the value of the programme. Learning and Development Week has set a strong foundation for the year ahead, ensuring that student leaders feel prepared, supported and confident to make a positive impact within their clubs.

9. The EUSU AGM took place on 5 March, with elections held for the 2026/27 Executive Committee. All positions were filled with the exception of the Vice President Inclusion and Wellbeing & Inclusion Officer roles, for which we intend to re-open nominations ahead of the new academic year. The new elected committee reflects a broad range of experiences and perspectives, and we're confident that they will contribute positively to the continued development of sport at the University.

10. The incoming Sports Union President is Connie Chen, a fourth-year student studying Psychology and Sociology. She currently serves as Media Officer on the Sports Union Executive Committee and has been the Athletics Club Women's Captain. She will begin a two-week handover with the outgoing President on 15 June before officially starting the role on 29 June.

11. EUSU will be welcoming two new clubs into its offering for the 2026/27 season, Ice Skating and Functional Fitness. Men's Lacrosse and Flag Football have been disbanded due to insufficient numbers to be able to operate.

12. No constitutional changes were made to the EUSU constitution at the AGM.

Wider Edinburgh Sport Developments

13. As introduced in EUSU's previous update to Court, our recent research has examined the relationship between engagement in university sport and student outcomes at Edinburgh. We previously reported that students participating in university sport between 2020/21 to 2024/25 were up to 8 percentage points more likely to achieve a high degree classification (First or 2:1) compared with the wider student population. Further analysis has shown that Sport participants also demonstrated slightly stronger graduate outcomes over the period of 2020/21 to 2022/23, including slightly higher rates of employment or further study and progression into highly skilled roles. Notably, widening participation students engaged in sport reported more positive alignment between their graduate activity and future plans, with some evidence of higher rates of highly skilled employment or further study. These findings suggest that engagement with university sport at Edinburgh may contribute to both academic success and equitable graduate progression.

14. Our performance sport programme has had fantastic results recently, including: six University of Edinburgh players being selected for the Women's Six Nations. Scholar Ciara Schlosshan is ranked number one in Europe for 100m Butterfly and Archie Goodburn is ranked number one in Europe for 50m Breaststroke (Archie is now the second fastest swimmer in history over 50m Breaststroke). Alistair Hall competed at the Winter Paralympics as a VI Skiing Guide for Hester Poole. Further achievements include the University of Edinburgh Men's Hockey becoming the first University side to ever win the Scottish Premiership and four University of Edinburgh players playing in the squad that enabled Scotland Women's Hockey to qualify for the World Cup.

15. This semester, sport scholarship athletes have been visiting schools as part of the new InspirED programme. Student athletes have been talking to primary and secondary school classes about their journeys in sport, what their life as a student athlete is like and some of the challenges they've faced. They've also discussed what our values of Ambition, Belonging, Belief mean to them, and facilitated group discussions among pupils on what their values are.

16. Over the past couple of months Sport has been engaging in community consultations with local organisations around the provision of Friday afternoon sport sessions for local young people living in the communities surrounding Peffermill. Friday Sport will launch an 8-week pilot after the Easter break where young people will visit Peffermill and participate in structured and semi-structured sport sessions delivered by UoE staff and students. The project is in partnership with a number of local charities, youth organisations and services, and will also incorporate food provision for the young people attending. Following the pilot there will be a review with the aim being to offer regular activity through term-time for the young people of south Edinburgh.

Risk Management

17. No major risks.

Next steps/implications

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

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

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University Court

April 2026

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, Strategic IT Committee and Learning, Teaching and Student Experience IT Portfolio Group. 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 version

Student Experience Update

Summary

1. Progress continues to be made in a number of areas of work on the student experience. Notable points include the following:
   - Learning & Teaching Strategy: initiated systematic implementation and monitoring.
   - Assessment and feedback: currently tracking at 82.5% of assessments returned to students within three weeks, which is significant year-on-year progress towards our target of 90%.
   - Academic Size and Shape: initial implementation work underway in each College, based on high-level Principles. Design of Framework has commenced.
   - Improvements to collection of tuition fees: in progress and yielding financial benefits.
   - Other important work in advanced planning or preparatory stages, including enhancements to timetabling, course selection, boards of examiners, market insight, administrative processes and relevant digital efficiencies.

2. The report also outlines:
   - our engagement with a national review of awarding arrangements; and
   - the breadth of current work to capture the benefits of AI in teaching innovation, linked to the Learning and Strategy implementation.

Background

3. 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.

4. These major projects are complemented by an ongoing set of continuous improvement activities focused on areas raised regularly by students and staff, and some smaller development work dedicated to ‘getting the basics right’.

5. 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). The NSS and PTES are currently running and we will receive outcomes in the Summer.

Discussion

Strategy

6. Our Learning and Teaching Strategy presents a step change in setting our intentions for our academic delivery, focused on our agreed aim to ensure that the reputation of our student experience equals that of our world-leading research.

7. An Implementation Group under Senate Education Committee is leading and monitoring delivery. In addition, the Learning and Teaching Workstream serves to capture and monitor implementation of major initiatives.

Academic Size and Shape

8. The Strategy continues to provide the framing for our Academic Size and Shape deliverables across teaching, research and our civic mission:
   - 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;
   - Research, research impact and innovation activities and excellence to be supported by commensurate income generation and wider strategic benefit. Support of research innovation to support diversity of income sources.
   - Help to shape a more transparent and consistent holistic view of resourcing to support effective academic planning and budgeting.

Teaching and assessment

9. Assessment and Feedback improvements have continued to be at the core of improvements to our educational delivery, responding to consistent requests from our students via NSS and PTES and anecdotally. This includes speed and relevance of feedback. Data from the on-going assessment period so far show sustained improvement on last year.

10. Our curriculum development work includes the encouragement of innovation. As part of this, we are keen to encourage academic staff to consider how generative AI can help us develop new and interesting ways to teach and assess. We recognise the importance for our students to develop their skills in the responsible use of generative AI, creatively, critically and with integrity. There is an extensive array of initiatives within the University to develop and test potential applications in teaching and learning, often with benefits also for research.

Enabling initiatives

11. Important work to enhance the quality and consistency of student-facing services includes 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. This work is in various stages of design and delivery and, as such, is limited in measurable outcomes at this stage. We are prioritising our work in responses to student surveys and feedback via Student Representatives, notably in Assessment and Feedback and student voice.

External monitoring

12. Our improved student experience is subject to external as well as internal scrutiny. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) collaborate to ensure the quality and standards of higher education in Scotland.

13. At its meeting in February, University Court noted the submission of the University's Self-Evaluation Action Plan to the SFC, in line with the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework. The Student Experience update paper makes reference to the positive feedback on our approaches to quality assurance and enhancement from the QAA.

National Review of Awarding Arrangements

14. The SFC has commissioned QAA to conduct a National Review of Awarding Arrangements. The stated purposes of this are to assure awarding practices, maintain academic standards, protect student interests, and drive enhancement. The review follows an internal investigation by the University of Glasgow in response to the death of a student who had been wrongly informed that he would not receive his honours degree. SFC submitted a formal Concern to the Scottish Quality Concerns Scheme about the University of Glasgow in July 2025 and QAA subsequently issued a Target Peer Review report containing a set of recommendations.

15. In this context, we are carrying out a two-stage process to assess our own systems and practices and to provide assurance and/or identify any need for improvement:
    - Desk-based review (Feb-March 2026)
    - Thematic review of a sample of universities (May-Aug 2026), identified from desk-based review, plus volunteers.

16. The Glasgow report will form the framework for our reviews. Our initial benchmarking has been completed against the Glasgow report recommendations. Our work already started on Board of Examiners Review implementation, portfolio review within Academic Size and Shape and Student Administration Review show that we are already actioning improvements to address matters raised in the Glasgow report.

Risk Management

17. 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

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

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

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University Court

20 April 2026

Finance & Planning Update Report

Description of paper	This paper provides an update on: • University Group Quarter Two Forecast 2025-26; • University management accounts for February 2026; and • Outcomes of the half-year financial close exercise.
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.

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

H

University Court

20 April 2026

Strategy 2030 Strategic Performance Framework mid-year report 2025-26

Description of paper	This paper is a mid-year update on Strategy 2030 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including proposals to make changes to existing KPIs.
Action requested	Court is asked to **note** the 2025-26 mid-year KPI progress report, noting that some data gaps are due to timing, and not all KPIs can be reported at this stage. Court is also asked to **approve** a change to KPI 16 – Climate, as outlined in the paper, and to **note** the intention to propose an adjustment to KPI10 – Curriculum Transformation.
Resource Implications	Developing and monitoring our Strategic Performance Framework has resource implications, principally, but not exclusively, within Governance and Strategic Planning, with the frequency of reporting a key consideration. This requires staff time and automated tools for effective information dissemination. Monitoring progress is crucial as KPI ambitions are clearly aligned with our institutional and financial sustainability strategies. Resource implications of delivering against individual KPIs are addressed via separate business cases and finance and planning updates.
EDI implications	N/A
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	The performance measures are mapped to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. They were developed with Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) and align with the aim in our Regenerative Sustainability Strategy, to drive activity to address the climate emergency.
Consultation	This paper has been reviewed by Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance and Strategic Planning. To prepare progress reports we consult and engage with appropriate University contacts. University Executive reviewed the paper on 10 March, supported the KPI changes proposed, and commented on the criticality of complementary financial and operational metrics. PRC reviewed on 30 March; comments have been incorporated into this paper.
FoI status	Closed

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

University Court

20 April 2026

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data Report 2026

Description of paper	Reporting on 2024/25 academic year by protected characteristics, on both staff and students, intended for an external audience.
Action requested	Court is asked to **discuss** and **approve** before publication of the EDI summary report on the University's website by the end of April.
Appendices	The University's public EDI reports are published at https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/about/reports/edmarc
Resource Implications	There are no specific resource implications from this paper in itself, though the data may suggest areas for action with resource implications. Further development of the approach to internal and external reporting will have resource implications for Governance and Strategic Planning, HR EDI team, the University EDI Lead and other leads for EDI.
EDI implications	In seeking to support the advancement of equality, this report has positive implications for equality, diversity and inclusion matters: it identifies areas where we need to concentrate actions in order to ensure equity, increase diversity and ensure all staff and students can flourish.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	Actions arising from this work contribute to SDGs 5 (Gender Equality) and 10 (Reducing Inequalities). In itself, the topic of the paper has no climate impact; however if the discussion were to lead to active recruitment of students or staff from more diverse parts of the UK or world, the travel implications of these individuals could differ, bringing a positive or negative impact in terms of associated emissions.
Consultation	This reporting represents a continuation of the reporting approach agreed by EDIC in December 2022. It has also been circulated to colleagues working on EDI, and HR, for comment, and was considered by University Executive on 10 March 2026 and PRC on 30 March 2026.
FoI status	Reports published

J

University Court

20 April 2026

Responsible Investment Policy Representations Process

Description of paper	This paper proposes a finalised process for representations to be made by staff and students under the Responsible Investment Policy, following agreement by the Responsible Investment Advisory Group (RIAG).
Action requested	Court is asked to *approve* the revised attached process.
EDI implications	A submission form will be developed with accessibility considerations in mind, as will publication of the process when approved.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	Representations may be received on climate/sustainability topics. The Responsible Investment Policy already focuses strongly on climate goals and contributes to other SDGs and includes a commitment to explore embedding nature into our investments.
Consultation	The paper has been informed by previous PRC and Court discussions and decisions on the topic and by an extensive review of practice at peer institutions in the UK. The paper has been finalised following discussion at RIAG's third meeting.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper – the approved process will be published as an annex to the Responsible Investment Policy in due course.

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K

University Court

20 April 2026

IT System Replacement

Description of paper	This paper presents the ongoing work to progress the programme and requests that the committee recommend approval of funding.
Actions requested	Court is asked to: • **approve** the indicative funding range, in order to proceed with the procurement and deployment of a commercial solution.
Resource Implications	The capital funding will be met from the Digital Estates capital envelope allocation. This capital spend is within the current capital forecast. The revenue funding will be met from within the ISG revenue budget.
EDI implications	No direct EDI implications. An EqIA has been completed as part of the preparation of the full business case and is appended to that document.
Climate & SDGs	N/A
Consultation	This paper has been reviewed by the Digital Infrastructure, Cyber and Web Portfolio Group, Capital Projects Group, Strategic IT Committee and Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University. Estates Committee considered it on 18 March 2026. Approval recommended by Policy & Resources Committee on 30 March 2026.
Freedom of Information	Closed

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L

University Court

20 April 2026

Computer Room 4 Supercomputer Preparation Project, ACF

Description of paper	This paper presents an update on the CR4 Supercomputer Preparation Project to host the Next National Supercomputer and the required next steps to appoint the Main Contractor by 24 April 2026.
Action requested	Court is asked to: • note that the DSIT/ UKRI Formal Grant Agreement has now been received; and • give **formal approval** to proceed with the project and drawdown of Government funding from the grant award, subject to ongoing contract negotiations.
Resource Implications	Capital is forecast within the current Estates Capital Plan to deliver this project. The DSIT / UKRI Formal Grant Agreement has been received.
EDI implications	Equality and Diversity issues will be considered throughout the design development process in consultation with the relevant departments and statutory bodies.
Climate & SDGs	The project aligns to SDG9 – Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.
Consultation	Capital Projects Group, 19 February 2026; Estates Committee, 18 March 2026; Policy & Resources Committee, 30 March 2026. Before awarding the main contract, necessary approvals will be sought from the Estates Tender Review Panel and the CR4 Supercomputer Preparation Project's Project Board.
Freedom of Information	Closed paper

M

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University Court

20 April 2026

Small Works and Statutory Compliance Programme Budget Allocation

Description of paper	This paper sets out the proposal for funding for the 2026/27 Small Works and Statutory Compliance Programme which includes an increased element of Backlog Maintenance.
Action requested	Court is asked to **approve**: • the Small Works and Statutory Compliance Programme 2026/27 allocation; and • additional funding to come from capital plan re-allocations; and **note** that the total allocation sought is within the current capital plan forecast envelope and, therefore, within existing and new planning round assumptions.
EDI implications	N/A
Climate & SDGs	Increased investment in the condition of the Estate would contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 13: Action to combat climate change and its impact by repairing and prolonging the use of existing buildings rather than building new. Improvements to accessibility of the Estate would contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
Consultation	Capital Projects Group, 19 February; Estates Committee, 18 March 2026; Policy & Resources Committee, 30 March 2026.
Freedom of Information	Closed

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N

University Court

20 April 2026

Committee Effectiveness Reviews

Description of paper	The paper proposes the adoption of a self-review process by all committees of Court and proposes a flexible approach with core features for such reviews.
Action requested	Court is asked to **approve**, on the recommendation of Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC): • the adoption of a requirement for all committees of Court to hold regular self-reviews; and • the inclusion in the process of self-review of an expectation that reviews will usually be reported to GNC in the first instance, in addition to being shared with the body to which the reviewed committee reports.
Resource Implications	The addition of review processes would call on existing administrative resources, potentially requiring some re-prioritisation of tasks across teams that manage relevant committees.
EDI implications	Self-review could include consideration of EDI matters and could help to identify any relevant issues.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	This paper has been reviewed by the Vice-Principal and University Secretary. Governance & Nominations Committee considered this topic and recommendations on 26 January 2026.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper.

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

O

University Court

20 April 2026

Development & Alumni Annual Report for 2024/25

Description of paper	This Paper constitutes the annual report of Development and Alumni (D&A) to University Court. Court members already receive regular updates on D&A activity and gifts received at each of their meetings. This report aims to be complementary to those updates, drawing on broader data sets and providing multi-year data where helpful.
Action requested	University Court is asked to **note** the paper, to make any comments on progress made or on current priorities.
Resource Implications	There are no specific resource implications associated with this paper.
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 Mastercard Foundation programme, the Black British Scholarships programme, the Nyerere Scholarship and specific scholarships to attract candidates from under-represented groups both at University and School-specific level.
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	Fundraising by D&A supports sustainability initiatives, such as the Forestry and Peatland Programme, and specific research and teaching programmes connected to the environment, and raises awareness and support among alumni for the University's Carbon 2040 policy.
Consultation	The paper was noted by University Executive on 14 April 2026.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper (commercially sensitive)

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

P

University Court

20 April 2026

Alumni Club Recognition Process

Description of paper	This paper outlines the proposed changes to formal recognition processes for alumni clubs, alumni groups, and alumni regional contacts.
Action requested	Court is asked to **approve** the proposed changes to formal recognition of alumni clubs, alumni groups, and alumni regional contacts.
Appendices	N/A
EDI implications	N/A
Climate & SDGs	N/A
Consultation	This paper has been prepared by the Alumni Team and approved by the Development & Alumni Senior Management Team. University Executive has been updated on the proposed changes and colleagues in Legal Services have also reviewed this paper.
Freedom of Information status	Closed

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Q

University Court

20 April 2026

Award of University Benefactor

Description of paper	The paper proposes candidates for the award of University Benefactor.
Action requested	Court is asked to **approve** donors for the award of University Benefactor.
Resource Implications	The cost of awarding is met from existing budgets.
EDI implications	N/A
Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals	N/A
Consultation	All nominations have been reviewed and recommended to the Principal by the Vice-Principal Philanthropy and Advancement.
Freedom of Information status	Closed paper

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

R

University Court

20 April 2026

Forest and Peatland Programme: Third Annual Report and Future Oversight

Description of paper	The paper provides the third and final Forest and Peatland Programme (FPP) annual report, along with a review of progress against the initial 10 objectives of the FPP. It also outlines how the FPP objectives will be overseen henceforth.
Action requested	Court is asked to **note** the report.
Resource Implications	No significant implications. Modest savings to staff time are expected from the removal of the current FFP board.
EDI implications	The Programme has undertaken consideration of physical access issues and is exploring improvements. A full Equality Impact Assessment for the Forest and Peatland Programme was completed during 2023/24. Providing access for a wider range of groups that traditionally do not experience nature and the outdoors remains a priority.
Climate & SDGs	The FPP will sequester all unavoidable carbon dioxide from the University's travel emissions over a 50-year period and ensure additional benefits for nature and society. It addresses a number of SDGs, including: SDG 3, Good health and wellbeing; SDG 10, Reduced inequalities; SDG 13, Climate action; and SDGs 14 & 15, Life below Water and Life on Land.
Consultation	This paper was reviewed and approved by the Forests and Peatlands Programme Board and the Regenerative Sustainability Strategy Delivery Board, prior to approval of relevant operational decisions by University Executive on 7 October 2025. Considered by Policy & Resources Committee on 30 March 2026.
Freedom of Information	Closed paper. Extensive information on the FPP is publicly available at https://sustainability.ed.ac.uk/operations/forest-peatland

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

S

University Court

20 April 2026

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 January to 28 February 2026 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 MasterCard Foundation 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

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

T1

University Court

20 April 2026

Draft Resolutions: Degree Programme Regulations

Description of paper	This paper invites Court to consider two draft Resolutions containing annual updates for the degree programme regulations and to refer them to the General Council, Senate and any other interested party for comment before they return to Court for approval.
Action requested	Court is asked to consider the following draft Resolutions and to **refer** them to Senate and the General Council for observations: • Draft Resolution No. 5/2026: Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations • Draft Resolution No. 6/2026: Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations.
Resource Implications	Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) has given due consideration to any potential resource implications and there are none to be raised to Court.
EDI implications	APRC has given due consideration to equality and diversity issues, and considered that the proposed amendments include enhancements and clarifications that will have some positive effects for students, e.g., by offering the option of readmission for students who have left the University in good academic standing for reasons beyond their control.
Climate & SDGs	N/A
Consultation	The proposals for amendments to the Regulations have been considered by APRC and recommended to Court for approval. The proposals arose via consultation with Schools and Colleges. Relevant departments have been consulted regarding specific proposals for amendment, e.g. Student Immigration Service for changes affecting visa-holding students; Student Recruitment and Admissions regarding changes relating to readmission to study.
FoI status	Open paper

Draft Resolutions: Degree Programme Regulations

Summary

1. The paper invites Court to consider two draft Resolutions containing annual updates for the degree programme regulations and to refer them to the Senate, General Council, and any other interested party for comment before they return to Court for approval.

2. There are a small number of proposed amendments to the regulations, which are described in the Key Changes tables provided in the Discussion section of the paper.

Background

3. The Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 enables the Court to exercise by Resolution approval for 'any additions or amendment to regulations for existing degrees' on the recommendation of the Senate, with Senate having delegated responsibility for detailed work on the academic regulatory framework to its Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC). APRC has undertaken its annual review of the undergraduate and postgraduate degree regulations and has recommended some amendments following consultation with Colleges and Schools. Draft Resolutions have been formulated to incorporate the recommended changes. Attached to these draft Resolutions are a list of degrees to which these regulations apply.

Discussion

4. The key changes proposed to the Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations 2025/26 are as indicated in the table below. Links within the regulations to other information have been updated as necessary.

Regulation Updated	**What has changed**
6 Undergraduate awards	Amended the credit volumes for the MBChB (medicine) and the BVM&S (veterinary medicine) to reflect the current structure of these programmes.
19 Authorised Interruption of Study	Amended to remove content duplicated from the Authorised Interruption of Study Policy and instead refer to that Policy for more information. This removes existing misalignment between the wording of the Regulation and the Policy (for example regarding retrospective approval of interruptions) and prevents this recurring.

28 Optional Study Abroad	Amended to clarify the position regarding the requirement to have passed all credits before undertaking optional study abroad. The clarification states that all courses taken in Year 2 must be passed at the first attempt, rather than simply Year 2 courses, as students in Year 2 may be carrying courses with fails or null sits from Year 1. The amendment also notes that the College may allow exceptions to this where students are awarded null sits for courses taken in Year 2 due to Exceptional Circumstances. The amendments reflect existing practice.
33 Withdrawal and Exclusion	Amended to bring the regulation into line with the postgraduate degree equivalent (45) and the expectations of the Withdrawal and Exclusion Procedure. The amendment explicitly extends the permission to apply for readmission onto the same, or a related programme of study to students who have been excluded due to debt, non-matriculation, or lack of visa permission. It maintains the existing requirement that the gap between withdrawal or exclusion and readmission must be no more than three years, but notes that there are some exceptions to this, e.g. on professional programmes where two years is the maximum. The regulation states that the decision as to whether to readmit a student remains at the University’s discretion, and provides information regarding factors to be considered when assessing applications. This provides effective mitigation against the risk that a student may be readmitted where this would not be appropriate or feasible, and serves to manage students’ expectations regarding the process of readmission. The regulation also clarifies that, where a readmitted student has previously received an exit award, this will be rescinded, in the event that they achieve a higher award following resubmission. Students face increasing challenges with the affordability of study, so it will be of benefit to provide explicit reassurance that students excluded due to debt can seek readmission once their debt is settled. This benefit will be particularly relevant for students from lower-income backgrounds.

	Students requiring a visa to study can also face challenges securing or maintaining the appropriate visa through no fault of their own. Providing a route to readmission following exclusion due to lack of visa permission is therefore a significant benefit to international students. There are situations where students fail to matriculate at the appropriate time due to serious health or personal issues, and they do not respond to contact before the exclusion process is completed. Providing an explicit route to seek readmission in these circumstances will therefore be of significant benefit to these students.
Changes to Degree Specific Regulations	
78 MBChB	Amended to reflect new requirements from the General Medical Council, including the Medical Licensing Assessment Applied Knowledge Test.
85-91 BVM&S	Various amendments to align the regulations with current practice regarding progression requirements on the programme. 87 states that the permitted maximum of two years of interruption or of repeat years may not be taken consecutively. This reflects the experience within the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies that students with such interrupted progress have a very low likelihood of completing the programme subsequently. It is therefore considered in a student's best interest that they withdraw voluntarily in these circumstances, although there remains the option for the School to request a concession in exceptional cases. 91 provides new content regarding attendance requirements on the programme. These are existing requirements, being added to the Regulations for the sake of clarity. The requirements are set out in detail in the BVM&S Attendance Policy.

5. The key changes proposed to the Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations 2024/25 are as indicated in the table below. Links within the regulations to other information have been updated as necessary.

Regulation Updated	What has changed
16 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	**Removal of RPL where an exit award is made** RPL is limited to one-third of the total credits for the award for which a student is applying. However, where a student exits a programme with a lesser award, the RPL could constitute as much as 100% of the credit for the exit award, for example where a student is awarded 60 credits RPL for a Masters programme, but exits with a Certificate. This means that a student is being awarded a qualification largely or entirely based on credit that has already been counted towards a different award. The amendment states that previously-awarded RPL may be removed in order to comply with the "one-third" rule, where a student leaves with an exit award. Colleges can allow exemptions to the "one-third" rule where the RPL has been awarded for University of Edinburgh credit which did not lead to an award previously, for example credit gained as part of Continuous or Postgraduate Professional Development. **RPL for courses on a Degree Programme Table** Students may take individual courses at the University as Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD) or Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and subsequently seek to use the credit for these courses as part of a programme of study. The amendment to the regulation states that, where a student is given RPL for a course or courses taken previously which are on the Degree Programme Table for the programme they are joining, the mark(s) for the course(s) will be used for progression and award decisions on the new programme. This is line with the approach taken for students returning to undertake a Diploma or Masters after completing a Certificate or Diploma, under Regulation 60 of the Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations.

33 Authorised Interruption of Study	Amended to remove content duplicated from the Authorised Interruption of Study Policy and instead refer to that Policy for more information. This removes existing misalignment between the wording of the Regulation and the Policy (for example regarding retrospective approval of interruptions) and prevents this recurring. The Regulation retains content regarding exceptions to the rule that the total permitted period of interruption will not exceed 100% of the prescribed period of full-time study, which is referred to but not covered in the Policy.
45 Request for Reinstatement on Doctoral and MPhil degrees	Amended to extend provision for former students to request reinstatement where they have been excluded due to debt, non-matriculation, or lack of visa permission. Like students who have withdrawn voluntarily, students readmitted after exclusion for these reasons will be offered the time they had remaining on their programme at the point of exclusion to complete their thesis. Self-funding students in particular face increasing challenges with the affordability of study, so it will be of benefit to provide explicit reassurance that students excluded due to debt can seek readmission once their debt is settled. This benefit will be particularly relevant for students from lower-income backgrounds. Students requiring a visa to study can also face challenges securing or maintaining the appropriate visa through no fault of their own. Providing a route to readmission following exclusion due to lack of visa permission is therefore a significant benefit to international students. There are situations where students fail to matriculate at the appropriate time due to serious health or personal issues, and they do not respond to contact before the exclusion process is completed. Providing an explicit route to seek readmission in these circumstances will therefore be of significant benefit to these students. The regulation states that the decision as to whether to readmit a student remains at the College's discretion, and provides information regarding factors to be considered when assessing applications. This provides effective mitigation against the risk that a student may be readmitted where this would not be appropriate or feasible, and serves to manage students' expectations regarding the process of readmission.

48 PhD Thesis Length – Word Count **51 MPhil by Research**	Amended to state that image captions are not included in the word count for PhD or MPhil theses. This will encourage the provision of detailed captions, where appropriate, which will be of particular benefit to blind or partially-sighted readers of a thesis.
Changes to Degree Specific Regulations	
68 PhD – Submission by Portfolio in Art, Design and Landscape Architecture	a. Amended to include examples of what might constitute a permanent record for the portfolio of artefacts, using existing text from Regulation 80; b. Amended to refer to Regulation 48 regarding inclusions and exclusions from the word count, for consistency with other doctoral degrees; c. New content added regarding separate submission of the portfolio and thesis for some programmes.
69 MPhil - Submission by Portfolio in Art, Design and Landscape Architecture	a. Amended in line with Regulation 68. b. Amended in line with Regulation 68.
72 Master of Chinese Studies **76 MSc in Middle Eastern Studies with Arabic** **78 MSc in Architectural Project Management** **79 MSc in Advanced Sustainable Design (mixed mode)**	These regulations are to be removed as these programmes are closing and have no students currently taking them. Subsequent regulation numbers will be amended.
80 PhD in Creative Music Practice	a. Amended to refer to Regulation 48 regarding inclusions and exclusions from the word count, for consistency with other doctoral degrees.
82 PhD in Architecture by Design	Amended to provide more information and consistency of format with other Edinburgh College of Art doctoral degrees.

Risk Management

6. APRC has considered any risks arising from the proposed amendments and there are none to be raised to Court.

Next steps/implications

7. Court will invite Senate and the General Council to comment on these draft Resolutions and notice of these will be published on the website. Final Resolutions will be referred to Court on 15 June 2026 for consideration and approval.

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

T2

University Court

20 April 2026

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: Appendix 1: Responses to questions from a member of Senate Appendix 2: Resolution No.1/2026: Foundation of a Chair of Large-Scale Database Systems Appendix 3: Resolution No.2/2026: Alteration of the title of the Mary Dick Chair of Molecular Veterinary Medicine
Resource Implications	Funding for the Chair of Large-Scale Database Systems will be met by the Huawei Strategic Talent Fund for three years, after which it will be met from the School's core budget. The alteration of the title of Mary Dick Chair is backdated as the current incumbent was appointed to the new title and this is a clerical adjustment to formalise the *de facto* arrangements, so there are no resource implications associated with the alteration of the Chair's title.
EDI implications	Equality and diversity best practice and agreed procedures are adopted in promoting individuals to chairs.
Climate & SDGs	N/A
Consultation	Senate and the General Council are asked for observations on draft Resolutions. The draft Resolution to establish a Chair of Large-Scale Database Systems was circulated to eSenate 28 Jan - 11 Feb 2026. One Senate member raised questions, responses to which, from the relevant School, are provided in an appendix. Draft Resolutions are available on the University website: https://governance-strategic-planning.ed.ac.uk/governance/university-governance/acts-and-secondary-legislation/university-resolutions/notice-draft-resolutions to enable any other body or person having an interest to express observations.
FoI status	Open paper

Appendix 1: Responses to questions asked by a member of Senate

The School has provided the following responses to questions regarding the draft Resolution to establish a Chair of Large-Scale Database Systems:

'Given the current restraint on recruitment, is this expertise that cannot be met within our current staff?'
The current Database Group leaders have commitments that mean they cannot take on this role. The Huawei funded post will enable the School to attract a high calibre individual, whom we expect to take a significant mentoring and general leadership role within the group, whilst building succession planning for the future so the post will provide the opportunity to develop not-yet-senior academic staff.

'Is the Huawei funding given at FEC [full economic cost] *or just a salary basis (i.e. what implicit subsidies from the university are involved in creating this post)'*
The Huawei Strategic Talent Fund covers salary at 0.2FTE and potential start-up funds. There are no subsidies for this post required by the University for the duration of the funding.

'Is the chair's appointment and research programme at all influenced by the external funder, and what are the funder's expectations?'
There are no commitments to the funder in terms of research direction or outputs. The funder is not involved in the recruitment process.

'Given the time limit on external funding, does this represent an ongoing commitment of resource past the external funding window to the external funder's expectations?'
After the Huawei funded period of 3 years, this 0.2FTE position will move to the School budget in 2030. It is expected that the funded position will generate substantial research income, together with industrial and translational awards, minimising any future ongoing costs.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Resolution of the University Court No. 1/2026

Foundation of a Chair of Large-Scale Database Systems

At Edinburgh, the Twentieth third day of April, Two thousand and twenty six.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to found a Chair of Large-Scale Database Systems.

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

1. There shall be a Chair of Large-Scale Database Systems in the University of Edinburgh.

2. The patronage of the Chair shall be vested in and exercised by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh.

3. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 February Two thousand and twenty six.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Draft Resolution of the University Court No. 2/2026

Alteration of the title of the Mary Dick Chair of Molecular Veterinary Medicine

At Edinburgh, the Twentieth day of April, Two thousand and twenty six.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to alter the title of the Mary Dick Chair of Molecular Veterinary Medicine;

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

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

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

1. The Mary Dick Chair of Molecular Veterinary Medicine shall hereafter be designated the Mary Dick Chair of Physiology.

2. This Resolution shall come into with effect from 1 October 2020.

For and on behalf of the University Court

LEIGH CHALMERS

University Secretary