



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

APPOINTMENT OF Senior Lay Member of the University Court



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About the University of Edinburgh

Established in 1583, Edinburgh is consistently ranked in the world's top 50 universities; has been ranked fourth in the UK for the breadth and depth of its research; and is the largest university in Scotland. The University of Edinburgh is internationally renowned for its world-leading research, the high quality of its teaching and learning, and its entrepreneurial and creative culture.

The University has an annual turnover of more than £1.4 billion, of which £365m is research income. With more than 17,000 staff and over 49,000 students, the University of Edinburgh is a truly global university, rooted in Scotland, but with worldwide impact. Edinburgh is a founding member of the UK's Russell Group of leading research universities, and a member of the League of European Research Universities (LERU).

From playing a central role in the Enlightenment and establishing the first English literature department in the world, to laying the foundations of electromagnetism and antiseptic surgery, the University is steeped in history.

Our campuses house some of the world's most important collections, spanning more than 400 years and including art, musical instruments, natural history, geology, anatomy, rare books and manuscripts.

We have the oldest student newspaper and purpose-built student union in the world. Every year we award the James Tait Black Prizes, Britain's oldest literary awards.

Today, against the backdrop of an ever-changing political and societal landscape, we continue to have a global outlook, in the knowledge that our international partnerships, collaborations, staff and student community make us what we are, and allow us, as an institution, to continue in the tradition of making history. We are first in the world for industry, innovation and infrastructure, according to Times Higher Education, with one of Europe's largest centres for AI research.

We have a clear and **ambitious strategy for the future**. As a world-leading research-intensive University, our purpose is to address tomorrow's greatest challenges. Between now and 2030 we will do that with a values-led approach to teaching, research and innovation, and through the strength of our relationships, both locally and globally.

About the University of Edinburgh

Key facts

- Edinburgh is consistently ranked one of the top 50 universities in the world. It is 29th in the 2025 THE World University Rankings.
- Edinburgh is ranked the sixth best student city in Europe and 13th in the world.
- It is ranked fourth in the UK for research power; based on the 2021 Research Excellence Framework.
- Its graduates are ranked 33rd in the world by employers.
- It is ranked 7th in the world in the 2025 QS World University Rankings for Sustainability. It is ranked 4th in Europe and 2nd in the UK.

Our vision

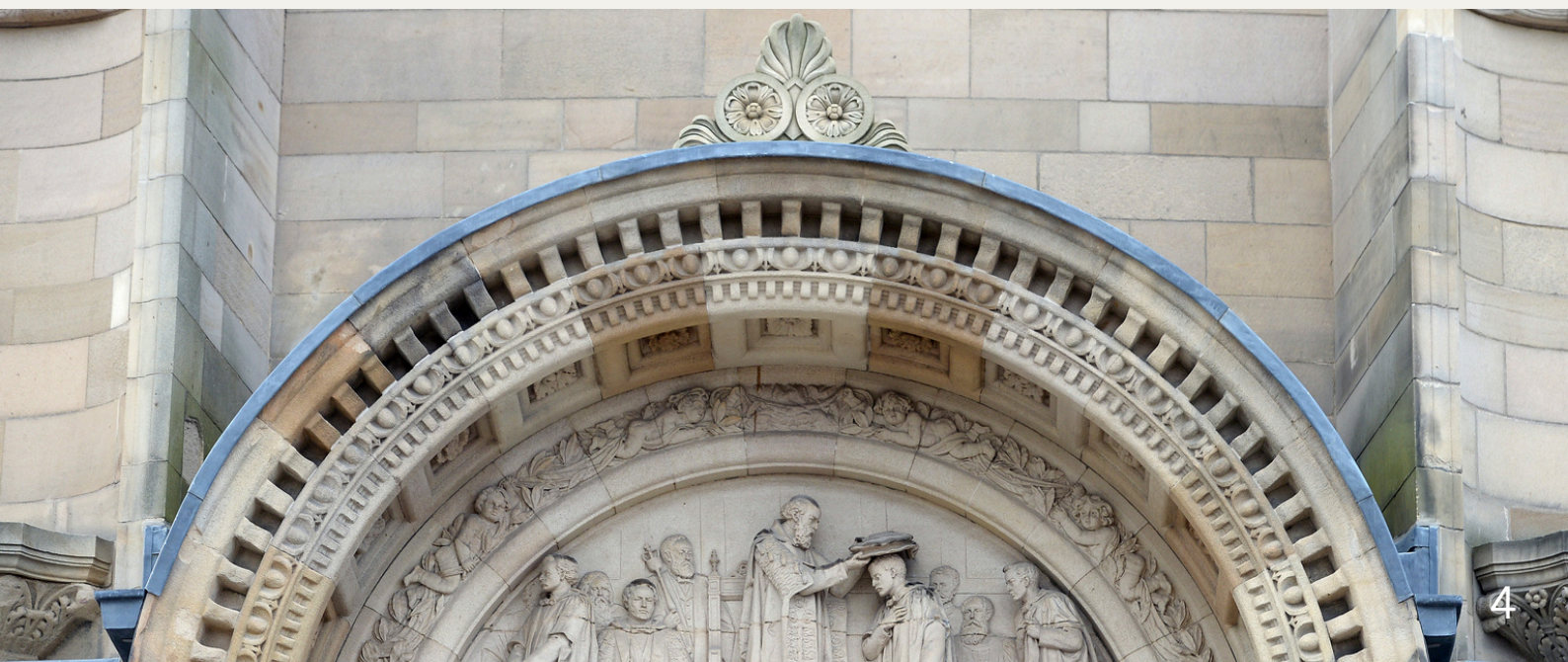
- Our graduates, and the knowledge we discover with our partners, make the world a better place.

Our purpose

- As a world-leading, research-intensive University, we are here to address tomorrow's greatest challenges. Between now and 2030 we will do that with a values-led approach to teaching, research and innovation, and through the strength of our relationships, both locally and globally.

Our values

- We aim to achieve excellence in all that we do; always being principled, considerate and respectful.
- Our teaching and research is relevant to society and we are diverse, inclusive and accessible to all.
- We are ambitious, bold and act with integrity, always being willing to listen.
- We foster a welcoming community, where staff, students, alumni and friends feel proud to be part of our University.
- We celebrate and strengthen our deep-rooted and distinctive internationalism, attracting the world's best minds and building innovative global partnerships for research, teaching and impact.
- We are a place of transformation and of self-improvement, driven to achieve benefit for individuals, communities, societies and our world.
- We sustain a deep allegiance and commitment to the interests of the city and region in which we are based, alongside our national and international efforts, ensuring relevance to all.





Strategy 2030

By 2030 we will be able to demonstrate the success of our strategy in the following ways:

- The undergraduate curriculum will support breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it.
- Edinburgh will become the Data Capital of Europe. We will deliver inclusive growth, provide data skills to at least 100,000 individuals, and create new companies and solutions for global challenges.
- We will be leading Scotland's commitment to widening participation.
- We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.
- We will be on track to be a Carbon-Zero University by 2040.
- Our estate will be fit for purpose, sustainable and accessible.
- We will see our research having a greater impact as a result of partnership, international reach and investment in emergent disciplines.
- Improved digital outreach will see us enabling global participation in education.
- We will be a global leader in artificial intelligence and the use of data with integrity.
- We will be a destination of choice, based on our clear "Edinburgh Offer". All of our staff and students will develop here, whether they are from Leith, Lisbon, Lahore or Lilongwe.
- We will support learning, research and collaboration with our neighbours, businesses and partners.
- We will have more user-friendly processes and efficient systems to support our work.
- We will support learning, research and collaboration with our neighbours, businesses and partners.
- We will see integrated reporting of our whole organisational impact against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- Multidisciplinary postgraduate education pathways will support flexible whole-life learning.



University Court

The University Court is the governing body of the University of Edinburgh. It is composed of twenty-four members both internal and external to the University.

The Court is the employer of all University staff and the owner of all the University's assets, valued at £3 billion. It is responsible for the safeguarding of those assets, including the University's extensive estate, ensuring proper financial control arrangements and accounting for the University's turnover of approximately £1.4 billion per annum, much of this derived from public funds. The Court is also responsible for ensuring effective audit and risk oversight arrangements and for the University's compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations, including the health and safety of staff and students. The University is an educational charity and the Court members are its trustees, with the responsibilities this entails.

The Court is collectively responsible for overseeing the University's activities, determining its future direction and fostering an environment in which the institutional mission can be achieved and the potential of all learners maximised. This responsibility includes considering and approving the

University's strategic plan, which sets out the University's goals, aims and objectives and identifies the financial, physical, staffing and other strategies necessary to achieve them. The Court takes all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the institution and is required to regularly monitor its own effectiveness and the performance of the University.

Please see the following webpage for more details on the University Court:

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



Role Description



The Senior Lay Member's role is similar to that of the Chair of the institution and is responsible for the overall leadership of the Court and must ensure that the Court conducts its business in an effective and efficient manner with due consideration of the appropriate legal and compliance issues.

The Senior Lay Member should ensure that members of Court work well together and that members conduct themselves in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life.

The Senior Lay Member acts as a critical friend to the University, the Principal and members of the senior team.

Through leadership of the Court, the Senior Lay Member plays a key role in the business of the University but should not be drawn into the core day to day management which is the responsibility of the Principal and the senior management team.

The Senior Lay Member also has the responsibility, along with the Principal and others, to ensure that the institution is well connected and represented with its partners, stakeholders and other external bodies. This includes the Committee of University Chairs, Committee of Scottish Chairs and the Scottish Funding Council.

In addition to attendance at the Court, the Senior Lay Member will be the ex officio Convener of Exception Committee, a committee with delegated authority to make decisions which would otherwise require Court approval between meetings of the Court. The Senior Lay Member will also contribute to the governance of the University in other significant areas such as membership of the Governance and Nominations Committee and the Remuneration Committee. There is also an expectation that the Senior Lay Member will participate in University ceremonial events such as graduations.

The commitment associated with the role of Senior Lay Member is a combination of time taken to undertake the formal tasks, such as attendance at Court and Committees, and the informal support and contact which are critical to the effective discharge of the responsibilities of the position.

The Senior Lay Member is elected following an open recruitment and interview process.

Role Description

Period of Appointment

The appointment will be made for a period of four years. The appointee will be eligible for consideration for reappointment for a further term of four years subject to satisfactory appraisal.

Time Commitment

The likely overall time commitment required for the effective conduct of the duties of the post is expected to vary between two to four days per month. This will include preparation for, and attendance at, Court, Committee meetings and events including ceremonial events and external events, along with discussions with the Principal and other members of the senior leadership team. The Senior Lay Member is expected to be flexible in terms of their availability and being able to be contacted at short notice.

The Court currently meets five times a year on Monday afternoons, with two additional seminars held at the beginning and the middle of each academic year. The Court's Committees normally meet between three and six times a year on various days of the week.

The University does expect all members to be committed and willing to engage with the work of the Court and the University. Court members are invited to attend a number of university ceremonial events and some social events throughout the year. They are very welcome at these events, but the University recognises that other commitments may limit members' ability to accept all such invitations.

Honorarium & Expenses

Expenses incurred in connection with attending an interview or in participating in an election (up to an agreed limit) will be reimbursed.

Upon taking office, an honorarium of £15,600 is available to the Senior Lay Member. This is in line with the Scottish Government minimum daily fee framework for Band 1 Chairs of Public Bodies of £362 per day given the expected time commitment. Reasonable expenses incurred will be met by the University as per the University's Expenses Policy.



Role Specification



Eligible candidates must demonstrate they meet the following essential criteria to enable them to fulfil effectively the role of Senior Lay Member:

The availability, skills and knowledge to:

- exercise the functions of the Senior Lay Member; and,
- command the trust and respect of:
 - i) the other members of the Court
 - ii) the members of the Senate, the University's academic governing body; and,
 - iii) the staff and students of the institution.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Significant senior executive experience and expertise in leading on strategic issues within a large complex organisation;
- Experience of chairing high level, strategic Board and Committee meetings and bringing often complex and sensitive matters to a satisfactory conclusion;
- Relevant professional expertise and knowledge in matters relevant to successful operation of a large, diverse organisation, e.g. commercial acumen, risk management, organisational change;
- Strong experience of financial strategy;
- Knowledge and understanding of the education sector;
- Awareness of probity issues and commitment to high standards of integrity, transparency and impartiality;
- Knowledge or understanding of governance in complex organisations;

- Skills of networking, influencing and advocacy, including stakeholder management and the ability to represent the University to Government and in the media;
- Understanding of strategic planning processes;
- Alignment with the values and vision of the University of Edinburgh;
- Understanding of the economic, social and political dynamics the University of Edinburgh operates within;
- Knowledge of the international environment, particularly in relation to higher education;
- Experience of risk management oversight;
- Experience of people matters;
- As a member of Court, the Senior Lay Member is a Trustee of the University in its capacity as a charity and each candidate will, therefore, be required to confirm that they are not disqualified from serving as a Trustee under the Charities and Trustee Investments Act (Scotland) 2005.

In addition the following criteria are considered to be desirable, but not essential:

- Experience of delivering significant organisational change/transformation in a complex organisation;
- Experience of Research Councils, relevant Charities or Public/Government organisations.

Role Specification

Personal Attributes

The Senior Lay Member will have a strong personal commitment to higher education and have alignment with the values, aims and objectives of the University of Edinburgh.

Individual members and the Court collectively should at all times conduct themselves in accordance with accepted high standards of behaviour in public life, which embrace selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership, duty and respect.

Essential Personal Attributes include:

- Ability to communicate effectively at senior level and explain issues and decisions both orally and in writing
- Calm, measured, judicious approach;
- Diplomacy and sensitivity, including the ability to deal with conflict in a constructive manner
- Ability to demonstrate leadership skills, engender respect from a diverse community and establish good working relationships with a wide range of people (staff, students, other members of Court and its committees);
- Demonstrable commitment to equality and diversity;
- Sympathy with and understanding of the University of Edinburgh's culture;

- Strong interpersonal skills;
- Integrity, discretion, independence, objectivity and sound judgment;
- Ability to interpret information, debate constructively and provide rigorous and constructive challenge.

Equality & Diversity

The University is committed to embedding Equality & Diversity across all its work and strongly recognises the benefits that a diverse University Court can bring. Suitably experienced applicants from all walks of life are encouraged to apply.

After the appointment process has concluded and conforming to the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 a report will be published stating:

- (a) the number of applicants for the position,
- (b) so far as consent to disclosure has been received the characteristics listed in section 149(7) of the Equality Act 2010 with respect to:
 - (i) the applicants,
 - (ii) the applicants invited to an interview for the position,
 - (iii) the applicants entitled to stand as candidates in an election for the position following such an interview.



Application Process and How to Apply

The appointment process, which conforms to the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, comprises three stages:

- i) advertisement, application and interview;
- ii) election; and
- iii) appointment.

Application is by submission of a full Curriculum Vitae and a covering letter of application, addressing the job description and person specification and including suitable telephone contact details and an email address.

We encourage all applicants to complete and submit an Equality Monitoring Form (available for download from the website or upon request to court@ed.ac.uk).

Completed applications should be submitted by email to court@ed.ac.uk.

The closing date for applications is midday (GMT) on Friday 31 October 2025.

The Appointment Committee will meet in mid-November to decide upon a shortlist of candidates.

These individuals will subsequently be invited to visit the University for interview on Monday 1 December 2025.

The interview will explore each candidate's qualities, attributes and experience to determine whether they can demonstrate that they fulfil the criteria for appointment.

Please note that applications cannot be considered from staff or students at the University of Edinburgh or staff or students at any other higher education institution.

Applicants who are members of the University Court of the University of Edinburgh or the governing body of another higher education institution will be expected to relinquish their current position before taking office as Senior Lay Member.

Applicants judged by the interview panel to meet the criteria for appointment will be eligible to stand for election. The electorate comprises students, staff and Court members of the University. Candidates will have the opportunity to set out an election message which will be distributed electronically by the University to all electors and will also be invited to attend an online open meeting currently scheduled for Tuesday 20 January 2026 to address staff and students and to take questions.

The election will take place from Wednesday 21 January to Tuesday 27 January 2026 using the first past the post system. The candidate who receives the most votes will be appointed Senior Lay Member subject to agreeing to a standard Code of Conduct for Court Members and any other pre-appointment checks.



General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The University Court of the University of Edinburgh is the controller in relation to personal data submitted as part of this recruitment process.

We use the information you provide in your application to manage the recruitment process, and to assess your suitability for the position applied for.

The information you give us as part of the application process will not be shared with other organisations. The equality information you provide will be used for equality and diversity monitoring only to ensure the University fulfils its legal obligations. It is not shared with anyone involved in the selection process.

The legal basis for processing your data is that it is necessary to pursue our legitimate interests for the above purposes; that is necessary for us to take steps, at your request, to enter into a contract with you; and (in relation to equality information) to meet our legal and regulatory obligations.

Further information can be found on the University's corporate privacy notice page at <https://data-protection.ed.ac.uk/guidance/privacy-notices/corporate/employment>