Court Members – Role Description

Role of the University Court

Court is the governing body of the University and, as such, is responsible for the management and administration of all the revenue and property of the University, ensuring the effective management of the University and planning its future development. It is also responsible for the reputation and financial health of the University, the employment of all staff and for the well-being of the staff and students.

It is composed of twenty-four members both internal and external to the University. The internal members are staff and students of the University. Twelve external members are appointed by Court itself and are referred to as co-opted or lay members.

The role and responsibilities of members of Court

All members of Court should:

- offer to Court the best possible level of expertise, information and advice in pursuit of achievement of the strategic aims of the University
- question intelligently the business before Court and debate constructively
- conduct themselves in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life as recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee)
- endeavour to attend meetings of the Court (normally five meetings each year) and to serve on other groups reporting to Court as the Court may require
- share collectively in the responsibility for the decisions made by the Court
- declare any interest, whether personal or business, which may conflict with their role as a member of Court or with any particular item of business under discussion
- respect certain aspects of confidentiality depending on the nature of the business under discussion
- act independently and not as if delegated by any particular group or body, even when they may be nominated by a particular group.

Lay Members in particular bring to the Court’s deliberations knowledge, expertise, judgement and balance which may not be available among the members appointed from amongst the staff or students of the University. Their principal assets will be their independence, detachment and the provision of an external view; and their principal contributions will be:

- to challenge rigorously
- to decide dispassionately and to give an independent view on possible internal conflicts of interest
- to listen sensitively to the views of others
- to remind the University of the public interest in its affairs and to advise on the public presentation of the University
- to offer specialist skills in given areas.
The qualities required of members of Court

The qualities required of members of Court include:

- commitment to the University, its values and its objectives
- the ability to discuss a wide range of matters in a respectful and professional manner
- an appreciation of the broad social, economic and other trends affecting universities
- the capacity to question information and explanations supplied by officers of the University
- common sense, honesty and integrity.

Skills register

An evaluation of the balance of skills, attributes and experience of lay Court members is detailed in the table below (assessed in March 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills &amp; Experience</th>
<th>Lay Members</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Business &amp; Enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering/Science</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Finance</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Government/Public sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>----*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>International</td>
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<td>Legal</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<td>Property</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Strathclyde Alumni</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The 10 staff and student Court members provide expertise in Higher Education.

12 Lay Members: 6 Male 6 Female
0 Minority ethnic
0 Registered disabled

Time required

The time required of members of Court will vary, but will not normally be less than the equivalent of one day per month (or 12 days per annum). There are currently five scheduled meetings of Court per annum, one of these (November) being organised over two days. The main commitment will be during the period September to June, and the main time commitment will be spent reading and preparing for meetings. For those who are members of other committees or groups as well, then the time commitment will be greater.
Members of Court will also be invited to attend certain University functions and events, including University Day, Graduation ceremonies and other functions. Members of Court are encouraged to attend as many of these as they can, particularly Graduation ceremonies.

Persons not appointable as lay members

In the light of the role and responsibilities of Court the appointment of certain individuals as lay members could compromise effective good governance and so they would not normally be considered for membership. This may be due to:

- significant and/or recurrent conflict of interests, e.g. where an individual is a member of a governing body of another university, or is a member of staff of the firm employed as External Auditors to the University;
- a lack of wider experience, expertise or demonstrable independence; or
- persons, however eminent in public life, who are unable or unwilling to attend the main meetings of Court or to devote appropriate time to Court business.

Please note that the University’s Statutes do not allow the appointment of current staff or students as lay members.

Remuneration

In common with most higher education institutions and other registered charities, there is no remuneration directly associated with membership of Court. However, the University will meet reasonable expenses incurred in connection with membership of the Court or activities on behalf of the University including meeting child and other dependent care costs.

Period of Appointment for Lay Members

Lay member appointments are typically for a one year term in the first instance, with the possibility of a three year extension (renewable once) subject to satisfactory appraisal.