

## UNIVERSITY COURT

Thursday 26 November 2020  
By Zoom videoconference

### BUSINESS SESSION AGENDA

12.00 – 13:30

**Apologies:** Andrew Eccles

**Declarations of interest:** None noted

Introduction		
1.	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020</b>	<b>Paper A</b>
2.	<b>Matters arising</b>	
3.	<b>Principal's Report</b> <i>Principal</i>	<b>Oral</b> 15 mins
4.	<b>Update on Health, Safety &amp; Wellbeing</b> <i>University Secretary &amp; Compliance Officer</i>	<b>Oral</b> 5 mins
Substantive items		
5.	<b>2019/20 Financial Statements</b> <i>Chief Financial Officer</i>	<b>Paper B</b> 20 mins
6.	<b>Q1 2020-21 - Quarterly Business Report</b> <i>Chief Financial Officer, Director of Strategy &amp; Policy</i>	<b>Paper C</b> 20 mins
7.	<b>Strategic Plans Progress Report</b> <i>Director of Strategy &amp; Policy</i>	<b>Paper D</b> 10 mins
8.	<b>REF 2021 Submission Development</b> <i>Deputy Associate Principal for Research, Knowledge Exchange &amp; Innovation; Research Policy Manager</i>	<b>Paper E</b> 10 mins
Items for formal approval		5 mins
9.	<b>Research Integrity Statement 2019-2020</b>	<b>Paper F</b>
10.	<b>Convener's action: SBS UAE branch campus - Country Manager &amp; Authority to operate banking facilities</b>	<b>Paper G</b>



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Items for information		<i>5 mins</i>
11.	Lady Curran Endowment Fund	Paper H
12.	Independent QC Inquiry Report	Paper I
Committee reports <i>(for noting, unless otherwise stated)</i>		
13.	Executive Team	Paper J
14.	Court Business Group	Paper K
15.	Audit and Risk Committee (including draft Annual Report to Court)	Paper L
16.	Estates Committee	Paper M
17.	Senate Committee	Paper N
Closing remarks		
17.	Any other business <i>Convener</i>	
	Date of next meeting <i>Tuesday 2 March 2021</i>	

## MINUTES OF UNIVERSITY COURT

6 October 2020

Meeting held by videoconference

**Present:** Dame Sue Bruce (Convener), Paula Galloway (Vice-Convener), Professor Sir Jim McDonald (Principal), Virginia Beckett, Dr Jeremy Beeton, Dr Archie Bethel, Linda Brownlow, Kayla-Megan Burns, Ronnie Cleland, Alison Culpan, Andrew Eccles, Gillian Hastings, Chelbi Hillan, Stephen Ingledew, Dr Barbara Keating, Councillor Ruairi Kelly, Susan Kelly, Professor Scott MacGregor, William McLachlan, Dr Katharine Mitchell, Malcolm Roughead, Heather Stenhouse, Peter Young, Brenda Wyllie

**Attending:** Professor Tim Bedford, Professor Douglas Brodie, Adrian Gillespie, Professor David Hillier, Professor Atilla Incecik, Dr Veena O'Halloran, Professor Ian Rivers, Gordon Scott, Professor Eleanor Shaw, Rona Smith, Professor Iain Stewart, Steven Wallace, Dr Daniel Wedgwood, Helyn Gould (item 6), Claire Carroll (item 7), Professor Stephen McArthur (item 7)

**Apologies:** Marion Venman

### Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed Court members and attendees to the meeting. The Convener extended a particular welcome to new members of Court for 2020/21, who were attending their first formal business meeting.

No interests were declared.

### 1. Minutes

Court **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2020.

### 2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising, other than those covered in the main agenda.

### 3. Principal's Report

The Principal updated Court on recent developments. Court had recently received a separate update in relation to management of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the present meeting, the following points were noted by the Principal and the University Secretary & Compliance Officer:

- Teaching had begun in the new academic year. In accordance with the University's plans, teaching was entirely online at this stage. There would be a transition to blended learning within 3-5 weeks, subject to external conditions and guidance at the time.
- There had been cases of Covid-19 in University accommodation and elsewhere in the student community, but these were isolated clusters rather than significant outbreaks. These cases were being dealt with within households, in accordance with government guidance. While the data were by nature subject to fluctuation, the evidence pointed to an on-going reduction in the number of cases on campus.
- The University had worked closely with the Students' Association, whose contributions were commended by the Principal, to manage the arrival of students on campus and the commencement of online teaching.

- A 'buddying' system for students had had a very positive response from staff, with many volunteers coming forward.
- The University continued to work closely with Public Health Scotland and the NHS and to engage with the Scottish Government and the higher education sector. Glasgow City Council's Environmental Health officers had visited University accommodation and expressed satisfaction with arrangements for preventing and managing the virus.
- There had been regular communication with students both to clarify required behaviours and to convey positive messages and support around health and wellbeing.
- The University was injecting further funds into its Covid-19 Hardship Fund, which had seen high demand.
- November graduation ceremonies had been cancelled. A Conferment Day would be marked online, as had been done in place of summer graduations.
- Through the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland, the University was continuing to contribute to manufacturing efforts that would help combat the pandemic, including further manufacture and distribution of PPE equipment, for the University's own use and for local charities.
- A number of important research projects relating to Covid-19 were being pursued in the University, often in partnership with the NHS.

The Principal's updates on other topics included the following:

- The University had risen sharply in the Guardian and Sunday Times rankings of UK universities.
- In Widening Access, the University was exceeding Scottish Government targets. At the same time, entry qualifications remained high.
- A Strathclyde Medal ceremony had been held, providing recognition for the efforts of staff across the University. The Principal thanked the Convener for her contributions to this event.
- The Principal had completed a new series of engagement sessions with University staff, with over a third of staff attending in total. Other Senior Officers had also attended. The sessions had generated much positive feedback from staff.
- The University's Centre for Sustainable Development had been launched on 1 October. On the same day, the University had published its sustainable investment plans.
- Notable recent achievements by Strathclyde staff included the award of the 2021 IEEE Richard Harold Kaufmann Award to Professor Stephen McArthur, for his work in smart energy systems.
- Despite the unusual and challenging external context, the University was continuing to recruit exceptional academic talent and was maintaining and extending its international partnerships.

Court **noted** the report.

#### **4. Student Recruitment 2020/21 – UG, PGT & PGR Position at 29 September 2020**

The Director of Strategy & Policy updated Court on student recruitment and fee income, noting that the Covid-19 pandemic had had a significant impact in many areas of recruitment. The data were consequently expected to be subject to change for a longer period. In addition to an extended window for student arrivals, a number of additional taught postgraduate (PGT) programmes starting in January would mean that the recruitment data would continue to change for a number of months.

Widening Access admissions had reached the target set by the Commission on Widening Access. The University was not expected to exceed tolerance levels for recruitment of SFC-funded students. In general, recruitment of home and rUK students at both undergraduate and PGT levels was strong. Research postgraduate recruitment was showing growth from the previous year.

**[Reserved]**

The Chief Financial Officer noted that the financial impact of reduced international fees income would not, under realistic scenarios, lead to a breach of the University's proposed updated debt covenants, with the European Investment Bank, while noting that the negotiations for these covenants was ongoing. The Chief Financial Officer stated that quantifying the full changes to budget resulting from the current Covid-19 response would be completed as part of the Q1 Forecast process.

It was noted that the University was engaged in co-ordinated communications efforts to provide as much reassurance as possible to new and continuing students.

Court **noted** the report.

## **5. SFC Outcome Agreement update**

The Director of Strategy & Policy outlined the current position regarding the University's Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The SFC had suspended the Outcome Agreement process in response to the pandemic crisis, but Strathclyde had submitted its near-final document for the previous year, with appropriate caveats to reflect its dependence on previous circumstances. No guidance had yet been received regarding the current academic year's Outcome Agreement process, but the University and the wider sector were in dialogue with the SFC. Both the content and timing of the process were expected to differ from other years. Guidance was not expected to be issued until the first phase of the SFC's Review of Coherence and Sustainability had been completed. Court would be informed of developments.

Court **noted** the update.

## **6. National Student Survey 2020**

Helyn Gould, Deputy Associate Principal, summarised key results of the National Student Survey (NSS), which had been largely completed prior to the Covid-19 crisis and had been judged by regulators not to have been substantially affected by it. The NSS provided important input to inform the University's pursuit of excellence in learning and teaching.

Strathclyde's results showed that the overall gains of the previous year had been maintained, with the overall satisfaction rating improving relative to the University's benchmark group. At greater levels of detail, movement could be found in both directions. Full analysis would be carried out of areas in which improvement had been evident and where more work was required, to learn lessons from both. Past successes had been used to disseminate good practice more widely across the University and this approach would continue. An analysis in terms of sector quartiles confirmed that the University had improved in many areas not only in its absolute scores but also relative to other institutions.

Members discussed the ways in which best practice could be identified outside the University. It was noted that the Higher Education sector had a strong culture of sharing best practice in these areas and that the University actively monitored relevant external developments.

Further discussion centred on the detailed parameters according to which the data could be analysed and the ways in which qualitative data could supplement the quantitative results of the NSS. It was noted that the University drew on a number of sources of qualitative and quantitative data in addition to the NSS.

Court **noted** the presentation.

## **7. REF update**

Professor Stephen McArthur (Deputy Associate Principal) and Claire Carroll (Research Policy Manager) gave an overview of preparations for the REF2021 submission. The current focus of preparations was on enhancing Environment and Impact statements and case studies. The University continued to take a conservative approach in estimating outcomes.

Discussion focused on the development of the University's approach to REF preparations since the previous REF exercise. It was noted that the University had a strong understanding of requirements and could be confident that appropriate actions had been taken, with the focus in the right areas. The Principal and staff

members of Court commended the REF team's contributions. It was noted that the team had been able to continue to engage across the University despite the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members noted the wider, cross-sector importance of a robust, positive narrative on social and environmental governance and that the REF was an opportunity to convey the University's contribution in these areas.

Court **noted** the update.

## **8. Corporate Risk Register**

The University Secretary & Compliance Officer (USCO) presented the two corporate risk registers, one being dedicated to risks relating to Covid-19 and the other a continuation of the pre-pandemic register. The intention was to merge these two registers in the near future, reflecting the fact that it was necessary to begin to view management of Covid-19 as being integrated with business-as-usual. The Vice-Convenor noted that this approach had been welcomed by Audit & Risk Committee.

In subsequent discussion, members noted how both practical and reputational risks relating to the pandemic had been managed and how related opportunities may arise on the basis of changes that had been prompted by the crisis. In particular, members noted how Strathclyde had been able to transition rapidly and successfully to online and blended learning on the basis of existing high-quality online provision and discussed how the benefits of online learning might be captured and used in the future, as part of a wider programme of digital transformation.

Court **noted** the risk register and **approved** the top risks.

### **Items for formal approval**

## **9. Court Strategy Session, November 2020 – initial planning**

The Convenor and the Principal outlined initial plans for the Court Strategy Session. Given the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, the event would be held entirely online and would be limited to one day, 26 November 2020. A shortened business meeting would be followed by a strategy session that would include breakout group discussions, which would build on previous strategy discussions carried out within the Executive Team and Leadership Group. Each discussion group should have a Court lead in addition to an Executive lead; the Convenor invited members to volunteer to act as Court leads.

Court **noted** the outline plans.

## **10. Amendments to the Ordinances and Regulations**

Court **approved** amendments to the University's Regulations and Ordinances in order to effect:

- removal of the upper limit on co-opted members of Enterprise & Investment Committee; and
- changes to the list of the University's Senior Officers, to remove the position of Chief People Officer and add the position of Chief Information Officer.

### **10a. Convenor's Actions**

Court **homologated** prior approvals, by Convenor's Action, of:

- the appointment of Heather Stenhouse to Court Business Group and Linda Brownlow to Court Membership Group;
- the granting of University Status to NHS Lanarkshire, subject to specified management arrangements; and
- the submission of the ELIR Follow-on Report to QAA Scotland.

## **11. Annual Review of key Court documentation**

Court **approved** new versions of the Court Standing Orders and Handbook for Members of the University Court (incorporating Court's Statement of Primary Responsibilities), noting that amendments had been made in order to:

- reflect the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, which the University had implemented for the beginning of academic year 2020/21;
- align with the University's Charter and Statutes, as revised earlier in 2020 in the context of implementing the above Act;
- reflect changes made within the last year to certain committees of Court; or
- improve the clarity of the text.

## **12. Annual Statement on Institution-led Review of Quality for Scottish Funding Council, Academic Year 2019/20**

Court **approved** the Annual Statement on Institution-led Review of Quality, noting that, in line with standard practice, this had been submitted to the SFC by its deadline of 30 September 2020, marked as being subject to Court's approval. [Minute note: a Statement of Assurance noting Court's approval was sent by the Convener to the SFC after the meeting.]

### **Item for information**

Court received and **noted** the following items:

#### **13. Court Members' Annual Survey 2020**

#### **14. Complaints Handling Annual Report 2019/20**

#### **15. Health & Safety Annual Report and Strategy update**

### **Committee Reports**

Court received and **noted** the following committee reports:

#### **16. Executive Team**

#### **17. Senate** (relevant approvals noted under item 10a)

#### **18. Court Business Group**

#### **19. Court Membership Group** (relevant approvals noted under item 9)

#### **20. Audit & Risk Committee**

#### **21. Staff Committee**

#### **22. Enterprise & Investment Committee**

#### **23. AOB**

There was no other business.

### **Date of next meeting**

- 26 November 2020

**2019/20 Financial Statements  
[RESERVED ITEM]**

The University's published Financial Statements are available at:

<https://www.strath.ac.uk/professionalservices/finance/generalinformation/financialstatements/>



**Q1 2020-21 - Quarterly Business Report**  
**[RESERVED ITEM]**

## Strategic Plan Progress Reports

### Introduction

1. Immediately prior to publication of the University's [Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#) (Vision 2025) in February 2020, relevant targets were disaggregated to Faculty and, in some cases, Department/School. The approach of setting disaggregated targets and continuing to keep the number of University-level KPIs tight at 16 ensures a continuing focused framework for determining progress against the University's Strategy. This approach has provided a robust basis for Faculty and Departmental/School annual planning and performance assessment since 2015.
2. To raise awareness of, and enhance Court's ability to respond to, any issues with performance in-year, we provide Executive Team and Court with twice annual reports on progress against University KPIs, as follows:
  - a) Actual performance for the preceding year in November;
  - b) Mid-year forecast performance for the current year in February / March.
3. This year, in addition to the 2019-20 Year 1 progress update on the 16 KPIs in Vision 2025, we have also provided a final 'wrap up' report on the 2020 KPI targets in the Strategic Plan 2015-2020.
4. The KPIs in Vision 2025 mainly used 2018-19 data as their baseline and this Year 1 Progress Report is intended to:
  - a) Provide Court with an early update on progress, achieved in 2019-20, against the University's agreed 16 KPIs as outlined in the 2025 Strategic Plan;
  - b) Inform the University's annual planning round discussions with Faculties and Professional Services.
5. It should be noted that:
  - a) Within Vision 2025, our 16 key performance indicators (KPIs) build on the positive progress made over the period of the previous strategy. The majority of KPIs have been continued on and extended with some amends to definitions introduced for Vision 2025. Our KPIs provide a robust and focused framework to measure and demonstrate our overall success, underpinned by delivery across the University against a wide range of supporting strategies and informed by data and additional metrics. Vision 2025 was launched in February 2020, before the introduction of 'lockdown' restrictions in March in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. There has been no attempt at this early stage in the Strategic Plan cycle to address any potential impacts relating to Covid-19 in terms of amending the KPI milestones, however these impacts are highlighted where appropriate in the KPIs commentary. Whilst we have seen an immediate impact on student recruitment in 2020-21, it is difficult to foresee the scale and longevity over the longer term. This also applies to longer term impacts of the pandemic on research, the move to large scale remote working by staff and the balance of income from different activities. This will be considered further ahead of subsequent progress reports, as more information becomes available.
  - b) With the exception of KPI 15 (net cashflow from operating activities), given the timing of the launch of Vision 2025 and this early reporting on the 2025 KPIs, which mainly reference 2018-19 baselines, the majority of quantitative milestones for 2019-20 are indicative, and were calculated as the mid-point between the baseline and the agreed 2020-21 milestone. Milestones from 2020-21 onwards were set by Faculties and were used to inform the preparation of plans as part of the annual planning round for 2020-21.

- c) Updated quantitative progress against two of the KPIs (Graduate Destinations and Strategic Relationships) cannot be reported yet; Graduate Destinations benchmarks are being developed at sector level, and the Strategic Relationships KPI is being reported initially via narrative.
  - d) **In terms of the ‘wrap up’ report for the Strategic Plan 2015-2020, and based on positive reporting in Q1 in 2020-21, it is considered that the 2019-20 targets for two of the three KPIs that are flagged amber and one of two KPIs that were flagged red were on track to have been met or exceeded prior to Covid-19. Due to the impact of the pandemic during the final quarter of 2019-20 the final position for these KPIs is just short of target. Further detail has been provided in the commentary boxes for these KPIs.**
6. A mid-year report on progress achieved in 2020-21 will be provided to Executive Team and Court in Spring 2021.
  7. For KPIs that are flagged red/amber, further detail and context in relation to the 2019-20 actual has been provided in the commentary box. In line with the KPIs reporting approach to date, context has been kept to a minimum for KPIs that are flagged green.
  8. Regular reporting of progress towards Strategic Plan targets uses a simple traffic light flagging system to summarise performance for each measure against the relevant annual milestone.
  9. For background, Court may wish to note that:

In March 2020, marking the first very early KPIs progress report of Vision 2025, we reported:

- **11 KPIs ‘on track’** or ahead of milestone – green flag
- **2 KPIs as ‘further work required’** or behind milestone – red flag (KPI8 PGR population), amber flag (KPI14 gender pay gap)
- **1 KPI as ‘data available summer 2020’** (KPI3 NSS)
- **1 KPI as ‘data available spring 2020’** (KPI4 graduate destinations)
- **1 KPI as ‘data available 2020’** (KPI10 key strategic relationships)

In November 2019, marking the end of Year 5 of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020, we reported, using Year 5 actuals, as follows:

- **13 KPIs ‘on track’ or ‘target achieved’** ahead of milestone – green flag
- **1 KPI as ‘further work required’** or behind milestone – red flag (KPI8 PGR population)
- **1 KPI as ‘further work required’** or behind milestone, despite progress – amber flag (KPI3 NSS)
- **1 KPI as ‘data available 2020’** (KPI4 graduate destinations)

10. In November 2020, we are reporting, using 2019-20 actuals, as follows:

#### **Vision 2025:**

- **11 KPIs ‘on track’** or ahead of milestone – green flag
- **3 KPIs as ‘further work required’** or behind milestone – red flag (KPI8 PGR population; KPI9 income from conferences, training, consultancy, KE grants; KPI11 Industry Research Income)
- **2 KPIs as ‘further work required’** or behind milestone, despite progress – amber flag (KPI 2 Student retention; KPI7 Citations)

### **'Wrap up' – Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020**

- **10 KPIs 'target achieved' or 'target exceeded'** – green flag
- **2 KPIs as 'target not achieved'** – red flag (KPI8 PGR population, KPI10 Industry Research Income\*)
- **3 KPIs as 'further work required'** or behind milestone, despite progress – amber flag (KPI3 NSS; KPI 12 Diversity of international students\*; and KPI13 International academic staff proportion\*)
- **1 KPI as 'data unavailable' (KPI4 – source of data (Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey) ceased in 2018)**

*\* As noted in para 5.d) it is considered that these three KPIs were on track to have met or exceeded their targets prior to Covid-19.*

### **Action Requested**

11. Court is invited to **discuss** the 2019-20 Year 1 progress update on the 16 KPIs in Vision 2025 and final 'wrap up' report on the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 KPI targets.

Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025  
Year 1 2019/2020 progress update  
**[Reserved]**

## Strategic Plan 2015-2020 – 'Wrap up' report

**[Reserved]**

**REF2021 Update to Court  
26 November 2020**

*This is an interim update focused on preparation progress and environment metrics ahead of a full pre-submission report in early 2021.*

**1. Context**

On 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020, there are four months remaining until the submission deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. In October 2020, finalised output profiles were presented to Court. Finalised environment metrics are now available and the second part of this report will focus on the final outcomes and what this indicates for the submission.

In January 2021, final scores for impact cases and unit-level environment narratives will be available. This will enable reporting of final profiles for these elements and for each unit of assessment overall. This will also be the point at which the final impact case selections are made.

**2. Preparation Update**

**2.1 Impact**

There remain 76 case studies in play. These cases are being intensively worked by the RKES team members for impact, Helen Young and Grace Murkett, with the support of staff from the UOAs. This work will culminate in a final scoring process in December 2020 where final internal ratings will be agreed prior to selection of the final cases in January 2021. This review will involve David Littlejohn (Advisor to the Principal, academic lead for REF2014), Jane Winn (external consultant, RKES Impact team member for REF2014) and Karen Ness (external consultant, REF2014 panel secretary, manager of RAE2008 at University of Glasgow) in addition to the Vice Deans Research. This is a crucial period for the impact element of the submission with evidence gathering the area with the greatest risk to the quality of the final submission (i.e. if evidence is not in place, cases cannot be submitted no matter how high the internal rating). This is being closely managed by the RKES team.

**2.2 Unit Level Environment Narratives**

The majority of the narrative statements are in strong shape as we approach the 30<sup>th</sup> November deadline set for submission to final review. The few which require more development are receiving intensive support from the RKES team member for environment, Carol McKenzie, working closely with the Vice Deans Research. Although certain statements are likely to need further refinement beyond the December review, all will be comfortably complete before submission.

**2.3 Institutional Environment Narrative**

Guided by Professor Stephen McArthur, the institutional narrative continues to be refined and, following the addition of detailed information, it is nearing the next round of review. The statement should be available for wider review towards the end of 2020 leaving several months for any final changes required.

**2.4 Outputs**

UOA leads are working closely with the RKES team to finalise the selection of outputs to reduce risk and maximise performance in the final selection of outputs. This will not result in a change to the forecast profiles prior to submission but gives the best chance that forecasts will be met. This involves selecting outputs with higher ratings on the 13 point scale (i.e. 3+ rated outputs selected over 3\* rated items) and where there are multiple items with the same rating seeking to select those with the best fit for the unit. Final checks for

additional metadata required in the submission such as open access details and author contribution are being checked and finalised.

### **3. Performance Update**

This report provides a final performance update on the Environment metrics. The report to Court made in October 2020 provided the final output performance information. A report will be made to Court in early 2021 detailing the final impact, environment and overall performance expectations.

#### **3.1 Environment**

Environment comprises 15% of the total score awarded to each unit of assessment. As with the other elements (outputs, impact), the outcome of the scoring for environment is a profile on a rating scale from unclassified to 4 star and only 3 and 4 star attracts funding via the Research Excellence Grant.

The scoring for environment is based on peer review of the environment narrative alongside environment metrics and the new institutional narrative. There is no breakdown specified for how the component parts contribute to the overall environment score. While our own analysis demonstrates that a narrative statement can be used to outperform metrics (i.e. to score well even if PGR numbers or income levels are low compared to others), it is also clear that income and final scores tend to follow the same trajectory. This is unlikely to be a causal relationship; it is more likely that having more funding means that an organisation can more easily create an impressive research environment. The environment metrics can help to give an indication of how our environment should score and can help to moderate the scoring of the narratives (due to be undertaken for the final time in December 2020).

#### **3.2 Environment Metrics**

This report presents the final environment metrics: i.e. levels of research income and numbers of PGR awards. Environment metrics are submitted for the period 1st August 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. In Appendix 1 we have supplied research income information in tabular format and have provided benchmark data on competitor institutions for comparison. Appendix 2 presents the information on PG Doctoral awards. In both cases, we have provided the total figures as well as the per FTE figure. REF2021 panels will be supplied with the per FTE figures only. The table demonstrates that a less impressive performance overall can be transformed when viewed through the per FTE lens.

In the vast majority of the UoAs, the metrics held steady or slightly improved against benchmarks with the addition of the final year of data (2019-2020). In terms of income there were a few that showed a significant increase as a result of 'research tax credit' additions for the year 2014-2015. In the case of one unit, B8, a reduction in income per FTE is caused by the addition of 5 FTE before the submission deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 (these individuals will contribute significantly to the higher weighted Outputs element of the submission) but this unit continues to compare favourably with comparator institutions.



#### 4. Timeline to Submission

Details of Future Snapshot Reporting & Internal Deadlines are included in the table below:

Snapshot	Information provided	Changed Data included in Update	Internal Deadline for Academic Staff
Nov 2020	Updated Environment Metrics	Final comparison against benchmarks including the final year data for PGR awards and research income.	Final year figures available Oct 2020 on completion of HESA return
Jan 2020	Updated Output Profile	Based on final output selection*	Detailed Selection Complete 30 November 20*
Jan 2020	Updated Impact and Environment Profiles	Based on final review carried out in Dec 2020.	All narratives to be completed 30 Nov 20

\*outputs published between 30 November 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2020 will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

#### 5. Summary

The submission preparations are on track and any risks are being managed such that their impact will not be material to the quality of the final submission. The submission performance continues to look strong. Final performance forecasts will be available in early 2021.

**Preparations for REF 2021  
Appendices  
[RESERVED ITEM]**

# RESEARCH INTEGRITY STATEMENT 2019-2020

9/2/2019

## **Research Integrity Statement 2019/2020**

**September 2020**

### **1. Introduction**

The University of Strathclyde is committed to excellence in research and fully supports the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity<sup>i</sup> (the Concordat). Strathclyde applies the Concordat's definition of Research Integrity as comprised of four core elements: honesty; rigour; transparency and open communication; and care and respect which are 'the values through which trust and confidence in research stem, and from which the value and benefits of research flow.'<sup>ii</sup> Strathclyde's Research Code of Practice<sup>iii</sup> defines the standards to which the University expects researchers should aspire and those which they would be expected to attain. Research integrity is an essential element of research excellence and Strathclyde expects its students and staff to act with integrity at all times. Striving for excellence entails a constant pursuit of improvement and as the research environment evolves, Strathclyde continues to make positive adjustments in its approach to integrity to ensure the highest standards are adhered to.

In June 2020, Strathclyde was able to demonstrate this commitment in becoming a signatory to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers which has research integrity at its core.

### **2. Leadership**

In recognition of the seriousness of its commitment to research integrity, the Associate Principal with responsibility for Research has designated responsibility for ensuring that the University responds to and upholds the Concordat. This responsibility extends to research and knowledge exchange policies, ethics, postgraduate research development and research governance. The Associate Principal is supported in this work by the Deputy Associate Principals with Research and Knowledge Exchange portfolios in addition to the following groups and committees:

- Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC)
- University Ethics Committee (UEC)
- Animal Welfare Ethical Review Board (AWERB)
- Researcher Development Sub-Committee (Responsible to RKEC)
- Strathclyde Doctoral School

The committee structure enables cohesion and consistency of communication at a senior level across the faculties. This information is then communicated within the faculties via staff and student structures as follows:

- Responsibility for Research Integrity is distributed through the Academic Faculties via the Vice-Deans with responsibility for Research in each Faculty who represent their faculties on RKEC. Agreement made at committee level is disseminated via faculty, departmental and school management structures.
- Student representatives participate in the Researcher Development Sub-Committee and Strathclyde Doctoral School Board to ensure involvement in decision-making and

communication of information into the wider student community. Expectations, information and guidance are also delivered to research students via their supervisors and postgraduate administrators in order to ensure that they are fully informed of best practice in research.

This year, changes have been made to the team, based in Research & Knowledge Exchange Services, that supports policy and strategy for Research Integrity. The re-establishment of a research policy function via a four- person-strong policy team working across research policy, including research integrity, under the leadership of the Research Policy Manager, will enable the activity planned for the next several years to be supported appropriately.

### **3. Named Person**

The Named Person responsible for Research Integrity at University of Strathclyde is the Associate Principal responsible for Research. Any queries related to research integrity, research misconduct or other related matters should be directed to [research-integrity@strath.ac.uk](mailto:research-integrity@strath.ac.uk).

### **4. Policies**

The University of Strathclyde has a range of Academic Policies and procedures aimed at clearly setting expectations for the standards of conduct of staff and students. The [Research Code of Practice](#) (for staff) and the [Policy and Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Study](#) in addition to the [Code of Practice on Investigations involving Human Beings](#), are all documents that are designed to demonstrate the behaviours and attitudes that researchers and other staff should engender in pursuit of research integrity and research excellence.

### **5. Actions & Activities to Support and Strengthen Research Integrity**

The University prides itself on serving research students with the highest standard of education and preparing its students and staff for their future careers in research through a combination of subject area knowledge and practical skills and experience. Knowledge and understanding of Research Integrity is essential for excellent research and so is part of the researcher development experience wherever appropriate. The University delivers and demonstrates research integrity via three main routes: training, support and recognition.

#### **5.1. Researcher Training**

As detailed in previous statements, Strathclyde has an award-winning PGR researcher development programme. This programme continues to be delivered by Faculties, Professional Services and external partners to offer the postgraduate research community a range of opportunities to continue their personal, professional and career management skills development. Established through utilisation of Research Council's 'Roberts' funding, and now institutionally supported, provision is designed to help researchers enhance their generic skills, attributes and competencies for future employability both inside and outside of academia. RDP provision is mapped to the UK's Researcher Development Framework and Statement (RDF/S), which articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers. Specific research integrity training is delivered through PGR induction, via face to face workshops and as a 20 hour online resource available to all

students. Following the review of the full PGR lifecycle a programme of work is being developed to address opportunities to enhance the PGR experience (Further details included in Section 7 under Key Activities in the Current Year).

Training for Early- Career (including postdoctoral researchers, research fellows and research assistants), Mid-Career & Established Academics continues to be delivered by our Organisational Staff Development Unit. In particular, the Unit's SPARK and SPIRAL programmes aim to deliver appropriate content to our researchers: SPARK's specific Researcher Development programme aims to empower staff, by providing them with the skills, experiences and understanding to reach their full potential, whilst at the same time providing the University with a means of assuring and enhancing quality in its research at all levels. Meanwhile SPIRAL focuses on developing and strengthening leadership across research and knowledge exchange. Both programmes contribute significantly to the culture of research integrity at Strathclyde. Specific training on Research Integrity issues including research data management is available and provided to groups of researchers on request. In addition to the 20 hour online resource on research integrity, also available to students, there is a full research data management course available online via the Development & Training Gateway. In this period, additional courses related to RI have been provided by OSDU (as detailed in 6.2 under Key Activities in the Current Year).

## **5.2. Researcher Support Services**

The University continues to provide dedicated support in a number of areas in addition to structured training programmes to assist researchers in the fulfilment of their research responsibilities. Colleagues from across Professional Services provide specialist advice on topics with research integrity implications such as:

- Information Governance including GDPR,
- Ethics in Human and Animal Research,
- Records Management,
- Data Management,
- Open Access and Open Data, and
- Cyber security.

This provision is often delivered via cross-disciplinary/departmental groups involving specialists from Strategy & Policy, Information Services and Research & Knowledge Exchange Services working with academics wherever appropriate.

## **6. Key Activities in the Current Year**

In addition to a continued focus on ensuring that our policies and practices continue to be consistent with the latest advice and requirements, this year Strathclyde has sought to improve provision in targeted areas based on initial assessment of our provision. This work has included:

### **6.1. Instigation of full review of PGR provision**

In 2018, the Strathclyde Doctoral School was established to ensure a prominent and cohesive provision for postgraduate research students at Strathclyde. A wholesale review of the PGR lifecycle from regulations to administrative processes and systems was conducted and an extensive

set of recommendations designed to enhance the overarching approach to supporting the PGR lifecycle have been documented. Where practicable recommendations have been implemented. Following review, induction for PGRs is conducted twice annually and a suite of resources has been created to support new PGRs. This is supplementary to the PG Essentials online induction module .

## **6.2. Introduction of Additional Training for Staff Researchers**

Ensuring that cognisance of research integrity continues to be a feature of the life of our researchers as their careers progress is of crucial importance in maintaining a culture of research excellence. Research Integrity events are now included as standard within OSDU's Researcher Development provision. These workshops will be delivered online while face-to-face teaching is suspended.

- “Research Integrity in Practice” (SPIRAL Programme) – a twice-yearly, half-day workshop to support staff understand and apply the principles of research integrity in their everyday work, explore how misconduct may arise and ways to alleviate such pressures, as well as draw attention to Strathclyde's policies and processes in these areas.
- Research Integrity and Ethics (Strathclyde Supervisor Development Programme) – a half day workshop to support PGR supervisors consider their own understandings of good research practice, make informed choices based on the principles of research integrity and consider how they can embed a culture of integrity within and beyond their supervisory relationships.
- Staff are able to access the online suite of ‘Research Integrity’ workshops also available to PGRs.

## **6.3. RKEC Short Life Working Group on Research Integrity**

At the second regular annual meeting of RKEC specifically focused on Research Integrity in September 2019, a short life working group focused on Research Integrity was approved. The aim of this subgroup was to map current research integrity activity across the institution and then to use this information to highlight areas of best practice enabling peer-to-peer learning and to inform the provision of improved central support in the form of policy and training. This group has undertaken to meet with a broad range of staff involved in research over the course of academic year 2019/2020 to gather information on awareness of research integrity, sources of information/training currently used by researchers, examine the appropriateness of the current Research Code of Practice and explore current issues experienced in relation to research integrity. This work will underpin work in 2020/2021 to improve awareness through improved guidance and training.

## **7. Activities for the Coming Year**

### **7.1. RKEC Research Integrity Working Group**

In Autumn 2020, the RIWG will examine plans to implement the recommendations arising from information gathering exercise undertaken in AY2019/2020. Outputs from this are expected to include a new version of the Research Code of Practice accompanied by improved online provision to bring the issues covered by the Code alive for researchers. This will be launched along with appropriate supporting training and initiatives aimed at increasing awareness and engagement with Research Integrity.

## **7.2. Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers**

Strathclyde became a signatory to the revised Researcher Development Concordat in June 2020. A Concordat Officer has been successfully recruited and is due to take up post on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020. Over the coming year, the Concordat Officer will undertake a gap analysis to develop an action plan designed to address the University's obligations under the three principles: Environment and Culture; Employment; and Professional and Career Development. Research Integrity is embedded throughout the revised Researcher Development Concordat and this role has been designed to work alongside the RIWG to ensure that all guidance and training is aligned with the both Concordats.

The Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) asks questions relating to Research Integrity and Research Misconduct. CEDARS ran at Strathclyde during July 2020 and will be analysed and reported by the Concordat Officer during late 2020 with results feeding into the RIWG.

## **7.3. Outcome of Ethics Review**

Over the course of AY2019/2020, the new Chair of the University Ethics Committee has undertaken a wide ranging review of the operation of ethics services at Strathclyde. The results of this review are due to be reported to RKEC in September 2020. The recommendations of this report will be applied during AY 2020/2021.

## **7.4. Continuous Improvement**

In the coming review period, Strathclyde will undertake the following actions to ensure that our research integrity activity continues to be of the highest standard and meets the needs of the University:

- Monitor sector & government guidance for recommendations or guidance that provide an opportunity for improvement.
- Act upon lessons learned from any misconduct allegations and from reports prepared by UEC & AWERB.
- Seek out examples of best practice from other HEIs and research organisations. We expect our membership of UKRIO to greatly assist in this aspect of our learning.

## **8. Transparent, Robust, Fair, and Appropriate Processes for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct**

In 2016/17 the University took the opportunity to formalise and make public its process for investigating research misconduct by including the process as an Annex to the Code. The process was updated to reflect the UKRIO best practice in handling such allegations. Clear responsibilities are outlined for senior members of staff in handling allegations. Internal processes and guidance have been created to ensure that any allegations made receive high quality management in adhering to standards of integrity but also in ensuring fairness for both the complainant and respondent. The result is a more robust and transparent process that enables the collection and



reporting of the types of information that our research funders require to fulfil their own obligations as detailed below. The Code was endorsed by RKEC in November 2017 and formal Senate approval followed in early 2018.

## 9. Formal investigations of research misconduct

The University of Strathclyde takes very seriously any allegations of misconduct including in relation to research. Strathclyde's research quality depends upon a transparent and accountable research culture and Strathclyde is committed to supporting the highest standards in research. As part of this commitment, activities for the coming year will include promotion of reporting mechanisms to ensure that researchers are able to raise questions and concerns about research conduct and practice and be confident that there are effective mechanisms in place to deal with any allegation appropriately.

This table details recent allegations of misconduct:

Date of Allegation	Nature of Allegation	Respondent Type	Status	Outcome
2016/2017	Failure to follow ethical guidelines	Staff	Formal Investigation Complete	Upheld
2019/2020	Failure to recognise/report student falsification	Staff	Formal Investigation Complete	Rejected

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/cs/gmap/academicaaffairs/policies/RKEC\\_ResearchCodeofPractice2017.pdf](https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/cs/gmap/academicaaffairs/policies/RKEC_ResearchCodeofPractice2017.pdf)

**Convener's action - Change of local infrastructure partner in UAE  
[RESERVED ITEM]**

## **Lady Curran Endowment Fund: The Fund's Donor Purpose and Donor Management**

### **Introduction**

1. The Lady Curran Endowment Fund (The Fund) was set up by the late, first Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Strathclyde, Sir Samuel Curran, in the name of his wife (Joan Strothers).
2. This paper outlines the history and purposes of the Fund and informs Court of the following changes that are now planned:
  - a. widening the purpose of the Fund, to align with the current funding interests of the donor's family and to align with the University's strategic funding priorities
  - b. assigning management of the donor relationship to the Alumni & Development (A&D) department, assisted by Finance (administering the endowment) in conjunction with the donor's family (in line with the Schedule of Delegated Authority and with standard practice regarding comparable funds).

### **The Lady Curran Endowment Fund**

3. The Fund was originally set up in the years prior to the establishment of an Alumni & Development (A&D) office at the University (prior to 1990) and as a result there is no gift agreement attached to the Fund but it is referred to in Court records.
4. A donor endowment fund is typically established by a donor to ensure longevity of the gift; the capital is retained and only the interest is used to provide ongoing funding for the donor's chosen project(s).

### **Terms and administration of the Fund**

5. The original terms of the Fund set up by Sir Samuel Curran in 1980 were wide ranging: to support any staff member, research fellow or student in support of University Business including the support of international study exchanges. Court and senior members of the University, including its Principal, were to approve the use of funds.
6. In 1988 the terms of the Fund were altered through a Resolution of Court to now 'normally' support Research Fellows and staff exchanges with the University of Łódź in Poland, with which the Currans had a strong association.
7. The Resolution also noted that "The Fund's designated administrators shall have the right to make no awards of Lady Curran Fellowships or to apply the income to any alternative object, purpose or use."
8. In addition, the Fund's decision makers were noted as the University Registrar (i.e. Secretary) and Sir Samuel and Lady Curran and their successors. Since the establishment of the A&D office, the involvement of the University Secretary in such matters would be outlying and impractical. Moreover, Court has in the intervening time approved a Schedule of Delegated Authority that grants authority to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to administer Gifts, Benefactions and Donations.
9. In line with this, it is assumed that the Fund, which has effectively been dormant for a period (see below), should henceforth be administered by A&D and Finance, under the authority of the CFO and in ongoing consultation with the donor family. This will bring the Fund under the same arrangements as other comparable Gifts, Benefactions and Donations. These

arrangements will be recorded in a new gift agreement by A&D which will also ensure the Fund terms are wide enough to be adapted for future priorities of the donors and the University.

### **Uses of the Fund**

10. The donor's family is aware that the last project supported by the Fund was a sanitation research project in 2010 between Łodz University and the Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) department at Strathclyde. This project fully depleted the available funds and the Fund was then left dormant until its interest once again accumulated.
11. **[Reserved]**
12. Alumni & Development met with the donor's family in October 2020: **[Reserved]**. Both are keen to review the terms of the Fund and support new projects at the University and they also believe the association with Łodz University is no longer a strong priority.
13. The donor's family have a strong preference to use the Fund to support the advancement of sustainability. In response A&D suggested two immediate projects which were warmly accepted by the family:
  - a. To support research work within the University's new Centre for Sustainable Development including its priority to fund PhDs.
  - b. To support the university's wider impactful research and teaching associated with sustainable development aims including support for its Vertical Integrated Projects (VIPs).
14. Any new PhD studentships will be put forward for approval by Senate, in accordance with standard academic governance arrangements.

### **Recommendations**

10. Court is requested to **note**
  - the widening of the purpose of the Fund, relative to its historical 'normal' uses as previously approved by Court, with a current preference to support the projects outlined in Point 13; and
  - the future donor management of the Fund, to be formalised in a new gift agreement, by A&D and Finance, in ongoing consultation with the donor family.

## Independent QC Inquiry Report

### Report to the Principal of the University of Strathclyde by C R K Sandison, Q.C. re Issues Arising from the Conduct of Kevin O’Gorman

1. In August 2019 the Principal commissioned an independent QC-led Inquiry into the University’s handling of matters relating to past complaints of sexual misconduct against Kevin O’Gorman, a former staff member. This followed his conviction of a range of serious offences, some of which were carried out when he was an employee of the University between 2005 and 2012.
2. The trial and subsequent conviction of Kevin O’Gorman revealed details of his crimes over a number of years, including while he was working at Strathclyde. The entire University community was appalled at what emerged during the trial. With the full support of the Executive Team (ET) and the Court, the Principal commissioned an independent QC-led Inquiry to discover everything possible about the events that occurred while Kevin O’Gorman was in post and to identify lessons for the University.
3. Mr. Craig Sandison QC conducted a thorough and detailed independent examination of the University’s records, systems, processes and actions to ascertain the true facts pertaining to Kevin O’Gorman’s recruitment to and promotion within the University, his activities while in post, the disciplinary processes undertaken, and his exit from the University. QC Sandison was also asked to make any recommendations as he saw fit.
4. Mr. Sandison delivered his detailed report and six recommendations to the Principal on 31 October. The report was sent to all staff and students, to the ET, Senate and Court and was made public in its entirety on 9 November 2020, accompanied by a public statement from the Principal. The report was shared in advance of publication with the Principal of Heriot-Watt University (where Kevin O’Gorman also held an academic post) and with the Chair and Chief Executive of the Scottish Funding Council. The Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR) was also sent the report. Briefings were provided to the University Chancellor, Lord Smith, to the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, Mr Lochhead, and to the Convener, Vice-Convener and Senior Deputy Convener of Court, prior to publication of the report.
5. The report contains 6 recommendations, which the Principal, on behalf of the University, has accepted unreservedly. The recommendations are provided as an appendix to this paper.
6. The attention of Court is drawn to paragraph 163 and 164 of the report:

*163: Whether there was and is at the University a culture of reporting issues and promoting the welfare and wellbeing of students and staff, it seems to me that that is a matter of impression on which the opinions of individuals is likely reasonably to differ. That the institutional infrastructure necessary to enable such a culture to flourish was and is present, seems to me to be quite clear. Whether that infrastructure has always been used to best advantage in every Faculty and department over the years is, unsurprisingly given the varying attitudes and personalities involved, a rather different question. For all the reasons already set out, however, and although improvements can and should*

*be made, I certainly do not consider that the incidents of the O’Gorman affair demonstrate in any way serious institutional failings on the part of the University in relation to the welfare and wellbeing of its staff and students.*

*164: The very nature of a university as an institution for education and research requires the intensive interaction of individuals in such a way that those of ill intent will almost certainly be able to exploit for their own ends the relationships which come into existence as necessary incidents of the greater endeavour. To seek to remove entirely the opportunities for such exploitation would not only be a fool’s errand, it would also change the nature of the institution in a wholly undesirable, indeed unviable way. Rather, seeking to learn from the experience of the institution itself, of others similarly placed, and from the broader wisdom of society, the effort must be to identify and where possible to reduce risks, to encourage the shining of light into places that some would prefer to remain obscure, and to recognise and deal effectively with wrongdoing. In presenting this Report to the Principal of the University, I very much hope that its contents may contribute in some degree to that effort.*

7. With the objective of reducing risks, particularly for those most vulnerable, the Principal has invited the University Secretary & Compliance Officer to lead an Inquiry Recommendations Implementation Group (IRIG), tasked with implementing the recommendations in 2020/21, in keeping with the commitment made by the Principal to the University community. Student and staff stakeholders will be represented on the IRIG, which will also commission workshops to ensure wider stakeholder involvement.
8. Sexual misconduct has no place in higher education. The recommendations provide opportunities to enhance our procedures to safeguard members of our university community. A report on the implementation of the Inquiry recommendations will be submitted to Court in due course.

## **Recommendation**

9. Court is invited to **note**
  - the content of the independent QC’s report and its recommendations in particular; and
  - the next steps to be taken by the University, as outlined above.

## QC Independent Inquiry Report 2020

## Recommendations

Extracts from the report with action recommended highlighted in bold:

117

“I accordingly recommend that **full pre-employment checks, including full disclosure checks, are undertaken and passed in any case where it is proposed to appoint any person to an academic post in the University in circumstances where that post does or may involve more than a *de minimis* connection with students.** “

118

I further recommend that in any case where it is proposed to appoint any person to an academic post in the University without there having been a competitive recruitment process (that is to say, a process which has not been advertised within and outwith the University, or where only one candidate has applied for the post), the fact of that proposed appointment having been the result of such a process is notified to the University HR department along with a brief explanation of the circumstances, that the proposed appointment does not proceed without the HR department being satisfied by that explanation, and that a record of the fact that the appointment was the result of such a process and the explanation therefor be recorded in the personnel file of the person appointed and in any other records of the University pertaining specifically to the post.

140

It would be better, and I accordingly recommend, that specific provision is made in the University’s procedures for complaints of or concerning sexual misconduct not to be subject to any indicative time limit.

141

Further, although there are extensive procedures in place for recording complaints, their outcomes and any resulting action taken, **the University’s procedures do not explicitly require the recording of the reasons for decisions taken in the processing and disposal of complaints.** I recommend that those procedures should in future require the recording of reasons for the disposal of complaints and should encourage, so far as proportionate, the recording of reasons for significant decisions made in the course of processing complaints. While that will serve the interests of transparency in the event that decisions are subsequently criticised or require to be reviewed, my primary reason for making this recommendation is that a requirement to record the rationale of any particular decision entails the decision-maker positively thinking about that rationale and ensuring that it is expressed in a manner that can withstand scrutiny.

146

In these circumstances I recommend that any academic employee of the University who proposes in that capacity to give an academic reference for another current or former employee of the University should inform the University HR department of that intention and provide that department with a copy of the intended reference, and should be permitted to provide that reference as an employee of the University only if the HR department are content with its terms. For the avoidance of doubt, this recommendation does not extend either to references being provided for persons who are or have been students, as opposed to employees, at the University, or to any reference which is not to be

given by any person in his or her capacity as, and which does not mention his or her status as, an employee of the University.

**161**

The University's Complaints Handling Procedure permitted and permits complaints to be made by third parties authorised in writing by the person affected by the conduct complained of. **The Dignity and Respect policy places an obligation on staff at managerial level to address any incidents of bullying, harassment or victimisation that they observe or witness even though no complaint may have been made by the subject. It seems to me that, as another strand of the policy of bringing unacceptable behaviour to light, all members of the University staff should be strongly encouraged (albeit not in every instance obliged) to report to their own line manager any such incidents, and I so recommend.**



## **Executive Team Report to Court**

The Executive Team (ET) met on 8 and 26 October, 5 November, in addition to regular meetings, at least weekly, for management of the University's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in its capacity as the University's Emergency Management Team. The following key items were discussed by the Executive Team and are provided here for Court to note:

### **1. Management of the Covid-19 pandemic response**

ET took and/or reviewed a number of decisions in key areas, including

- phased introduction of blended learning, in line with government guidance;
- approval of an Outbreak Response Plan;
- adoption of safeguards in relation to the resumption of teaching activity on campus;
- replenishment of the University's Covid-19 Hardship Fund;
- arrangements for learning and teaching in Semester 2, in line with government guidance on management of the pandemic;
- general suspension of international exchange schemes in Semester 2 and arrangements for exceptional cases;
- regular reporting on student recruitment;
- additional January starts for selected taught postgraduate programmes.

### **2. REF 2021**

ET received updates on the University's preparation for the Research Excellence Framework 2021.

### **3. Learning and Teaching Building Project**

ET received regular updates on the Learning and Teaching Building Project and on the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the project. The Team approved two recommendations relating to a revised handover date of February 2021 and hibernation costs.

### **4. Concordat for the advancement of knowledge exchange in higher education**

ET supported a recommendation that the University become a signatory to the 'Concordat for the advancement of knowledge exchange in higher education' and recommended the concordat for approval by Senate.

### **5. Draft Financial Statements 2019/20**

ET reviewed a draft of the annual Financial Statements, noting that additional work remained to be completed in certain areas, as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and that the Financial Statements were due to be signed off before the end of the calendar year.

## **6. Q1 Business Report**

ET reviewed the Q1 Business Report, noting areas in which the impacts of the pandemic were evident and where any impacts were yet to show in the data, alongside the significant progress made towards a number of targets.

## **7. Strategic Plan Progress Update**

ET received a summary of performance against institutional strategic KPIs, including a final summary in relation to the 2015-2020 strategic plan and a Year One overview of Vision 2025 KPIs.

## **8. Strathclyde Inspire: Entrepreneurship Strategy**

ET approved the business case for a new Entrepreneurship Strategy, Strathclyde Inspire. This would provide sector-leading new facilities and opportunities for students and staff and to support creation and growth of new ventures.

## **Court Business Group Report to Court**

**The following items were discussed by Court Business Group on 13 November 2020 and are provided here for Court to note.**

### **1. 2019/20 Financial Statements**

CBG examined a draft of the Financial Statements, noting that this was an atypical year in terms of both the financial context and the timing of the preparation of the financial statements, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The timeline for approval of the financial statements was noted. This would include extraordinary meetings of Audit & Risk Committee and of Court, in order to provide time for the University's external auditor to deliver an opinion on the basis of detailed scenario modelling and for final approval by Court before the end of the calendar year. This additional process was in line with standard sector practice in the current unusual circumstances.

Having received an overview of the financial results, members noted that the University was in a strong position to meet the challenges of the coming period and commended the clarity of the financial statements.

### **2. Q1 Business Report**

CBG considered the Q1 Business Report and financial forecast. The pandemic had affected both income and expenditure, including a significant reduction in non-EU tuition fee income. Growth in tuition fee income in the previous year had provided a strong basis for managing this. The University's primary mitigation for the loss of fee income, the provision of additional January intakes for certain PGT courses, was not reflected in the present forecast but was showing positive results. Many areas of the business continued to show strong performance, including widening access measures, and underlying strength was evident in other areas, accounting for the unusual circumstances of the current period.

### **3. Strategic Plans Progress Report**

The Director of Strategy & Policy presented a summary of progress against the University's strategic KPIs, which covered both a final review of the KPIs from the 2015-2020 strategy and an assessment of progress relative to the Vision 2025 strategic KPIs.

The great majority of the 2015-2020 targets had been achieved, allowing, in some cases, for the impact of the pandemic. Progress against many of the 2025 KPIs was affected by the pandemic conditions although in some cases the impact was not yet visible in the data, given the timing of key data collection points.

Members discussed the potential revision of KPIs in the light of the pandemic. It was noted that the KPIs would be reviewed and that the new context provided opportunities in addition to challenges.

### **4. REF update**

CBG received a report on preparations for the REF2021 submission. The focus of preparations continued to be on enhancing Environment and Impact statements. The Environment metrics for submission were now fully calculated and could be compared with benchmark institutions. It was noted that the influence of these metrics on final ratings could vary according to the Unit of Assessment and that they required significant contextualisation.

CBG agreed that Court hold an extraordinary meeting in late January or early February in order to present detailed REF profiles, with input from Executive Deans and Vice Deans Research. This would allow Court members to provide input in good time before the REF submission.

**5. Draft Court agenda, 26 November 2020**

CBG **approved** the agenda, subject to minor adjustments.

## Report to Court from Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee met on 6 November 2020.

**Audit and Risk Committee makes a recommendation to Court in regard to the following item:**

### 1. Review of External Auditor's Performance

The Audit and Risk Committee noted that the 2019/20 audit process was going well to date and that the performance of the External Auditors had been satisfactory.

Audit Committee **recommended** to Court that Ernst & Young LLP be retained as the University's External Auditor for the audit of the 2020/21 Financial Statements.

**The following items were discussed by the Audit and Risk Committee and are provided here for Court to note:**

### 2. Financial Statements 2019/20

Due to the atypical situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, it was necessary for additional consideration to be given to going concern. This meant that the Financial Statements, although well advanced, could not be finalised at this time. Finance and the External Auditor were working to a detailed timetable with additional meetings of ARC and Court being arranged to finalise the approval of the Financial Statements, once the work on going concern was completed.

Prior to the meeting, the members of the Audit and Risk Committee met in closed session with the Head of Internal audit and the External Auditor to discuss the audit and draft Financial Statements. This allowed the Internal and External Auditors the opportunity to raise any issues of concern with members of the Audit and Risk Committee. No matters were reported as requiring further consideration by the Audit and Risk Committee, with the exception of the ongoing consideration of going concern.

The draft Financial Statements and accompanying commentary from Finance were presented during the main meeting. The Audit & Risk Committee welcomed the results for 2019/20 and offered comments. During discussions it was noted that:

- The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension deficit provision was, once again, the most significant factor impacting the overall outturn with a credit of £43.9m compared to the additional charge of £74.8m in 2019;
- Despite the adverse impact of Covid-19, income, excluding one-off items and capital grants, had risen by £3.8m to £319.3m, a year-on-year increase of 1.2%;
- Decreased income from residences and catering was directly related to the campus closure and the values based decision to release students from accommodation contracts at the start of the national lockdown;
- [Reserved]
- A good cash performance was recorded and the University had closed with an overall net cash position;
- There was significant headroom on debt covenants at year end;
- Although the University was in a strong position, this would be affected going forward by the impact of the pandemic on its partners and the sector as a whole;
- Members were content that there were no major issues with the financial statements as presented while acknowledging that some work, particularly around going concern, was

outstanding and this could impact both disclosures in the financial statements and the audit opinion.

The Convener thanked the Finance Directorate for their considerable effort in compiling the Financial Statements and noted that ARC would reconvene to review the final version of the financial statements in due course.

### **3. Report from External Auditors**

The representative from the External Auditors outlined their provisional report on the audit of the financial statements of the University for 2019/20. It was noted that the audit was substantially complete, with the exception of the matters outlined in Appendix B to the report. These matters included the review of the going concern position, review of the front end narrative of the financial statements, in particular, consideration of disclosures related to the impact of Covid-19 and related going concern disclosures.

The following points were highlighted:

- An appropriate, measured approach had been taken to the preparation of the Financial Statements and revised timetable;
- There were limited findings to report and the University was in a good place in terms of the completion of the financial statements;
- The External Auditor expected to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the University's financial statements;
- There had been no material modifications or significant adjustments to the scope of the audit as outlined in the audit plan;
- Queries were still outstanding with the University actuaries in respect of the key actuarial assumptions driving the University's share of its liabilities in the Strathclyde Pension Fund;
- The judgement on going concern would determine the appropriate disclosures to be made in the financial statements, which would be reflected in the final report;
- The External Auditor confirmed his independence and noted that the fee for the audit was detailed in the report;
- The ongoing evaluation of the USS pension scheme may potentially result in further volatility within the accounts in future years. It was anticipated that this volatility would continue and appropriate explanation in the text accompanying the Financial Statements would therefore be vital going forward;
- The wording of the Letter of Representation was also noted.

Members noted that an updated report would be brought to ARC in December.

### **4. IAS Activity Report**

IAS had performed sample testing of the controls in relation to claiming, authorising and processing of senior staff business expenses and the use of University Traveller Cards (UTC). This had been extended to include Deputy Associate Principals and Professional Services Directors. Although senior staff this latter group were not Senior Officers of the University and therefore their expenses were not published. The overall assurance evaluation for the review was Reasonable Assurance and the detailed testing indicated compliance with University policies and procedures. A number of opportunities for enhancements to the existing control framework were also highlighted. The CFO noted that retrospective checks on these expenses would be undertaken.

The International Travel Review had been identified as being wide ranging with a variety of aspects and it was therefore agreed that the review would be delivered in two parts. The first tranche of the work was completed and a summary paper was presented to Audit & Risk Committee in September 2020. The second tranche of the work was largely complete and IAS were in the process of arranging workshops with key stakeholders to discuss the findings and agree the corporate decisions that required to be made in respect of overseas travel. Once the workshops had been undertaken, a full audit report would be presented to the Audit & Risk Committee.

#### **5. IAS Management Action Update Report**

The Head of IAS noted that, since the last Management Action Update report, 39 recommendations had been implemented and there were 80 outstanding recommendations, 15% of which were not yet due. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent remote working had resulted in delays in the implementation of a number of actions. It was noted that completion rates had slowed across the sector with resources being transferred to emerging risks and that the closure of 39 actions was therefore very positive and an indication of how addressing follow-up actions was routine business.

Members discussed the impact of the pandemic on capacity to address outstanding recommendations and the potential benefit of delaying the next review. It was agreed that the next update report should be postponed until the May meeting in order to provide additional time to bring actions to conclusion. It was important that the reason for the postponement was communicated to the relevant staff.

#### **6. Review of COVID-19 Lessons Learned Phase 1 Report**

The Head of IAS introduced the Review of COVID-19 Lessons Learned report noting that the review had been split into two phases as the University was still in the process of actively managing the consequences of the pandemic. Phase 1 concerned the University's initial response to the pandemic, including the monitoring activity undertaken in early 2020, through to the activities undertaken prior to the lockdown period, including communications with staff and students and risk identification. Phase 2 would consider the University's approach to planning for the return of staff and students to campus and financial sustainability.

It was noted that the key objective of the review was to provide both the Audit Sponsors and the Audit & Risk Committee with assurance over the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore no overall assurance evaluation had been assigned and no audit recommendations were raised. The Phase 1 Review concluded that the University had responded proactively and swiftly in the management of the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a robust approach to risk management and ensuring business continuity. A small number of observations were noted.

#### **7. Information Security Annual Report 2019/20**

Audit & Risk Committee noted the Information Security Annual Report. It was noted that some documents embedded in the report could not be opened and these would be circulated separately. The Director of Information Services would be invited to attend the January 2020 Workshop to discuss the key risks relating to Information Security along with the work on virtual desktops and multi factor authentication.

#### **8. Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report 2019/20 –Draft (Annex A)**

The Audit & Risk Committee **approved** the provisional Annual Report 2019/20 noting that the area of going concern should be left blank and would be agreed at the extraordinary meeting of ARC that would consider the finalised Financial Statements. Members agreed that the provisional report would be submitted to Court in November in line with normal practice with a final version to be circulated to the December Court meeting.

## **9. IAS Annual Report 2019/20**

The Committee noted and approved the IAS Annual report 2019/20.



# **UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE**

## **DRAFT AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT TO COURT**

### **Year ended 31 July 2020**

This is the University of Strathclyde Audit & Risk Committee's Annual Report for 2020 covering the financial year 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 As a leading international technological university, Strathclyde has a very clear focus on the delivery of world-leading research, knowledge exchange and teaching and learning programmes augmented by partnerships with business, industry and government. Established as the place of useful learning, with a mission to make the world better-educated, prosperous, healthy, fair and secure, the University continues to live by its socially progressive values today.
- 1.2 The University's investment in campus infrastructure and management information systems continues in order to develop a dynamic, technology-enabled and sustainable environment for staff, students and partners. It is also pursuing new opportunities in support of its ambitions and strategic objectives, building upon existing strengths.
- 1.3 The University has had to respond to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant lockdown to ensure the Safety, Health and Wellbeing of staff and students. The Executive Incident Management Team (IMT) was established on 28 February 2020 to lead this response. The University sought to be agile, innovative and evidence based in its decision making taking the appropriate time to respond to external changes. During the course of the lockdown the University continued to focus on risk management, control and governance to support the operational management of the University.
- 1.4 The Audit & Risk Committee has continued to fulfil its role by providing an objective assessment to the University Court on the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's systems of internal control. Under the Audit & Risk Committee's direction, the continued review of management practices, operations, systems and procedures (including risk management, control and governance) by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) allowed for the timely identification of risks, opportunities, and issues. In addition, Audit & Risk Committee members met with leaders of key initiatives throughout the year.
- 1.5 During 2019/20, under the Audit & Risk Committee's direction, IAS continued to focus resources on the three major aspects of audit work – *key risk based audits, recurrent audit activities, monitoring and advisory work*. Implementation of the University's Accountability & Assurance Framework helped to support a continually developing culture of good governance and sound internal control. Through this framework, the Principal is supported in the requirement for him to certify the Statement of Internal Control in the University's Annual Report and Financial Statements by Assurance Statements provided by the Chief Financial Officer, University Secretary and Compliance Officer, Chief Commercial Officer, Chief People Officer, Vice Principal and the Executive Deans.

## **2 MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 2.1 The membership of the Committee in 2019/20 is detailed below with the Terms of Reference (as approved by the Committee on 7 September 2017 and reviewed at its meeting on 6 February 2020) appearing in Appendix 1.

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Term of Office</b>
Paula Galloway (Convener)	Lay Member of Court	01/08/18 – 31/07/21
Jeremy Beeton	Lay Member of Court	01/08/19 – 31/07/21
Alison Culpan	Lay Member of Court	01/08/18 – 31/07/21
Brenda Wyllie	Lay Member of Court	01/08/19 – 31/07/22
Kerry Alexander	Co-opted Member	01/08/19 – 31/07/23
Ian Reid	Co-opted Member	01/08/19 – 31/07/23

### **3 MEETINGS IN 2019/20**

#### **3.1 The Committee met on six occasions during the year:**

4 September 2019  
1 November 2019  
15 January 2020  
6 February 2020 (Annual Workshop)  
19 March 2020  
20 May 2020

Due to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic the March meeting was held by teleconference and the May meeting by videoconference.

#### **3.2 The Principal, the Head of Internal Audit, the Chief Financial Officer, the University Secretary and Compliance Officer and the Committee Manager were also in attendance. Other members of senior staff were invited to attend when appropriate. Representatives from the University's External Auditors, Ernst & Young LLP, attended four meetings during the year, including the Committee's Annual Workshop (September, November, February and May).**

#### **3.3 The Committee members took the opportunity to meet privately, prior to the start of each meeting, without University officers in attendance.**

#### **3.4 Prior to the November 2020 meeting (where the 2019/20 Financial Statements were discussed) the members of the Committee met in closed session with the Internal Auditor and with the External Auditors.**

#### **3.5 As part of its 2019/20 programme of meetings the Committee visited one area of the University:**

- The CMAC Future Manufacturing Research Hub to meet staff, tour the laboratories and discuss the work being done, vision, goals and core focus, key challenges and risks and governance and interaction with the University.

#### **3.6 Planned visits to other areas of the University were rescheduled by the move to remote working occasioned by the UK Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.**

#### **3.7 The Committee also received presentations from members of senior staff on a range of strategically important activities and key areas in the Corporate Risk Register, providing an opportunity to scrutinise the arrangements for governance and internal control:**

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

- Covid-19 Pandemic – the Principal and the University Secretary & Compliance Officer updated Audit & Risk Committee, regularly, on the University's response to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant lockdown;
- Student Information Management System (SIMS) Project - in September 2019, the Deputy Associate Principal updated Audit & Risk Committee on the implementation of SIMS phase 2 and the plans for future work in this area;
- Information Security - the cyber risks facing the University and the processes and plans in place to mitigate these. (see paragraphs 10.7 – 10.8);
- Estates Strategy - the Director of Estates Services updated the Committee on the ongoing development of the University Estate the backbone of which was the Estates Development Framework.

### **4 INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE 2019/20**

- 4.1 The University is required by the SFC's Financial Memorandum to have an effective internal audit function. This is provided at the University of Strathclyde by an in-house team. The Unit had a staff complement, during the 2019/20 financial year, comprised of the Head of Internal Audit and two Senior Internal Auditors (2.4 staff FTE) which was considered adequate for delivery of the 2019/20 Audit Plan.

#### **Role of the Internal Audit Service**

- 4.2 The primary role of the IAS is to provide independent and objective assurance to the Principal and Court, via the Audit & Risk Committee, on the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's systems of risk management, governance and internal control. This is obtained through conducting audit reviews of management practices, operations, systems and procedures (including risk management, control and governance), and measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of these controls and systems in achieving the University's strategic objectives.

#### **Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21**

- 4.3 In May 2020, during the drafting of the Internal Audit Assurance Strategy and Plan for 2020/21, an early draft was shared with Audit & Risk Committee members for review and comment. At its May 2020 meeting the Committee considered and endorsed the Internal Audit Assurance Strategy and Plan for 2020/21.
- 4.4 The Strategy and Plan was prepared using a risk based approach and aimed primarily to ensure assurance could be given about the key risks faced by the University in achieving its objectives. This involved reviewing the University's Strategy and Corporate Risk Register as well as the subsidiary registers held within individual Directorates, Faculties, Schools and Departments. In developing the plan, IAS also took into account its inherent knowledge and experience of the University's governance and control systems including the results of previous audit activities and also considered the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in planning the work to be undertaken.
- 4.5 In addition to the risk-based plan, IAS also performs annual recurring audit work designed to meet the requirements of the Scottish Funding Council's Financial Memorandum and Outcome Agreement.
- 4.6 IAS continued to manage the University's Assurance Statement process by distributing the Key Controls Checklist and collating the results from individual departments and directorates. This process is designed to ensure management remains vigilant about its governance and control responsibilities in key areas.

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

4.7 Due to the remote working arrangements, IAS issued the Checklist earlier than in previous years to allow staff additional time to ensure its completion and requested that, where there had been any alterations to embedded key control practices, that these be highlighted in the Comments section of each subject area.

4.8 IAS reviewed the returns to identify areas of risk or potential weakness and followed up on any anomalies and queries raised by staff. IAS also summarised the outputs of the checklists and collated useful feedback to Professional Services teams (such as Cyber Security and Human Resources) for their own information and follow up.

At the request of the Audit & Risk Committee, IAS performed spot checks of a selected area of the Key Controls Checklist. UKVI Sponsorship Licence was selected in 2019/20, across a sample of departments. IAS reviewed the responses provided on the Checklist against the results of the IAS Review of UKVI Tier 4 Monitoring in March 2020. Three Departments/Schools were noted, during the audit review, as requiring improvements to their processes. In the Checklists, all three confirmed that the processes in place were operating satisfactorily.

4.9 IAS also continued to monitor key developments across the University that impacted on governance, control and risk management.

4.10 The Strategy and Plan was designed to be fluid and updated to reflect changing priorities or emerging risks. Proposed changes would be approved by the Audit & Risk Committee.

### **Annual Report from Internal Audit Service 2019/20 and Audit Assessment**

4.11 The Committee received the IAS Annual Report 2019/20 at its meeting on 2 September 2020. The Report served to provide an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's arrangements for governance, risk management, control and value for money. It also provided a summary of the activity and resources of the IAS during 2019/20.

4.12 In its Report, the IAS provided assurance that the University had a framework of controls in place that provided reasonable assurance regarding the organisation's governance framework, internal controls, effective and efficient achievement of objectives and the management of key risks. This assessment was based on:

- all reviews undertaken as part of the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan;
- any scope limitations imposed by management;
- matters arising from previous reviews and the extent of follow-up action taken including 2019/20 reviews;
- expectations of senior management, the Audit & Risk Committee and other stakeholders;
- the extent to which internal controls address the University's risk management / control framework;
- the effect of any significant changes in the University's objectives or systems;
- the internal audit coverage achieved to date; and
- the signed Statements of Assurance provided by Heads of Department or equivalent, Directors, Executive Deans, the University Secretary & Compliance Officer, Chief People Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Commercial Officer.

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

- 4.13 IAS confirmed that there had been no scope limitations imposed by management on the delivery of the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan.
- 4.14 The business as usual approach taken by IAS during the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic enabled it to complete the 2019/20 audit plan and to provide an unqualified opinion.

### **Accountability & Assurance Framework (Key Controls Checklist)**

- 4.15 This self-assessment document covers key areas of internal control and governance. Following consultation with colleagues across the University, the Key Control Checklist was reviewed and refreshed to reflect changes in University, regulatory and legislative requirements in 2020. Due to the remote working arrangements in place, IAS issued the Checklist earlier than in previous years to allow staff additional time to ensure its completion. The checklist was issued to every Head of Department/School and Professional Services Director, and a number of other managers identified as being in charge of significant stand-alone functional areas, for completion by end of July 2020. In order to provide assurance that robust controls continued to be in place despite altered working practices due to the COVID-19 pandemic, IAS requested that where there had been any alterations to embedded key control practices that these be highlighted in the return.
- 4.16 IAS review of the completed checklists noted a minor number of alterations such as alternative right to work check arrangements and increases in incidental business expenditure due to the purchase of equipment for use during remote working.
- 4.17 Statements of Assurance were then provided to the Executive Deans, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Commercial Officer, Chief People Officer and the University Secretary and Compliance Officer. These officers in turn signed Statements of Assurance addressed to the Principal, Audit & Risk Committee and University Treasurer to confirm compliance with key University policies and procedures within their area of control.
- 4.18 This provides the Principal, as signatory of the University's Annual accounts, with an additional degree of confidence that the important internal controls are operating effectively throughout the University. The process also serves as a means by which any areas of concern can be referred upwards for consideration at a higher level. The Audit & Risk Committee was apprised of the details of this process for 2019/20 and provided with the signed Statements of Assurance from Deans, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Commercial Officer, Chief People Officer, Vice Principal and the University Secretary and Compliance Officer.

### **Internal Audit Performance**

- 4.19 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) were updated in April 2017 and state that the Chief Audit Executive must develop and maintain a Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that covers all aspects of the internal audit activity. The programme is required to include both internal and external assessments, with an external assessment required at least once in every 5 years. An external assessment had been conducted in 2018 in order to remain compliant with the PSIAS standards.
- 4.20 In August 2020, the Head of Internal Audit completed the Council for Higher Education Internal Auditors (CHEIA) self-assessment tool and submitted the responses to CHEIA.
- 4.21 This concluded that, for the 60 questions asked, the Strathclyde IAS displayed leading practice in 41 areas, met expectations in 18, had one developing area and no areas

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

considered immature. Following this process, the Head of Internal Audit was provided with benchmarking data to allow for a comparison of the IAS results against their peers.

- 4.22 The one developing area related to specialist skills within the IAS Team. The size of the team meant that it would not be possible to address this area. The risk is mitigated by the option to procure outsourced skills should the need arise.
- 4.23 During 2019/20, the Head of Internal Audit produced an action plan to identify the steps required to improve operations and internal processes. This led to improved results in comparison to 2018/19 with further improvement work planned for 2020/21.

### **5 EXTERNAL AUDIT**

- 5.1 The period of contract for Ernst & Young LLP expired with the audit of the 2018/19 accounts and a tendering process commenced in autumn 2019 with a recommendation for a new appointment to be made to Audit & Risk Committee and onwards to Court in February/March 2020.
- 5.2 A call for tenders was issued in late 2019 and closed in December. On the basis of the information presented to it, and following discussion with the representatives of the firm, the Selection Panel was unanimous in its decision to recommend to Audit & Risk Committee that Ernst & Young LLP be re-appointed as External Auditors to the University.
- 5.3 Audit & Risk Committee and Court approved this recommendation and Ernst & Young LLP were appointed as External Auditors to the University from March 2020 for a period of five years in the first instance, with the potential to extend the appointment for a further two years, subject to annual review of the performance of the External Auditor.

#### **External Auditors**

- 5.4 Following the re-appointment of Ernst & Young LLP, Mr Stephen Reid fulfilled the role of Audit Partner for 2019/20 and Mr Rob Jones was the Engagement Manager.

#### **Audit Related Assurance Services and Non-Recurring Audit Services Provided by the External Auditor**

- 5.5 In 2019/20, the audit fee was £68,750 plus VAT. Other assurance services were also provided by the External Auditor in the year as follows:
- Audit related assurance services relating to loans (including European Investment Bank), discretionary funds and Trusts of £15,500 plus VAT ;
- The total value of audit and audit related assurance services provided was £84,250 plus VAT.

#### **Non-Audit Services Provided by the External Auditor**

- 5.6 During 2019/20, the University appointed Ernst & Young LLP to provide consultancy advice in relation to payroll related advice and services. These appointments were fully compliant with the University's Policy on the Provision of Non-Audit Services by the External Auditor. The total value of non-Audit services provided was £4,230 inclusive of VAT.
- 5.7 Ernst & Young LLP confirmed that audit work was performed by team members separate from those providing non-audit services and all non-audit work was subject to the External Auditor's own independence process including audit partner approval and consideration of the non-audit fee to audit fee ratio. The Audit & Risk Committee was satisfied on the objectivity and independence of the external auditor in relation to non-audit services supplied.

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

### **External Audit Plan 2019/20**

- 5.8 At its May 2020 meeting the Committee considered and approved the External Auditors' Audit Plan for 2019/20, including the proposed approach for the audit of the 2019/20 financial statements. An addendum to this plan was approved at the September 2020 meeting. This was aligned with the requirements of the auditing standards and other professional requirements and also aligned with the Audit & Risk Committee's service expectations.
- 5.9 Key areas of focus included risk of fraud in revenue recognition or management override of controls, going concern, senior officer disclosures and accounting for pension obligations, valuation of capital development programmes and defined benefit obligations.

### **Review of Performance of External Auditors**

- 5.10 At its November 2020 meeting, the Audit & Risk Committee considered and discussed the performance of the External Auditors. Overall, the view was that the External Auditors were performing well and the Committee was satisfied with their work. The Committee recommended to Court that Ernst & Young LLP be appointed as External Auditor for the 2020/21 financial year.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Committee kept under review the effectiveness of the University's risk management arrangements, receiving and discussing the Corporate Risk Register at regular intervals throughout 2019/20. The Committee was satisfied that processes were in place to ensure the identification of key risks and that appropriate mitigating actions were planned and undertaken in response. In addition, a number of risk owners and senior officers were invited to attend meetings to discuss the management and mitigation of selected strategic risks (see 3.7 above).
- 6.2 A risk register which contained additional risks associated with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was presented along with the Corporate Risk Register and discussed at Audit & Risk Committee. The Committee was satisfied that processes were in place to ensure the identification of key risks and that appropriate mitigating actions were planned in response.
- 6.3 The risk assurance framework was discussed in the context of risk management and the ongoing work on the review of risk appetite across the University.

### **Impact of the UK's departure from the EU**

- 6.4 The UK's departure from the EU is prominent in the University's Risk Register and mitigations are in place. The University has had a number of working groups coordinating information-sharing and mitigation, including the Strathclyde EU Exit Working and Advisory Group (SEEWAG), which advises the Executive Team, and the Brexit Business Continuity Group, chaired by the University Secretary & Compliance Officer.
- 6.5 Current high-priority topics include fee-setting for EU students from 2021/22, new briefing sessions for EU staff and input to government-level discussions around potential research funding and Erasmus arrangements, should participation in the EU schemes come to an end.

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

- 6.6 The Brexit Business Continuity Group has focused on addressing immediate, medium and longer term actions in relation to active research, education and knowledge exchange awards, students (including those on exchange/placement), staff uncertainties, supply chain and potential wider issues such as travel and data exchange.

### **7 VALUE FOR MONEY**

- 7.1 The University's Internal Audit Service (IAS) has, as a key objective in every audit review, the aim of ensuring that the University obtains best value from the use of its resources and includes in every review consideration of VFM and awareness of fraud and corruption risks. Some reviews were also undertaken with a clear focus on value for money issues. Recent reviews in this category include:
- Review of Learning and Teaching Building;
  - Review of Research Grants – Income & Expenditure;
  - Review of Treasury Management; and
  - Review of the Procurement Tender Process.
- 7.2 The University's commitment to achieving value for money from all of its activities is clearly articulated in the Strategic Plan and is also demonstrated in its wider governance structures and in a wide range of policies, procedures and business processes, as outlined below.
- 7.3 Annual Plans and Budgets specifically require that 'all efforts should be made in achieving value for money in operations', whether by increasing income generation relative to cost or through explicit cost reductions and other efficiency savings.
- 7.4 Quarterly Business Reports provide detailed performance information on financial and key business targets, including a range of Key Performance Indicators and other metrics, which have been developed in support of the University's Strategic objectives, including, in particular, those in support of the Strategic Theme of Operational Excellence.
- 7.5 Staff costs are the single largest expenditure item for the University. Annual Development Reviews (ADRs) support the University in seeking to realise the potential of all staff and to maximise performance across the whole University. Investing strongly in staff and supporting staff development to achieve high performance directly supports value for money objectives.
- 7.6 The University's Procurement Strategy, Policy and Procedures reflect specifically the requirement in relation to all non-staff spending to "maximise value for money by working collaboratively with Faculties, suppliers and other public bodies to implement efficient and cost-effective sustainable procurement practices."
- 7.7 It is the responsibility of everyone who commits expenditure to ensure that they comply with the University's Financial Regulations which encompass the wider procurement legislation. The Procurement Team have expertise in sourcing suppliers and partners that deliver the best value at the best price, therefore have a crucial value-adding role within the University. The University's Procurement Manual and related guidance ensure that goods and services are procured both effectively and efficiently, but also importantly within the complex boundaries of Scottish and EU procurement legislation.
- 7.8 Estates costs are one of the most significant areas of University expenditure. Between 2008 and 2025, the University plans to invest £1 billion in the campus. All aspects of the



## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

University's Estates Strategy are rigorously tested and challenged to ensure value for money. Detailed options appraisals are undertaken to validate proposed activity before approval is sought; projects are competitively tendered; and expenditure against agreed plans is closely monitored until completion of the project.

- 7.9 The University is also making a significant continuing investment in Information Systems and Infrastructure, with the Information Services Directorate's objectives specifically requiring the delivery of 'efficient and effective services which provide value for money to the institution'. The delivery of new and enhanced information systems directly facilitates value for money, with new systems supporting improved and more efficient ways of working.
- 7.10 The University's Continuous Improvement Directorate provides leadership and direction to the University's continuous improvement activity and national Higher Education agenda including value for money. The Director is a member of the Lean HE Global Steering Group, Universities Scotland Efficiencies Taskforce and is convener of the Scottish HE Improvement Network.
- 7.11 The Directorate has undertaken specific improvement reviews as well as supporting and coaching continuous improvement projects in a number of areas including Estates Services, RKES and AFRC. The Team has also been involved in guiding and influencing Executive Team strategic projects.

### **8 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

- 8.1 As part of its review of the Financial Statements, the Audit & Risk Committee reviewed the draft Statement on Corporate Governance and Internal Control at its meeting on 2 September 2020 before it was incorporated into the Financial Statements.
- 8.2 At its meeting on 6 November 2020, the Committee provided scrutiny of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2020, in the presence of the External Auditors. A pre-meeting with the Internal and External Auditors (see 3.4 above) provided the opportunity to raise any issues of concern with members of the Audit & Risk Committee.
- 8.3 The uncertainty surrounding the University's activities due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the additional focus described below on Going Concern, meant that the Financial Statements received by ARC at the November meeting were incomplete and ARC was therefore unable to finalise its approval. An extraordinary meeting was held in December 2020 to enable ARC to approve the complete Financial Statements.

#### **Going concern**

TBC

### **9 EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE CONTROL ENVIRONMENT**

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

- 9.1 The ARC was briefed by management on the University's response to Covid-19 at its March and May meetings. The University recognised the importance of ensuring that robust controls continued to be in place despite altered working practices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A supplementary risk register was developed dedicated to risks relating to the Covid-19 outbreak. This sat alongside the existing risk register for the initial part of the pandemic before being merged with the existing risk register.
- 9.2 As note above (paragraph 4.14) the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan was delivered in full and the annual Internal Audit Opinion was issued as standard.
- 9.3 Key compliance requirements continued to be addressed during the pandemic, through robust processes and oversight including:
- Court, Senate, Executive Team and committees of Senate and Court continuing to function and operate to reporting cycles;
  - implementation on schedule of the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 and of the revised Scottish Code of Good HE Governance (2017));
  - compliance with the latest UK and Scottish Government Acts and guidelines and guidance from Health Protection Scotland and the University's Insurers in relation to Covid-19;
  - implementation of the University's Business Continuity Framework through Executive Team Emergency Management Protocols;
  - compliance with data protection legislation (GDPR) was assured through new guidelines and development of online training;
  - maintenance of robust, centrally co-ordinated visa procedures, in line with UKVI guidance, protecting the University's ability to recruit international students and staff;
  - Executive Team and Senate oversight to ensure assessment, examinations and Boards of Examiners could progress within University Ordinances & Regulations, assuring governance and equity for all learners, aligned to external quality assurance expectations (QAA guidance);
  - fit-for-purpose physical and digital infrastructure: implementation of home working, facilitated by rollout of the Zoom online conferencing tool integrated with MyPlace virtual learning environment; online learning resources for staff, standard monitoring process and helpdesk procedures;
  - detailed guidance, FAQs and communications to students and staff delivered via website and email throughout the pandemic;
  - close working with industry partners, including Microsoft alerts on cyber-crime across HE.

## **10 OTHER BUSINESS**

The Committee considered a range of other relevant business during 2019/20, including the following:

### **University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA) Review**

- 10.1 The Internal Audit Service (IAS) includes reviews of financial and other management control systems along with key risk areas affecting the USSA in its annual plan. As part of the 2019/20 Internal Audit Plan, IAS agreed with the USSA Chief Executive Officer and Head of Finance & Central Services and Deputy CEO to undertake a review of the USSA's readiness for the move to the Learning & Teaching Building in 2020/21, both in terms of financial and operational impact.

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

- 10.2 Although this is a University led project, the USSA is one of the primary stakeholders and has been involved throughout key stages of the project's delivery. The move to the Learning & Teaching Building represents a once in a generation opportunity for the USSA to relocate into brand new and modern accommodation which is designed around student needs and enhancing the student experience. The relocation may also provide the USSA with the opportunity to build greater financial foundations through efficiency savings and corresponding reductions in operational expenditure and increasing revenue streams.
- 10.3 The scope of this review included:
- Review and assessment of the procedures in place for managing the relocation;
  - Review and assessment of the arrangements in place for the relocation with regard to key areas of risk associated with budgets, interior solution and office design; communication; furniture; IT; and moving plan;
  - Review of the associated impact on the future budget and financial plans of the USSA;
  - Review of the governance arrangements in place for the oversight, decision making, monitoring and reporting of progress with regard to the relocation; and
  - Review of the risk management arrangements in place with regard to the relocation including the plans to ensure that the use of shared space is managed in a way to minimise the risk of disruption to other users of the building.
- 10.4 The overall evaluation for this review was Reasonable Assurance (Controls are adequate but require improvement. Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of procedures. There are weaknesses in the risk, governance and/or control procedures in place but not of a significant nature).

### **Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC)**

- 10.5 The Committee held an extraordinary meeting in January 2020 to consider and approve a report on the University's TRAC return prior to its submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The final figures in the TRAC return had been audited and approved by the IAS.

### **Institutional Efficiency return**

- 10.6 The Committee considered and approved a report on the details of the University's contribution to the Scottish Government's efficiency objectives. There was a standard approach that must be followed and specified categories of efficiency savings. The final return had been reviewed by the IAS to ensure the guidance had been followed.

### **Information Security and Risk Analysis**

- 10.7 The Committee continued to offer robust scrutiny of this area during 2019/20. Members sought assurances that the University was appropriately managing information security risks and was suitably equipped to respond to incidents, should they occur (see 3.7 above).
- 10.8 Audit & Risk Committee was pleased to note that the University was improving its processes for identifying and mitigating potential attacks by monitoring activity across its network and learning from the experiences of other organisations. A recent, significant, denial of service attack had been prevented and compromised student accounts quickly identified and suspended in another attack. It was also noted that people were key to protecting systems. The roll out of training, crucial to prevent attacks, continued with 83% of staff having completed training. Staff who had not yet completed training would be identified and reminded. The uptake among students had been more disappointing

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

and options, such as making training a compulsory element of induction, were being considered.

### **Other Reviews**

- 10.9 In addition to the activity described above, a number of other key audit reviews were undertaken across the University in 2019/20. Subsequent findings were reported to the Committee by the IAS in each case. The Committee also received updates at its November and March meetings on the implementation status of agreed Management Actions in completed audit reports. At the March meeting, the Committee was pleased to note the highest number of actions closed in one review period in the last 2 years, following a period of significant effort and changes to the follow up process.
- 10.10 Additional areas where management practices, operations, systems and procedures were reviewed in 2019/20 included:
- Review of Cyber Security
  - Review of Glasgow City Innovation District Business Model
  - Review of GDPR Compliance
  - Review of Governance Act Compliance
  - Review of Learning and Teaching Building Project
  - Review of Research Grants
  - Review of Treasury Management
  - Review of UKVI Compliance
- 10.11 The outcome of these reviews is addressed in the IAS Annual Report.

### **Annual Workshop**

- 10.12 The Committee held its Annual Workshop on 6 February 2020 where it received presentations and held strategic discussions on SIMS, Risk Assurance, Estates Development and Information Security. The Committee also received input from the External Auditor covering: Fraud Risk and an update on Financial Reporting requirements.
- 10.13 The Audit & Risk Committee had been included in the externally facilitated review of the effectiveness of Court and its committees which took place in the summer of 2017. The final report of this review concluded that the Committee worked well, carried out its responsibilities with care and diligence and had an appropriate membership including provision for two external co-opted members with highly relevant experience.
- 10.14 During 2019/20, the Committee used a self-assessment tool developed by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) to assist with the effectiveness review of an Audit Committee. All members responded. The Audit & Risk Committee's performance was assessed as 'above average' or 'fully satisfactory'.
- 10.15 The Committee also undertook its annual review of its Terms of Reference and considered that the current Terms of Reference, approved in September 2017, remained fit for purpose.

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

### **Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing)**

- 10.16 During 2019/20, the University was made aware of one potential Public Interest Disclosure containing three disclosures relating to financial management and a specific contract.
- 10.17 An investigation was undertaken of the disclosure under the University's Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy. The USCO, as the Designated Person, reviewed the report and concluded:
- there was no suggestion or evidence of wrongdoing on the part of any member of staff;
  - the contract was part of a collaborative agreement which had gone through due process and was shortly due for review;
  - the allegation of financial mismanagement was unfounded.
- 10.18 The allegations and the investigation findings were shared with the Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee and a summary considered at the February meeting of Audit & Risk Committee.
- 10.19 Following a review and refresh and feedback from stakeholders across the University, a revised Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy was recommended by ARC for approval by Court and was subsequently approved by Court in May 2020.

### **Fraud Prevention**

- 10.20 In the 2019/20 no instances of fraud were reported to Audit and Risk Committee under the Fraud Prevention policy. In all work undertaken by IAS fraud and the potential for fraud is considered. In addition fraud risk is discussed with the External Auditor in the context of the external audit planning process and the completion process.

## **11 DRAFT OPINION**

- 11.1 On the basis of the information presented to the Committee by the University management, IAS, Ernst & Young and other sources, and the discussion and review of that information within these groups, it is the Audit & Risk Committee's view that the University's arrangements for:
- Risk management;
  - Internal control;
  - Corporate governance;
  - Economy, efficiency and effectiveness (VfM)
- during the year 2019/20 were adequate and effective and can be relied upon by the Court.
- 11.2 The Committee is satisfied that, during 2019/20, the University has complied with and applied the principles set out in the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance 2017. Areas which vary from full compliance with the 2017 Code are detailed in the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control within the Financial Statements.
- 11.3 The Committee is also satisfied that the Governing Body's responsibilities, as defined in the Statement of Primary Responsibilities of the University Court in the Financial Statements and to the extent covered by the Audit and Risk Committee's remit, have been satisfactorily discharged.

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

Ms Paula Galloway  
Convener of the Audit & Risk Committee  
November 2020

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

### **Appendix 1: Audit and Risk Committee**

#### *Terms of Reference*

#### **Purpose**

- 1.2.9 The Audit and Risk Committee reports to the University Court and oversees the arrangements for risk, internal control and governance, including the associated assurances related to these systems.
- 1.2.10 The committee is authorised by Court to obtain outside legal or other independent professional advice and to secure the attendance of non-members with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary, normally in consultation with the Principal and/or convener of Court.
- 1.2.11 It is also authorised to investigate any activity within its terms of reference and to seek any information it requires from any employee, and all employees are directed to co-operate with any request made by the committee.

#### **Main Duties**

- 1.2.12 The specific duties of the Audit & Risk Committee shall be to:

#### **Internal Controls**

- (a) keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's corporate governance arrangements, and its financial and other internal controls systems,
- (b) consider the effectiveness of the University's policy on whistleblowing and its arrangements for the prevention, detection or investigation of questions of fraud or other financial irregularities and be notified of any actions taken in line with such arrangements
- (c) to monitor and be satisfied that suitable arrangements are in place to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money) in the management of the University's resources
- (d) ensure the appropriate investigation of significant losses and that the relevant parties have been informed

#### **Internal Audit**

- (e) consider and advise the Court on the criteria for the selection and appointment of the Head of the Internal Audit Service or the appointment and terms of engagement of the internal audit service
- (f) review and endorse the Internal Audit Service's draft assurance strategy and annual plans; consider major findings of internal audit reviews and management's response and be satisfied that appropriate action is taken
- (g) monitor the implementation of agreed audit-based recommendations
- (h) consider if the resources made available to the Internal Audit Service are sufficient to meet the University's needs and make recommendations to the Court, if appropriate
- (i) promote co-ordination between the internal and external auditors

#### **External Audit**

- (j) advise the Court on the appointment of the external auditors, the audit fee, and any questions of resignation or dismissal of the external auditors

## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

- (k) discuss with the external auditors, before the annual audit begins, the nature and scope of the audit
- (l) review the annual financial statements, prior to submission to the Court, in the presence of the external auditors and alongside the auditors' formal opinion, the Management Letter and the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control, in accordance with the Scottish Funding Council's accounts direction, financial memorandum and other relevant direction and guidance
- (m) discuss with the external auditors any issues and reservations arising from the annual audit, including a review of the management letter, incorporating management responses and any other matters the external auditors may wish to discuss (in the absence of management where necessary)
- (n) to review and approve policy on the engagement of the external auditors to supply non-audit services
- (o) monitor annually the performance and effectiveness of the external auditors, including any matters affecting their independence or objectivity, and make recommendations to the Court concerning their reappointment, where appropriate

### **Risk Management**

- (p) to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of the University's approach to risk assessment and management through regular review of the Corporate Risk Register and reports from relevant University officers or committees.
- (q) to review the prioritisation of risk management focus via the Corporate Risk Register, taking into account financial, reputational and commercial risks.
- (r) to ensure that audit work is informed by risk management

### **Reports**

- (s) consider the impacts of reports or guidance issued by relevant external bodies, including the Scottish Funding Council, and make recommendations to the Court, where appropriate
- (t) to receive, as appropriate, reports on the implementation of major projects within the University covering progress, risks and mitigations.
- (u) to receive reports, as appropriate, where there is a potential reputational, commercial and/or financial risk to the University.
- (v) Prepare and present to Court, and subsequently to the Scottish Funding Council, an annual report covering the University's financial year and any significant events up to the date of preparation. The report should express opinions in relation to the committee's review of the effectiveness of institutional arrangements for:
  - i. Risk management, control and governance (including the adequacy of the governance statement)
  - ii. Economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money)

### **Other**

- (w) consider such other topics as may be remitted by the Court from time to time
- (x) review, on an annual basis and in consultation with Court, the committee's own performance against accepted good practice



## **Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report to Court 2019/20**

### **Composition**

- 1.2.13 The Committee shall consist of no fewer than four lay members of the Court, of whom one shall be Convener. At least one member shall have recent relevant experience in finance, accounting or auditing. The Committee may co-opt up to two further individuals external to the University, who should not have significant interests in the University, for a period of time to be determined by the Committee. The convener of Court should not be a member of the committee.

### **Meetings**

- 1.2.14 Meetings shall normally be held at least four times each financial year. The external auditors or head of internal audit may request a meeting if they consider it necessary.
- 1.2.15 The committee should meet with the external and internal auditors, without any officers present, at least once a year.
- 1.2.16 There shall be a quorum at any meeting of the Committee when not less than 3 members, at least 2 of whom are members of Court, are present. In the absence of a quorum no business shall be transacted other than the adjournment of the meeting.

*Approved by Court: 28/09/17*

**Report to Court from Estates Committee**

The Estates Committee met on 6 October 2020 and the following items were among those discussed:

**For Noting by Court:**

**1. Update on Covid 19 Activities by Estates Services**

The Director of Estates Services provided an update on the activities which had been carried out by Estates Services in direct relation to the COVID 19 pandemic, its impact on the activities of the department in general, and preparations for re-opening of the Campus.

While the process of closing the campus for lockdown in March was relatively effortless, that of maintaining it in the interim and then preparing for its reopening had proved much more challenging. Since the campus closed Estates had been sustaining a wide range of work streams. Almost immediately following lockdown circa sixty 'essential' Estates staff were brought back to campus, primarily within the Security, Electrical, Mechanical and Cleaning teams. While the initial role of these staff was to keep the buildings safe, with many engaged in essential maintenance of water systems to avert the risk of legionella, a vast array of additional work went into preparations to make the campus safe for students and staff to recommence. Just some of the tasks undertaken were highlighted as follows:- reviewing Estates staff resources and on-call arrangements; providing PPE for staff returning to work; staff inductions for those returning to work; carrying out Planned Preventative Maintenance to all areas that would be occupied by Research staff; planning and implementing one way systems and installing access control where relevant; installing signage and other physical barriers, providing hand sanitiser stations and other Covid-19 requirements for building entrances, common spaces and toilets; reviewing cleaning and waste regimes and agreeing travel and parking arrangements for staff returning to work..

Following the cessation of all Construction works and the retreat of contractors from site in March, in line with Government guidelines, significant preparation had gone towards preparing for reopening these sites, while ensuring they would be able to comply with Covid regulations. It was noted that all major project construction work was now back on site.

Similarly, all commercial operations for Strathclyde Sport, Catering and Ross Priory had ceased with the lockdown, though each started planning immediately for a new normal. It was reported that all of these were now open to varying degrees, with Catering still at a very reduced level, although, it is planned that this would increase as students started to come on campus in greater numbers, while the Ross Priory house and the golf were open, as was Strathclyde Sport, albeit with both offering limited services.

Estates Services had also carried out extensive work preparing for socially distanced teaching to return to campus. Planning had been carried out for 2 metre, 1.5 and 1 metre distancing so that any or all of these could be accommodated as required. It was reported that the campus was therefore ready to start operating the following week for the planned commencement of blended learning.

Planning work had also been carried out to prepare a campus Travel Plan, details of which were included within a separate item in the papers.

The greatest part of the burden of work on campus had fallen on the Operational teams. While the majority of Estates staff remained working from home, approximately one hundred operational staff were now working on site on any day.

The Committee noted the details of the paper and the extent of the work which had been undertaken by Estates Services staff during the period.

## **2. Case for investment for Curran Library Building Roof replacement and Façade repairs**

The Curran building is an essential part of campus, housing the Andersonian library, together with the Archives collection, and the IS department. However, the building is of an age where, in order to maintain its integrity and secure its ability to operate, sections of roof required to be replaced and urgent repairs to the façade carried out, including coping stones, lintels, sills, glazing and movement joints. Due to the size of the building, a five year phasing of maintenance upgrading had been designed, with internal and external works planned for each summer over a that period. Works completed to date included the IS consolidation project and the upgrading of Hass accommodation.

The works under consideration now were originally planned to be delivered over two financial years, aligning with the allocated funding within the Capital Development Plan. However, due to the lockdown imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Estates Services was unable to progress the planned phase 1 works due for completion in the 2019/20 financial year. These works had therefore been added to those planned for 2020/21. With the small number of students on campus currently, a window of opportunity existed to carry them out with minimum disruption to the student body and to achieve their completion, which would take approximately twenty-four weeks in total, prior to 24-hour operating commencing in the library from next Easter. Furthermore, the Committee was assured that the phasing of these works had been organised so that there would be no impact on the library during the exam periods, with the contractor made aware of the periods of time during which works likely to cause noise disturbance could not be carried.

The works would be primarily capital in nature. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed to the Committee that he was comfortable with the level of expenditure to be incurred and that to fail to proceed would entail significant risk for the University. While the pandemic had impacted on projects priced over the summer, with costs rising due to instability in the supply chain and new ways of working required by the Covid guidelines, this project had been priced to reflect these increases.

The Director of Information Services indicated his support for the proposals and highlighted some of the ongoing problems being experienced in the building, including roof leaks and flooding. The University Archives collection, which is located within the Curran, holds irreplaceable items, and the Committee recommended that a risk assessment of the vulnerability of this material be undertaken and any necessary mitigating actions taken, including possible offsite storage, until these works had been completed.

**The Committee approved the proposed investment in the roof and fabric of the Curran, [Reserved]**

### **3. Case for investment for the Creation of New Toilet Block in Royal College Building**

The Royal College, which currently houses the departments of Pure and Applied Chemistry, Electronic and Electrical Engineering, as well as the Principal's Suite and the Senior Officers Suite had been the subject of a phased upgrade over a number of years, including the creation of a number of extra teaching rooms which increased the capacity of the building. As a result, the toilet provision was no longer compliant or deemed adequate and a firm of Architects had been commissioned to review the current provision and report on the number and type of facilities required to meet the needs of the end users and comply with current Building Regulations and Equality and Diversity legislation.

The outcome of that exercise was a recommendation that a new toilet stack should be created within the centre core of the building, adjacent to the triplex lifts which would provide additional toilet facilities, accessible showers and gender neutral facilities. With that new toilet stack in place, the opportunity would also then exist to refurbish the existing facilities in the east and west wings.

The Student President commented that she was excited to see this project brought forward to Committee, especially the aspect related to the provision of additional accessible and gender neutral facilities. The paper did not include specific details of how many extra accessible facilities would be created, but the Director of Estates Services confirmed that the increase in these would be substantial and that, following the meeting, she would send details to the Committee members of the exact numbers of each. Notwithstanding the absence of this detail the Committee approved the project as was and looked forward to receiving the additional details.

**The Committee approved the progression of the toilet fit-out works [Reserved].**

## Senate Report to Court

Senate met on 18 November 2020. The Senate meeting took place online (via the Zoom platform) in accordance with measures in place to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

This report provides Court with key points from the Senate meeting.

### **FOR APPROVAL**

Senate invites Court to **approve** the following recommendation considered and endorsed by Senate on 18 November 2020:

#### **1. Annual Narrative Statement on Research Integrity**

Following referral by the RKEC, Senate **endorsed** the Annual Narrative Statement on Research Integrity 2019-20 and **recommends this to Court for approval and publication.**

### **FOR NOTING**

Senate invites Court to **note** the following items considered by Senate on 18 November 2020.

#### **2. Report from Senate Business Committee:**

Senate Business Committee (SBC) noted at its meeting on 30 October 2020 that, since the last meeting of Senate on 3 September 2020, the Collaborative Provision Agreement (CPA) Subgroup had processed one new agreement (joint PhD supervision) and addenda to two separate existing articulation agreements (for PGT and PGR respectively).

Senate was invited to consider and approve the reports for the November Senate meeting. Senate approval was given where requested in the reports, and is documented in the formal minute of the Senate meeting.

Senate homologated the following Convener's Actions approved by the Principal on behalf of Senate since the last Senate meeting:

- a. The University's Annual Statement on Institution-led Review of Quality Academic Year 2019-20 for the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). This was subsequently endorsed by Court with a Statement of Assurance signed by the Convener of Court and sent to the SFC.
- b. Guidelines to Support the Learning & Teaching of Students During Periods of Disruption: 2020/21 COVID-19 Pandemic
- c. The University's involvement in the Knowledge Exchange (KE) Concordat.

#### **3. Principal's Report**

The Principal provided a comprehensive report on news and items of interest since the last meeting, covering the following key topics:

- QC-led Independent Inquiry
  - The Principal reflected at length on the report of independent review he commissioned led by Craig Sandison QC into the behaviour of Kevin O'Gorman, following publication of the QC's report and recommendations on Monday 9 November 2020. The University's commitment to fully implement all of the recommendations was noted. This will be overseen by an Inquiry Recommendations Implementation Group convened by the USCO.

- COVID-19 News
  - Extension of local restrictions with the City of Glasgow moving to Protection Level 4 from 20 November to 11 December 2020
  - Provision of asymptomatic testing on campus with the Barony Hall earmarked as a potential testing centre.
- The University's Online Wellbeing & Working from Home Hub
- Accelerated roll-out of the Agile Working Toolkit
- External Endorsements
- Conferment Day
- 30 new Masters Programmes with entry in January 2021
- Principal's Staff Engagement Sessions
- Strathclyde Medals
- Launch of Strathclyde Inspire – Entrepreneurial Strategy
- Planned Construction of Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre
- Strathclyde Innovation Forum
- Climate change: Students Organising for Sustainability
- Core Cities Declaration
- Staff Awards and Achievements
- Research news

#### 4. Substantive Items of Business

Senate received updates on the following items:

- i. The Chief Financial Officer and Director of Strategy and Policy presented Senate with an update on the current financial forecast on the 2020/21 budget and details of student recruitment for 2020/21 respectively. It was reported that the University was in strong financial health and would continue to be proactive, responsive and responsible. Although international recruitment had been adversely impacted by COVID-19, undergraduate widening access targets had met or exceeded KPIs. The final picture for PGT recruitment would be clearer following the January 2021 intakes; however, budgeted recruitment targets would need to be exceeded to reach the growth trajectory required to meet our total PGR population target for 2025.
- ii. The Vice Principal and University Secretary and Compliance Officer presented Senate with an informative update on the management of **Return and Resume** activities, campus recovery and building occupancy, health and safety considerations to support on-campus learning and teaching in Semesters 1 and 2, an update on Residences and COVID-19 reporting, and information on Testing, Wellbeing and Positive Mental Health including helpful videos on *Campus Navigation*, *Self-Isolation Support* and *FACTS & Managing COVID*.
- iii. Professor Stephen McArthur, Deputy Associate Principal, Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation presented Senate with an update on preparations for the **Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021** submission which had been delayed due to COVID-19. Key changes were highlighted namely the new submission deadline of 31 March 2021 and extension to the impact period to 31 December 2020, and outlined the priorities and reporting programme for the coming months. Given the reputational and financial significance of the

REF, which determines the University's level of quality-related research (QR) funding, the benefits of small gains and the need for sustained engagement was emphasised.

- iv. Professor Tim Bedford, Associate Principal, Research and Innovation presented to Senate on the **Knowledge Exchange (KE) Concordat** to which the University had signed up, ensuring that Senate was fully appraised of the University's commitment. The Knowledge Exchange (KE) Concordat had been developed by Universities UK and Research England to set out the key principles of KE for the sector.
- v. The StrathUnion President provided a **Student Voice** update, sharing details of StrathUnion's ongoing efforts to support students through the COVID-19 pandemic. The University's introduction of COVID-19 Scholarships was welcomed and it was noted that this had generated many applications from students. Key areas of focus included (i) supporting Strathclyde students in Halls of Residence operated by private providers and the University community was encouraged to be compassionate to students whose access to suitable study space may be limited, (ii) encouraging an extension of Library opening hours to enable students to study later in the evenings and at the weekend, and (iii) considering how best to support the larger than usual numbers of students (~300) who would likely be remaining on campus during the winter break due to COVID-19 restrictions.

End