

Court

Mon 28 April 2025, 11:00 - 12:30

GT25 Ayr Campus

A meeting of the University Court constituted under the University of the West of Scotland Order of Council 2019 will be held on Monday 28th April 2025 at 1pm in Room GT25, Ayr Campus.

Agenda

11:00 - 11:00
0 min

1. Welcome, Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest

11:00 - 11:00
0 min

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 11th February 2025

☐ CoutMins120225.pdf (5 pages)

11:00 - 11:00
0 min

3. Matters Arising

11:00 - 11:05
5 min

4. Determination of Any Other Business

11:05 - 11:08
3 min

5. Chair's Statement

Information

Oral Report

11:08 - 11:18
10 min

6. Principal & Vice-Chancellor's Report

Discussion

☐ 6 - PVC Report.pdf (10 pages)

11:18 - 11:25
7 min

7. Students' Union

7.1. Students' Union Report

Information

☐ 7.1 - Students Union Report.pdf (7 pages)

11:25 - 11:30
5 min

8. Senate

8.1. Report from Meeting of Senate held on 26th March 2025

Information

☐ 8.1 - Senate Report.pdf (5 pages)

11:30 - 11:45 9. Sub-Committee Reports

15 min

9.1. Report from Meeting of Resources & People Committee held on 11th March 2025

- ☐ 9.1 - RPC Report.pdf (5 pages)
- ☐ 9.1 - App 1 - H&S Dashboard.pdf (3 pages)

9.2. Report from Meeting of Governance & Nominations Committee held on 11th March 2025

Information

- ☐ 9.2 - GNC report.pdf (4 pages)

9.3. Report from Meeting of Remuneration Committee held on 12th March 2025

Information

- ☐ 9.3 - RemCo.pdf (2 pages)

9.4. Report from Meeting of Audit & Risk Committee held on 25th March 2025

Information

- ☐ 9.4 - ARC Report.pdf (5 pages)
- ☐ 9.4 - App 1 - IAS ToR.pdf (7 pages)
- ☐ 9.4 - App2 - Risk Appetite Statement.pdf (5 pages)

11:45 - 12:00 10. Student Population & SFC Update

15 min

Discussion

- ☐ 10 - Student Population & SFC Update.pdf (9 pages)

12:00 - 12:10 11. Externally Facilitated Review of Effectiveness of Court

10 min

Information

- ☐ 11 - Externally Facilitated Review.pdf (2 pages)

12:10 - 12:12 12. Schedule of Meeting Dates - AY 2025-2026

2 min

Information

- ☐ 12 - Schedule of Meeting Dates - AY 25-26.pdf (2 pages)

12:12 - 12:12 13. Any Other Business

0 min

Louise Alison
23/04/2025 12:37:10

Ayr, 28th April 2025 being the 81st meeting of the Court of the University of the West of Scotland

Present: Ms K Allum (Chair)

Ms O Adebayo
Professor S Carnicelli
Dr A M Craig
Mr R Doherty
Mr A Gubbay (MS Teams)
Ms M Kennedy
Professor R MacIntosh
Professor D MacLean
Mr A Miller
Professor J Miller
Ms A Mitchell (MS Teams)
Mr C Morgan (MS Teams)
Mr K Murdoch (MS Teams)
Mr T Oyinpere
Ms R Simpson
Mr H Stolkin (MS Teams)

In attendance: Professor R Cragg

Mr A MacIver
Ms D McMillan
Ms F Morton
Ms S Pitticas
Mr M Ross
Mrs A Loudon

Observers: Mr C Houston

Dr C O'Donnell

Ms E Marshall

Mr J Britton (Ranmore Consulting)

Apologies for absence have been received from Ms L Carroll, Ms K Hedge, Mr A Munro and Ms R Paterson.

No Declarations of Interest were notified.

1. Welcome

The Chair reminded members that an externally facilitated review of the effectiveness of Court facilitated by external consultants was underway and welcomed Mr J Britton from Ranmore Consulting who was in attendance to observe the meeting as part of the review.

For the information of Court, the external consultant provided a high level overview of the process being put in place to support the externally facilitated effectiveness review of the Court, and a parallel review of the effectiveness of Senate. Further detail on the review was provided at paper 11 on the agenda.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 11th February 2025

Subject to minor amendment, Court approved the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2025.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising other than those contained elsewhere in the agenda.

4. Determination of Any Other Business

No additional items of business had been notified.

5. Chair's Statement

On behalf of Court, the Chair congratulated the Principal & Vice-Chancellor on his appointment as Convenor of Universities Scotland.

The Chair referenced various communications and issues raised, particularly in relation to the ongoing Organisational Change Project. In the interests of transparency and to ensure that members were fully briefed on these and other issues being raised, discussion would be taken as part of the Principal & Vice-Chancellor's Report when members would have the opportunity to ask questions.

6. Principal & Vice-Chancellor's Report

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor's Report provided an update for Court on a variety of issues relating to HE in Scotland, the UK, and Internationally.

The attention of members was drawn to the detail in the report in relation to the SFC Indicative Funding Allocations for the forthcoming academic year. This was a complicated picture and it was important to ensure that members of Court were fully briefed on the detail and aware of their implications to UWS. Final allocations would be confirmed soon, although no change was anticipated. These were being built into the financial forecasts for AY 2025/2026 being developed. Further detail on the SFC indicative allocation was

contained in agenda item 10 – Student Population & SFC Update.

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor updated Court on the Westminster Government's Immigration White Paper and confirmed that lobbying around the impact of this on inward student recruitment was being maintained. A formal timeline for implementation was not yet to hand.

Court noted that a disclosure had been made under the University's Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Procedure. This had been assessed and legal advice obtained had confirmed that the points raised did not fall within the whistleblowing procedure. The Head of Internal Audit Service had, however, been asked to review the matters raised and this was ongoing. A similar disclosure had been made to the SFC who had confirmed that this was not a matter for them to investigate.

Progress with the ongoing Organisational Change Project (OCP) was noted. Colleagues across the University continued to be kept up to date on progress, with the Principal's all-staff meetings being the primary communications channel for new information on the OCP, as well as the dedicated webpage on Connect. These were enhanced with a written summary of all staff meetings being available for staff who were not able to attend; a full set of frequently asked questions; individual departmental and divisional meetings.

Concerns had been expressed by the recognised Joint Trade Unions about the Project and a formal dispute had been raised. This was primarily due to the request for UWS to commit to no compulsory redundancies. In a subsequent communication, the Joint Trade Unions had indicated that the University was operating outside the formal OCP framework and had notified their decision to withdraw from participation in the project team and workstream activities until the dispute was resolved. Subsequently, the University had been informed via media new channels that two of the University's recognised Trade Unions had indicated their intention to move to an indicative ballot of members for strike action.

A letter received from the Joint Trade Unions addressed to the Chair and Members of Court expressing concern at the OCP was circulated to Court, along with the response from the Chair.

Court agreed that the decision by the recognised Trade Unions to withdraw from participation in the OCP was disappointing. Although the University would not rule out compulsory redundancies as part of the OCP, a commitment had been given to employment retention and everything possible would be done to avoid them. The door remained open for the joint Trade Unions to rejoin discussions at any time and there were other formal and informal mechanisms to ensure active and ongoing engagement.

Members were reminded that the composition of the Court provided for two Trade Union Representatives – one from the academic staff of the University and one from "all other staff" of the University, and it was disappointing that neither were in attendance at the meeting, although it was noted the academic staff Trade Union member was on a period of leave of absence from Court. The "all other staff" Trade Union member had submitted their apologies to the meeting. Reflecting the role of a member of Court as a charity trustee, the Standing Orders of Court did not provide for substitutes at formal meetings of Court.

Both SFC and the Scottish Government had been informed in advance of the launch of the OCP were being kept updated as matters progressed.

After discussion, members confirmed confidence and strong support in the University's approach to OCP and its aims to achieve financial sustainability. Whilst recognising many of the issues raised were operational in nature, Court would be kept informed as matters evolved.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

7. Students' Union Report

On behalf of Court, the Chair congratulated the President and Vice-President (Education) on their re-appointment for the 2025/2026 academic year.

The President of the Students' Union spoke to the report which provided an update on Union activities, including the recent election and referendum cycle, campaigning activity, student engagement and survey insights.

Court was interested to note the significant increase in election turnout. There had been a reduction in candidate numbers following the introduction of new eligibility criteria. The lack of diversity in the candidate pool was also noted. Following a referendum, 93% of students had supported the introduction of a new student officer structure, including part-time paid roles, aimed at improving access and flexibility, which would come into effect in 2026.

In response to a question on the initial insights from the annual student survey, the President of the Students' Union outlined the various arrangements in place to combat ongoing concerns from students on loneliness. This included attendance and involvement in societies and other events.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

8. Senate

8.1 Report from Meeting of Senate held on 26th March 2025

The Chair of Senate spoke to the report from the meeting held on 26th March 2025.

He drew members' attention in particular to the mechanisms being put in place to review and assess academic quality and enhancement in alignment with the new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) being implemented by the Quality Assurance Agency across the sector in Scotland. The University's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) would take place in October 2025.

As noted above, an externally facilitated review of the effectiveness of Senate was ongoing in parallel with the review of Court.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

9. Sub Committee Reports

9.1 Report from Meeting of Resources & People Committee held on 11th March 2025

The Chair of the Resources & People Committee spoke to the report from the meeting held on 11th March 2025.

He drew members' attention to approval by the Committee of student residence fees for AY 2026/2027 and endorsement of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Report which highlighted how the University had mainstreamed equality, reviewed progress made on our 2021-2025 equality outcomes and provided an overview of the adoption of the National Equality Outcomes. An update on health and safety activity and associated KPI Dashboard had also been reviewed.

Court noted the ongoing discussions and progress being made in relation to the disposal of the former Campus in Almada Street, Hamilton. Proposals being developed for the sale of student accommodation in George Street, Paisley were also noted. A cladding survey and fire risk assessment of the Lanarkshire Campus had concluded that while the likelihood of a fire occurring remained unlikely, an increase in the risk of potential consequences had resulted in an overall risk rating of "substantial", and a multi phased action plan had been put in place to return the risk to an overall tolerable rating. A full review of the cladding would be undertaken to identify options to address the issues identified in the report in an appropriate and cost-effective way. Under the terms of the lease of the Campus, the responsibility for the remedial work rested with the University.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

9.2 Report from Meeting of Governance & Nominations Committee held on 11th March 2025

The Chair should speak to the report from the meeting held on 11th March 2025.

Noting that there were currently up to 3 vacancies in the lay membership of Court, arrangements were being put in place to recruit new lay members to fill these vacancies with recommendations being brought forward to the June 2025 meeting of Court. Vacancies in the sub committees would be left unfilled pending recruitment of new lay members.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

9.3 Report from Meeting of Remuneration Committee held on 12th March 2025

Court noted for information the report from the meeting held on 12th March 2025.

9.4 Report from Meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 25th March 2025

In the absence of the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, the Vice Chair of Court spoke to the report from the meeting on held on 25th March.

He drew members' attention in particular to the detailed scrutiny and robust discussion at the Committee on the financial reforecast based on performance to 31st January 2025 and the various scenarios identified to respond to the volatile and challenging financial uncertainty facing HE and return the University to a surplus position in 2026/2027.

Court noted and endorsed the revised Terms of Reference for the Internal Audit Service, which had been updated to reflect recent revisions to professional standards and the newly developed Risk Appetite Statement, which would be embedded in the refreshed Risk Management Procedure.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

10. Student Population and SFC Update

The Vice-Principal (Planning & Recruitment) spoke to the report which provided an update on the achievement of intake and population targets for the domestic and international cohort, following T2 enrolment and 2025-2026 domestic recruitment cycle.

Court noted that overall, domestic recruitment (controlled and non-controlled) was forecast to be slightly ahead of UWS target and demonstrated year-on-year improvement but remained short of the total SFC target. While international recruitment remained below target, recruitment to T3 was forecast to have a positive impact. However, due to phasing, not all income from T2 and T3 entrants would be realised in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Recruitment for domestic students for T1 2025-2026 was proceeding well with a higher number of applications received than last year. While this was at an early stage in the recruitment cycle and conversion to enrolments was crucial, Court agreed that it did provide an indication for the continued multi-year recovery of the Scottish student population at UWS.

Court noted the SFC indicative funded places allocations for 2025/2026, noting that these equated to an overall reduction in main teaching grant to UWS of 0.9%. Funded places for controlled subjects were expected to be announced later in May, with little change expected from the current allocation.

In response to a question, the Principal & Vice-Chancellor updated Court on broader discussions being held across the sector on the

funding arrangements. Although, due to the regional impact, funding for the Dumfries Campus was ring-fenced, no account was taken of qualitative underlying policy, particularly in relation to widening participation and those from a care background, across the sector.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

11. Externally Facilitated Review of Effectiveness of Court

The Vice-Principal (Governance) & University Secretary spoke to the report which set out the detail of the externally facilitated review of the effectiveness of the Court which, as noted earlier in the meeting, was being supported by Ranmore Consulting.

Members were reminded that a self evaluation questionnaire had been circulated and invited those still to complete to do so by 30th April. Feedback from the questionnaires would be used to inform discussion at initial development engagement sessions and the identification of emerging key themes which would be explored further at Group sessions held during June and July.

Initial findings from the review would be presented to Court at its June meeting with the final report planned for the Court Development Day in September.

The remainder of the report was noted for information.

12. Schedule of Meeting Dates – AY 2025-2026

Dates of meeting of Court and Committees for the 2025-2026 academic session were noted for information.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

Loudon, Alison
23/04/2025 12:37:10

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Present: Ms K Allum (Chair)
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Mr R Doherty
Mr A Gubbay (MS Teams)
Ms M Kennedy
Professor R MacIntosh
Professor D MacLean
Mr A Miller
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Mr C Morgan (MS Teams)
Mr K Murdoch (MS Teams)
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Ms R Simpson
Mr H Stolkin (MS Teams)

In attendance: Professor R Cragg
Mr A MacIver
Ms D McMillan
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3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising other than those contained elsewhere in the agenda.

4. **Determination of Any Other Business**

No additional items of business had been notified.

5. **Chair's Statement**

On behalf of Court, the Chair congratulated the Principal & Vice-Chancellor on his appointment as Convenor of Universities Scotland.

The Chair referenced various communications and issues raised, particularly in relation to the ongoing Organisational Change Project. In the interests of transparency and to ensure that members were fully briefed on these and other issues being raised, discussion would be taken as part of the Principal & Vice-Chancellor's Report when members would have the opportunity to ask questions.

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There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed.