EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COURT 2025

Purpose, Process, Priority Actions & Delivery Planning

Dr Tom Kennie & John Britton

4th September, 2025

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST of SCOTLAND

CONTENTS

ranmore

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of an externally facilitated review of the effectiveness of the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) Court, carried out by Ranmore Consulting during the 2024/25 academic year. The review was conducted in line with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2023), which requires governing bodies to undertake an externally facilitated effectiveness review at least every five years. Our approach combined document review, meeting observations, stakeholder interviews, and a Court-wide self-evaluation questionnaire.

We find that the University Court is operating effectively, in line with the principles and expectations of the Scottish Code. It is discharging its responsibilities with diligence, integrity, and a clear commitment to continuous improvement. A strong culture of openness, collegiality and reflection has been fostered under the leadership of the Chair of Court, supported by the Principal & Vice-Chancellor, and the Vice-Principal (Governance) and University Secretary and her team.

Court members are appropriately engaged in strategic issues, with opportunities to test, challenge and influence institutional direction. The Court's approval of the new UWS Strategy 2030 was accompanied by highly effective strategic briefing sessions and discussion. Members demonstrated a clear grasp of the university's mission, challenges, and values, particularly in relation to widening access and social inclusion.

There is a mature and respectful culture in Court meetings. Members contribute thoughtfully, and hybrid participation is effectively managed. While some further support for newer members and those in staff or student roles may be beneficial, efforts are already being made to encourage all voices and perspectives. The CPD and development offer is well-considered and evolving, including a comprehensive induction, regular CPD sessions, and an annual development event.

We identified a small number of developmental opportunities to support even greater alignment with the Code.

Overall, we commend the University for its thoughtful, transparent, and enhancement-led approach to governance. This review has taken place at a time of considerable change and challenge, and the way in which Court has engaged with this review is testament to its strong ethos and commitment to effective oversight. The University Court of UWS is well-positioned to continue its important role in supporting and stewarding the University through the next phase of its development.

1. Introduction and Report Structure

This report presents the findings of an independent review of the effectiveness of the Court of the University of the West of Scotland. The process was conducted between March and August 2025 by Dr Tom Kennie and John Britton of Ranmore Consulting.

The report is structured to provide a clear and accessible overview of the evidence gathered, the conclusions reached, and the developmental opportunities identified. Following an executive summary, Section 2 sets out the areas of focus established in the original brief and introduces the framework used to assess governance effectiveness. Section 3 outlines the methodology employed, while Section 4 summarises the outcomes of the review, including reflections on progress since the previous effectiveness review, an assessment of current effectiveness, and a set of proposed priority actions for the future. Section 5 provides an outline phased implementation plan, and Section 6 aligns the evidence to the specific areas set out in the original brief. The report concludes in Section 7 with closing observations.

Whilst this report is focused on the effectiveness of Court, in parallel we have conducted a review of and reported on the effectiveness of Senate. Our review of Senate found that the University Senate is operating effectively, in line with the principles and expectations of the Scottish Code.

2. Areas of Focus and High Performance

In this section we set out the areas of focus in your original brief for this effectiveness review. The 8 areas of focus are summarised below in section 2.1. We then include a short overview of the framework we used to explore these areas of interest during the engagement sessions.

2.1 Summary of the Original Brief

To consider and confirm/agree recommendations on:

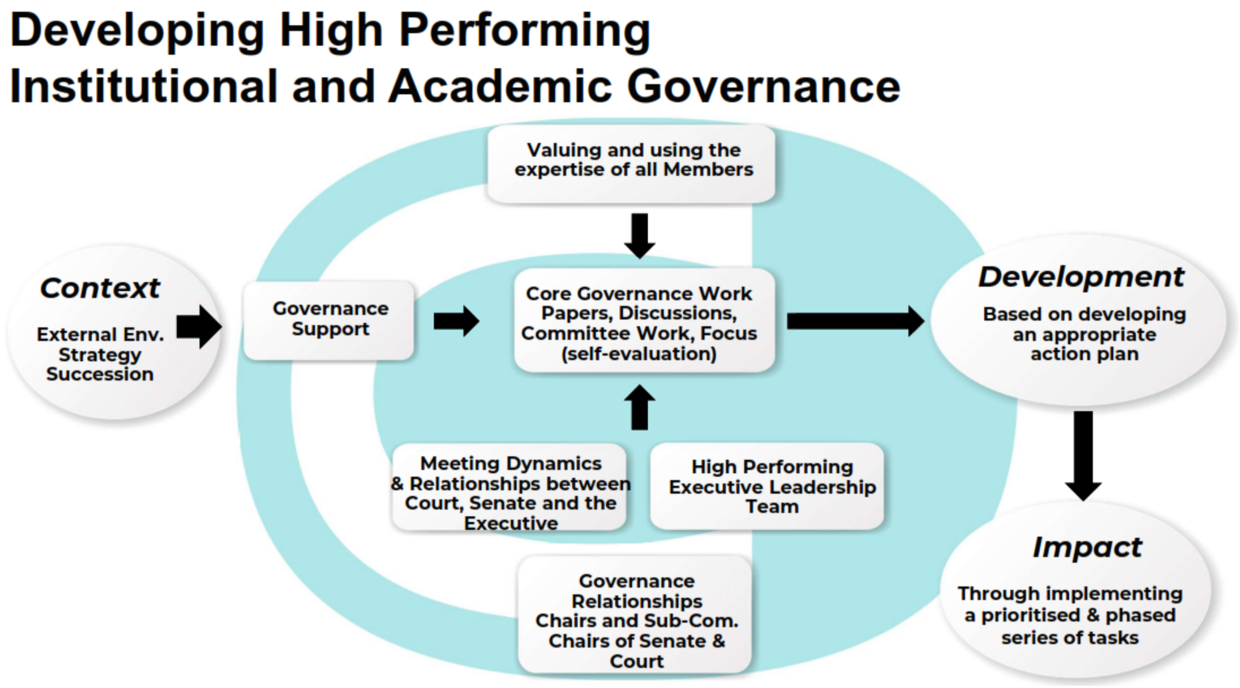
Element	Theme
C1	The extent to which the Court is keeping ***its own effectiveness under regular review and actively pursues an enhancement-led approach*** and to support the Court in identifying clear objectives and targets for further enhancement through this review process.
C2	The extent to which the Court meets its responsibilities, ***supports and challenges VCE on the delivery of the Strategic Plan***, monitors institutional performance and ***understands the challenges and opportunities for UWS at global, national and local levels.***
C3	The extent to which the arrangements for Court meetings (in-person/hybrid/remote), the chairing approach and ***member behaviours contribute to an effective and positive board culture*** and a successful

Element	Theme
	relationship between Court and VCE which ***supports constructive and robust debate and challenge***, holding the Vice Chancellor and their Executive to account, and with appropriate and clear boundaries between management and governance.
C4	How far Court is ***properly supported by the University*** to conduct its business and meet its responsibilities through the provision of high-quality papers, reports and presentations for meetings, guidance and reference points including handbooks and standing orders which are kept up to date and made available to Court members.
C5	The extent to which ***members of Court understand their role and responsibilities***, and are supported in this by the University through the appointment process; induction; CPD and personal development opportunities, along with connectivity with stakeholder groups.
C6	The extent to which ***Court members understand and engage with the Senate and its oversight of the academic work of the University*** and also more generally with the wider University to enhance their understanding and knowledge of UWS, its Schools/Departments/Staff and Students and other stakeholders through attendance at UWS events and graduations.
C7	Whether the ***structure and composition of the sub-Committees of Court are effective*** in supporting the Court in meeting its responsibilities.
C8	Whether the balance of ***diversity, skills and experience on Court is appropriate*** to ensure the overall effectiveness of Court and to foster stakeholder confidence.

We will return to these areas of focus in section 6 where we will link the different areas for priority action to the areas of interest as set out above.

2.2 Characteristics of a High Performance Governance System

Based on our experience of reviewing institutional governance systems in higher education combined with our review of the work of Court at UWS we developed and used the framework below to guide the developmentally based methodological approach we subsequently co-created with you and set out in section 3.



3. Methodology and Process

In the original specification for the project you provided guidance on your preferred methodological approach as follows;

- *The external consultant appointed to support the Court in this work should ….propose innovative, cost-efficient and time-effective mechanisms to engage with the reflection which will have been undertaken by Court and use appropriate additional mechanisms to engage with the Court during the review process which will add further value to the exercise.*
- *While ensuring governance standards are being maintained, the Review in 2025 should be approached with a developmental lens and in the context of the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.*

On the basis of this helpful guidance (which very much aligned with our preferred approach) and our review of the extensive suite of documents which you have developed to guide and inform the workings of Court (and Senate) we co-created, with input from the C&SO, a tailored self evaluation questionnaire (SEQ). This was subsequently distributed to members of Court and on the basis of the responses received a summary of the data and comments was produced for internal consideration.

Building on the data collection exercise, we also undertook a number of on-line group development sessions. These were designed to be interactive and engaging and enable members to provide further insights from the emerging themes from the SEQ.

In April 2025, the UK Government published its *Cyber Governance Code of Practice*, setting out clear expectations for how organisational boards should oversee and manage cyber risk. The Code emphasises that cyber security is a core governance responsibility, not solely a technical issue, and outlines principles for leadership, risk management, and assurance. For university governing bodies such as the Court of the University of the West of Scotland—particularly in light of the significant cyber attack the institution experienced in 2023—this new Code provides a timely and authoritative framework to strengthen oversight, embed resilience, and support strategic recovery efforts. We reference it in our Priority Areas for Future Action.

In June 2025, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) published the *Gillies Report*, an independent investigation led by Professor Pamela Gillies CBE FRSE and supported by BDO LLP. Commissioned in November 2024, the review was tasked with examining the precise causes and contributory factors behind the University of Dundee's sudden and severe financial deterioration. Its scope included internal financial management, governance, reporting practices, decision-making frameworks, and the university's leadership culture from August 2021 onward. The findings, published on 19 June 2025, concluded that the university's collapse stemmed from avoidable internal flaws—chiefly poor financial management, deficient reporting and oversight, weak governance by the Court, and a hierarchical culture that discouraged challenge—distinct from wider sector pressures.

The Gillies review observed that the *Scottish Code* and the Scottish Funding Council's *Financial Memorandum* are fit for purpose, but that the university failed to comply with the requirements laid out in both documents.

The Gillies report identifies 'lessons learned for the wider sector', the vast majority of which were already areas of scrutiny in this review. Its final observation is that 'a values-led university culture which privileges transparency and accountability is likely to support evidence-based collaborative decision making, integrity and openness to challenge and debate'. We viewed much evidence of this in our engagements with Court and Senate members. To build on this we propose one further process in the 'priorities for action' section of this document.

We should note that the OSCR (the Scottish Charity Regulator) and Scottish Funding Council responses to the Gillies Report were not yet available at the time that this report was concluded and likely to include further steers regarding governance within the sector which will influence the way that the recommendations from this report are taken forward.

4. Proposed Priority Areas for Future Action

We outline below a suite of priority areas for action which collectively will contribute to further enhancement of the effectiveness of Court during the forthcoming 5 years.

These are structured into four sub-sets which appropriately recognise many areas of existing strength and work in progress (Sections 1 and 2) as well as some further areas which are more strategic and developmental (sections 3 and 4).

Our desire is to be comprehensive in nature and we are well aware of the need to create a balanced suite of proposals for consideration. The overall package below should be viewed holistically and considered for action over at least the next 1-3 years. Some elements will be concluded and confirmed in the next 6 months, others will take time to implement and evaluate – and this could take a further 1-2 years (or longer).

Based on the detailed evidence set out in this report, it is our professional judgment that the University of the West of Scotland is meeting the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good

Higher Education Governance. There is strong evidence of an enhancement-led approach, including robust annual self-evaluation processes and a culture of reflection and continuous improvement. Particularly noteworthy are the transparent and well-chaired Court meetings, and the active engagement with institutional strategy, as exemplified in the April 2025 residential session. These practices demonstrate a clear commitment to the values and expectations articulated in the Code.

Our report identifies a small number of areas where practice could be strengthened to better align with the spirit and expectations of the Code. These are not breaches, but rather developmental opportunities.

The core of this external Court effectiveness assessment action plan is developmental in nature. It is focused on 'how' Court discharges its duties and much less about 'what' might be missing or is not currently being fulfilled, which is explored in our detailed findings above. As in all matters of a governance nature, balance is key and by continuing to give attention to the former this will continue to impact on the latter and ensure effectiveness continues to be enhanced.

PART 1 – ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS BY MAINTAINING AREAS OF EXISTING STRENGTH

A. **Board recruitment**. Continue to use innovative approaches to board recruitment.
B. **Reporting and monitoring**. Continue to publish gender data in line with the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018.
C. **Sub-committees**. Maintain and continue to strengthen reporting to Court from sub-committees.
D. **External context**. Continue the sharing of well crafted information, mindful of the audience, regarding the operating environment.
E. **Institutional purpose**. Continue to emphasise and imbue the purpose of the institution throughout the work of, and dialogue within Court
F. **Culture**. Continue good work – existing culture of reflection and enhancement. Digest the *Gillies Review* and consider if there are any outstanding considerations from the lessons learned that could usefully translate to the UWS context.

PART 2 - ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS BASED ON OPERATIONAL ISSUES ARISING FROM REGULAR ANNUAL REVIEWS

A. **Membership**. Consideration is given to how the visibility of how Court members are allocated to committees can be raised, e.g. through a short addition to an existing report on Court membership.
B. **Skills and experience.** Consider split out/separating sector experience and skills when asking Court members about their background, to help simplify interpretation of this data. Simplify the visualisation of Court members skills and experience.
C. **Attendance**. Continue to monitor the attendance of all members and highlight concerns such as low attendance of elected members.
D. **Handbook.** Review the text on trustee liability in the Court Handbook. Consider if consolidating the text on delegated authority in the Court Handbook would aid navigability. List committee chairs.
E. **Papers and preparation**. Remind paper authors of the need for clarity regarding abbreviations and sector terminology.

PART 3 – ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH EXPERIMENTATION AND EVALUATING ADAPTIVE PRACTICES

A. **Transitioning new governors**. Consider supplementary processes to accelerate the process of getting new governors 'up to speed' e.g. through co-option to committees, recruiting individuals already exposed to the university's operating environment and other options such as buddying.
B. **Engagement**. Consider if there are additional opportunities for Court members to strengthen their engagement with staff and the wider student body. Give further consideration to ways to encourage less vocal members.
C. **Timing.** Consider if it may be beneficial to have the formal Court meeting at the end of the April awayday rather than at the start..
D. **Reporting effectiveness**. Review a report to Court which reflects on the actions undertaken and their impact, twelve months after this review has concluded.
E. **Use of Court expertise**. Consider conducting a review of internal and outgoing communications by a group which includes Court members with relevant comms expertise.

PART 4: ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES

A. **Chair transition**. A more expansive focus on the process of transition for the new Chair is developed.
B. **CPD**. CPD to include additional content on university finances and the roles and responsibilities of members in relation to financial sustainability. CPD to be extended to include a session on good mentoring practice. Court and Senate Office to consider using the National Cyber Security Centre's *Board Toolkit*[1] which helps boards to ensure that cyber resilience and risk management are embedded throughout an organisation, including its people, systems, processes and technologies.
C. **Influence**. Consider how to extend the process by which suggestions from Court members for areas of additional oversight can influence CPD, papers and agendas (academic partnerships and spin outs were highlighted as areas that members were interested to explore further).
D. **Senate observation**. Consider if even more value could be gained from the process by which Court members attend Senate meetings.

[1] See e.g. https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/files/Board-Toolkit-101.pdf

4. Phased Implementation Plan

In finalising their report, Ranmore provided an suggested outline framework to guide the implementation of the priority action plans identified in section 4. The following priority action plan was approved by the University Court at its meeting on 26th November 2025.

EFFECTIVENESS OF COURT – PRIORITY ACTION PLAN – 2025-2030

	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Governing Documents	**Court Handbook** • Privacy Statement • OSCR Regulations • Scheme of Delegation	**Court Handbook**	**Court Handbook**	**Court Handbook**	**Court Handbook**
	Update Standing Orders of Court • Rules for Appointment of Chair • Election of Staff Govs • Election of Senate Rep • Appointment of Student Governors		**Standing Orders of Court Formal Review (last reviewed 2023)**		**Code of Practice relating to Operation of Students Union**
	Statement of Primary Responsibilities of Court				
Statutory Reporting	• **OSCR / Court Info** • **Charity Trustee** • **Register of Interests** • **UWS Website Info** • **Financial Statements**	**Annual Updates:** • RoI • Website • Financial Statements **Appointment/Re-Appointment:** • OSCR/Court Info	**Annual Updates:** • RoI • Website • Financial Statements **Appointment/Re-Appointment:** • OSCR/Court Info	**Annual Updates:** • RoI • Website • Fin Statements **Appointment/Re-Appointment:** • OSCR/Court Info	**Annual Updates:** • RoI • Website • Fin Statements **Appointment/Re-Appointment:** • OSCR/Court Info

	Report on Election of New Chair of Court **Report on Compliance with Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018**	• Charity Trustee	• Charity Trustee **Report on Compliance with Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018**	• Charity Trustee	• Charity Trustee **Report on Compliance with Gender Representation on Public boards (Scotland) Act 2018**
Succession Planning	**Skills Analysis** • Review Methodology • Court to Update	**Skills Analysis** Annual Update	**Skills Analysis** Annual Update	**Skills Analysis** Annual Update	**Skills Analysis** Annual Update
	Demography • Review Methodology • Court to Update	**Demography** Appointment & Re-appointment	**Demography** Appointment & Re-appointment	**Demography** Appointment & Re-appointment	**Demography** Appointment & Re-appointment
	Membership • Recruitment of Lay Govs • Chairs of Committees • Sub Committee M'ship • Attendance Monitoring • Role Descriptor	**Keep Under Review**	**Keep Under Review**	**Keep Under Review**	**Keep Under Review**
Induction & Onboarding	**Induction of New Chair**	**Review Role of Court "Buddy"**			
	Induction of New VP (Governance)	**Supplementary Processes to support new governors transitioning**			
	Core Induction Modules • Separate EDI session	**Core Induction**	**Core Induction**	**Core Induction**	**Core Induction**

CPD	**CPD Sessions:** • Role of Senate • Financial Sustainability • External Partnerships & Spin Outs • Observing Senate	Suggested topics sought from members **CPD Sessions:** • Gov – v – Mgt • Stakeholder Mgt • Observing Senate	Suggested topics sought from members **CPD Sessions:** • Mentoring/Buddy • Observing Senate	Suggested topics sought **CPD Sessions:** • Observing Senate	Suggested topics sought from members **CPD Sessions:** • Observing Senate
		Consider how to strengthen engagement with staff and wider student body			
Sub Committees	**Chair & Membership:** • Increase visibility of determination of sub committee m'ship (succession planning) **Reporting:** • Enhanced cover sheets and fuller reporting by Chairs • Finance/Student Numbers – dual reporting to ARC & RPC	**Keep under review**	**Keep under review**	**Keep under review**	**Keep under review**
	Minutes: More use of reflective language and follow up actions **Papers:**	**Keep under review**	**Keep under review**	**Keep under review**	**Keep under review**

Minutes, Papers & Reporting	• Clarity of messaging • External Context / Mindful of audience • Avoid acronyms and sector terminology • Institutional Purpose • Culture **Admincontrol:** Explore enhancements				
Communications	**To Court:** • Ebulletin • University Announcement **From Court:** • Court Highlights	**Review Internal and Outgoing Comms**			
Ongoing Effectiveness Activity	• SEQ • 1-1 meeting with Chair • Standing Item at GNC • Strategic Residential • Annual Report	• SEQ • 1-1 with Chair • GNC • Strat Residential • Annual Report	**Interim Review of External Report** • SEQ • 1-1with Chair • GNC • Strat Residential • Annual Report	• SEQ • 1-1with Chair • GNC • Strat Res • Annual Report	• SEQ • 1-1with Chair • GNC • Strategic Res • Annual Report

6. Summary Review of Court Effectiveness: Overview and Links to Areas for Future Action Over the Next 5 Years

In this penultimate section we return to the areas of focus as set out in section 1 and align the specific areas set out in the original brief.

Element	Theme	Comments on Effectiveness & Connections to Areas for Future Action (Priority Areas 1-4)
C1	The extent to which the Court is keeping ***its own effectiveness under regular review and actively pursues an enhancement-led approach*** and to support the Court in identifying clear objectives and targets for further enhancement through this review process.	There is **strong evidence** that UWS' Court is committed to **ongoing self-evaluation and learning**, aligning well with the enhancement-led expectations of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance. Multiple internal mechanisms – such as **annual self-reflection questionnaires**, **1:1 meetings with the Chair**, and **strategic residential sessions** – support this culture. Awareness of past governance reviews is mixed. Overall, the Court is operating with a proactive, improvement-oriented ethos. **PRIORITY ACTION AREAS** **1D, F, 3D**
C2	The extent to which the Court meets its responsibilities, ***supports and challenges VCE on the delivery of the Strategic Plan***, monitors institutional performance and ***understands the challenges and opportunities for UWS at global, national and local levels.***	Court demonstrates strategic leadership, engaging actively with institutional strategy, performance, and risk in line with the expectations of the *Scottish Code*, which emphasises the governing body's responsibility to set and monitor strategic direction. The two-day April 2025 event enabled informed and reflective debate, with effective challenge to the Executive. While Court generally maintains a strategic orientation, some members note occasional drift into operational territory. Risk and performance oversight is robust, with increasing clarity around sub-committee reporting and assurance. There was variance in understanding of financial sustainability where there was a mix of different member requirements. Members show strong awareness of UWS's strategic priorities, institutional culture, and social mission. **PRIORITY ACTION AREAS** **1C, D, E, 2D, 3A, B, 4B, C**

C3	The extent to which the arrangements for Court meetings (in-person/hybrid/remote), the chairing approach and ***member behaviours contribute to an effective and positive board culture*** and a successful relationship between Court and VCE which ***supports constructive and robust debate and challenge***, holding the Vice Chancellor and their Executive to account, and with appropriate and clear boundaries between management and governance.	The Court demonstrates a constructive, inclusive, and respectful meeting culture, reflecting the expectations of the *Scottish Code*, which emphasises collegiality, openness, and effective challenge. Meetings are well chaired, professionally supported, and attended to a high standard, with respectful engagement and growing confidence in constructive scrutiny. Hybrid participation is well supported, though newer members—especially students and staff—may benefit from stronger mentoring and support to contribute fully. There is a clear understanding of the distinction between governance and management, though periodic CPD could reinforce these boundaries. The Court operates as a cohesive team, with strong Chair–Vice-Chancellor dynamics, and dissenting views are respected and discussed openly when needed. **PRIORITY ACTION AREAS** **1D, E, 3A, B, C**
C4	How far Court is ***properly supported by the University*** to conduct its business and meet its responsibilities through the provision of high-quality papers, reports and presentations for meetings, guidance and reference points including handbooks and standing orders which are kept up to date and made available to Court members.	The Court receives timely, structured information that broadly supports informed, evidence-based decision-making, aligning with the *Scottish Code* emphasis on quality of information and transparency. Papers are improving in clarity and summarisation, though some remain lengthy or assume prior knowledge. Minutes are well-organised, balanced, and reflect robust discussion and decision-making. Decision-making is evidence-informed, particularly by events like the 'State of the Nation' session, though oversight of external partnerships may need clearer lines of assurance. Delegated authority is defined but could be more clearly consolidated. Communication of Court activity to stakeholders is developing, with opportunities for broader engagement and visibility across the University community. **PRIORITY ACTION AREAS** **1D, 2D, E, 3E, 4C**

C5	The extent to which ***members of Court understand their role and responsibilities***, and are supported in this by the University through the appointment process; induction; CPD and personal development opportunities, along with connectivity with stakeholder groups.	The Court demonstrates strong alignment with the *Scottish Code* in ensuring role clarity, ethical conduct, and a culture of continuous development. Transparent and inclusive appointment practices are in place, with effective use of outreach channels to promote diversity. Induction and CPD arrangements are comprehensive, incorporating bespoke elements for different member types and integrated into the governance calendar. The buddy system and annual one-to-ones support personal development. Court members act with integrity and transparency, with no conduct concerns observed. Conflicts of interest are declared and managed appropriately, and key projects, such as the Organisational Change Programme, follow visible governance routes with clear stakeholder engagement, reflecting a commitment to ethical governance and open communication. **PRIORITY ACTION AREAS** **1B, D, E, 2D, 3A, 4B**
C6	The extent to which ***Court members understand and engage with the Senate and its oversight of the academic work of the University*** and also more generally with the wider University to enhance their understanding and knowledge of UWS, its Schools/Departments/Staff and Students and other stakeholders through attendance at UWS events and graduations.	The Court demonstrates a growing commitment to engaging with Senate and the wider University community, as encouraged by the *Scottish Code*. Assurance on academic matters is routed via Senate, with reciprocal observer arrangements in place, **though Court members' understanding of Senate's role could be further strengthened**. Court visibility is enhanced through campus-based meetings and participation in strategic events. Engagement with staff and students beyond formal roles is developing. Members are committed to UWS's values, and Court culture reflects openness and collegiality. There is support for further developing Court visibility and public accountability. **PRIORITY ACTION AREAS** **1E, 3E, 4C, D**

C7	Whether the ***structure and composition of the sub-Committees of Court are effective*** in supporting the Court in meeting its responsibilities.	The Court's responsibilities are clearly articulated in the 2024/25 Court Handbook, reflecting the *Scottish Code* expectation for clarity of governance roles. Most Court members report a clear understanding of their responsibilities, and the Statement of Primary Responsibilities is under review. Sub-committees play a key role in supporting Court functions, though the 2024 survey indicated that reporting from sub-committees could be more robust. In response, Court has introduced enhanced cover sheets and expects Committee Chairs to provide fuller verbal reports, occasionally supplemented by relevant VCE input. This reflects a positive, enhancement-led approach to strengthening assurance, transparency, and the effective integration of sub-committee activity within the wider Court governance framework. **PRIORITY ACTION AREAS** **1C, 2A, B**
C8	Whether the balance of ***diversity, skills and experience on Court is appropriate*** to ensure the overall effectiveness of Court and to foster stakeholder confidence.	Overall, the Court demonstrates commitment to inclusive and skilled membership, with opportunities to strengthen alignment and succession planning. Succession planning is active, with clear arrangements in place for appointing a new Chair in 2026. Age and gender diversity are evident, and hybrid meetings have broadened participation. The annually updated skills matrix supports appointments, though its complexity could be refined to better highlight expertise and address potential biases in self-assessment. Enhancements in these areas could better align expertise with committee roles. Short tenures for staff and student members may limit their effectiveness, suggesting a need for improved induction, mentoring, or consideration of prior experience. While Court makes good use of members' skills, stronger development for lay members in understanding HE sector complexities is desirable. **PRIORITY ACTION AREAS** **1A, B, 2B, 3A, B, 4A, C**

7. Concluding Comments

In concluding our review, we commend the University of the West of Scotland for the open, reflective, and enhancement-focused approach it has taken throughout this process. Court members and the executive alike have engaged with candour and purpose, creating the conditions for a robust examination of governance practice.

We are pleased to confirm that the University is not only compliant with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance, but also demonstrates a clear commitment to its underlying ethos of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. We are especially grateful to those who supported our work. Their professionalism, responsiveness, and clarity were critical in enabling the effectiveness of this review.