

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF COURT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026

Under the terms of the University of the West of Scotland Order of Council 2019, the Court is the governing body of the University with powers to conduct the affairs of the University and carry out and promote its objects. In particular, the Court will ensure the effective management of the University; plan its strategic direction and plan its future development in order to advance the objects of the University. The membership of Court comprises a majority of lay members with ex-officio and elected staff and student members. The responsibilities of the Court are set out in its [Statement of Primary Responsibilities](#).

The Scottish Code of Good HE Governance (2023) requires the Court to review its effectiveness regularly and to report publicly on the results of effectiveness reviews and associated actions. The University Court keeps its own effectiveness under review in a variety of ways. A review of the effectiveness of the Court is a standing item at meetings of the Governance & Nominations Committee.

Members of Court are invited to complete a self evaluation questionnaire which is used to inform their 1-1 discussion with the Chair. This questionnaire seeks feedback from members on their personal experience as a member of Court and identifies any additional training needs. Meetings were held with the outgoing Chair with feedback provided to the new Chair as part of the induction programme.

As part of ongoing CPD activity, a Court Development Day was held in September 2025. The programme for this event built on previous events and included sessions with the external consultants on the externally facilitated review of Court, a presentation from a Dean of School, student roundtable discussion and lightning talks covering the National Student Survey and the Student Advice & Development and Registry functions.

Following an election process, the new Chair of Court started on 1st February 2026. A detailed programme of events was developed to support induction and onboarding which included meetings with the outgoing Chair, the University Chancellor, the Principal & Vice-Chancellor and with each member of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive on their Portfolio and their reporting/interactions with Court. Individual meetings with members of Court are also in progress.

Following a recruitment exercise, four new lay Governors also joined the Court in March and April 2026. CPD / Information Sessions were held on the same day as formal meetings covering financial sustainability, the role of the Senate and strategic goals. Members of Court regularly attend meetings of Senate as observers and are encouraged to attend graduation ceremonies and other events to increase their knowledge and understanding of UWS.

A range of activity was progressed during the year including:

- Election of New Chair of Court
- Revised Statement of Primary Responsibilities of Court
- Updates to Standing of Court
- Refresh of Court Handbook
- Refresh of Equality & Diversity Monitoring approach
- Refresh of Skills Analysis approach and methodology
- Refresh of Governor Information Form and Charity Trustee Declaration
- Review of lessons learned from the *Gillies* Report as they relate to UWS

A structured reflective discussion on the overall effectiveness of the Court was held as part of the April 2026 Strategic Residential Event. This session focused on the range of ways in which the Court assesses its effectiveness and activity during the year to enhance effectiveness.

Further enhancements to be taken forward in the next academic year include a review of the role descriptor for a member of Court, a review of sub-Committee structures, a refresh of induction arrangements and opportunities for succession planning. The opportunity will also be taken to enhance use of the Board portal to ensure transparency and visibility of all member of Court to University business.

At its meeting on 21st June 2026, the University Court confirmed assurance in its effectiveness and in meeting the terms of its Statement of Primary Responsibilities.

Court Office
June 2026