

MEMBERSHIP OF COURT

University of the West of Scotland has been delivering higher education since 1897. Our reach across the south and west of Scotland, together with our London campus, means UWS is a significant force in global knowledge creation and innovation and a leading provider of undergraduate, postgraduate and research degree education. Our degrees provide students with a transformational experience resulting in highly sought-after graduates in world-leading sectors, industries and businesses.

About the Court

The Court is the governing body of UWS and is responsible for determining the strategic direction and future development of the University underpinned by strong governance and integrity. It also plays a critical role in fostering an environment where our goals are achieved, and learners succeed. Our values and principles are fundamental to everything we do and Court holds themselves and others to account on living and breathing these values. The Court executes the financial responsibilities of the University and has a particular duty to observe the highest standards of corporate governance. The UWS Court operates in alignment with the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance and the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

The Court is composed of up to twenty-five appointed and elected governors reflecting a variety of interests and experience, and having regard to the balance of skills, attributes and experience required to enable the Court to function effectively. Up to 15 members are lay members from outside the University and the internal members are staff and students.

The Court is chaired by Kate Allum and the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor James A. Miller FRSE, is a member of the Court.

Further information is available at <https://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/governance/court/>

The Role

Court members should be able to evidence a commitment to Higher Education and an enthusiasm for the values and truths of the University of the West of Scotland as well as a commitment to Equality & Diversity.

Our Court members are:

- ambitious for our University
- experienced strategic thinkers who identify opportunities for development and support positive change
- skilled in corporate governance
- diverse in background and perspectives

Induction and CPD for Court members is provided as part of a programme of development and effectiveness monitoring.

We estimate the time commitment for this role is approximately 10-15 days per annum. The Court normally meets 4 times a year with meetings usually taking place at one of the University's campuses in November, February, April (2 days) and June, and a strategic themed event usually takes place in September.

Following the induction period there will be an opportunity to support the work of the Court through its sub-committees. Other engagements with students and staff take place throughout the year including graduations, student showcases and corporate events.

The University is a Scottish Charity and members of Court are its trustees: applicants must be able to meet the requirements of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Applicants will be asked to confirm at the outset that they are eligible* for such an appointment.

Staff members are elected for an initial three-year period.

Members of Court will:

1. Engage positively in the meetings and activities of the Court to ensure the Court fulfils its responsibilities
2. Act as a “critical friend,” to both challenge and support the University to develop, implement and monitor the delivery of the University’s Strategic Plan
3. Exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the University as a whole, rather than as a representative of any constituency
4. Operate effectively as a team member within the Court and work collaboratively with lay, staff and student members to achieve consensus
5. Protect the reputation and values of the University
6. Act as an ambassador for the University, promoting its activities in the wider community
7. Submit an annual Register of Interests return which is made available for public scrutiny
8. Participate in the induction, CPD and Court effectiveness programmes.

Competencies and Behaviours

1. An understanding of the role of non-executive directors is essential
2. Proven interpersonal and communication skills, including critical listening, the ability to question intelligently and debate constructively; challenge rigorously and decide dispassionately
3. A commitment to high standards of governance and probity and an understanding of the need to operate in accordance with the accepted standards of behaviour in public life
4. Skilled in analysing complex strategic and financial proposals with the confidence to challenge and hold to account the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Group and other senior officers
5. Experienced strategic thinkers in a context relevant to HE
6. The ability to work within a framework of collective decision-making in the best interests of the University and an understanding of the need to balance conflicting factors and make objective decisions
7. An appreciation of the importance of confidentiality
8. Members must commit to attending most meetings each year, participating in discussions and decision making across the whole range of Court responsibilities

***Persons not appointable as Lay Governors**

The appointment of certain individuals as lay governors could compromise effective good governance and so they would not normally be considered for membership. This may be due to:

- Significant and/or recurrent conflict of interests
- A lack of wider experience, expertise or demonstrable independence
- Persons, however eminent in public life, who are unable or unwilling to attend the main meetings of Court or devote appropriate time to Court business.

Please note that the UWS Constitution does not allow the appointment of current staff or students as lay governors.

UWS Court Office

May 2025