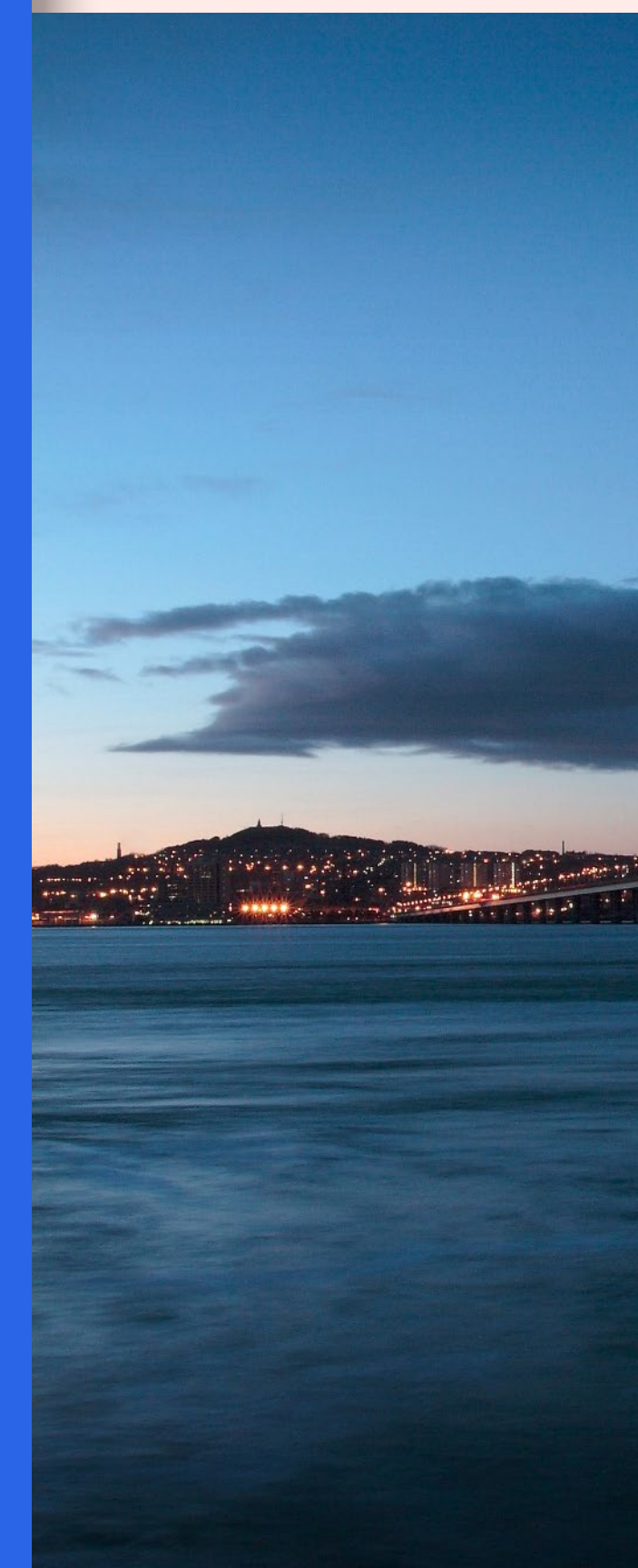


University Court Lay member Application Pack





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Introduction

The University of Dundee is an extraordinary university, with outstanding strengths in teaching and research, and a setting within a city on the beautiful banks of the River Tay.

We have a mission, to transform lives locally and globally, through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge. Vital to that, and ensuring that excellence is maintained in a thriving, sustainable institution, is the University Court, our governing body.

We are in a position where we are recovering from the institutional shock of a governance and financial crisis, caused in part by issues affecting the rest of the higher education sector in the UK but also by problems which were specific to Dundee. The past 18 months has been a challenging time for our entire community and a period of significant and necessary change.

We have received extraordinary support from the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Government to ensure our survival. Now we strive towards long-term sustainability, to support our continued excellence, and we are looking to recruit new lay members of Court, individuals who can contribute to the good governance of this great institution.

The University celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2027. You can help set us on course for many more decades of excellence.

We are an inclusive university and look forward to receiving applications from a diverse range of backgrounds.

You will find out more about the role and the University in this pack.

Esther Robertson, Chair of Court





About the University of Dundee

Granted Royal Charter in 1967, the University of Dundee is approaching its 60th year as an independent university.

Renowned for excellence in teaching, particularly for our wide range of professional programmes, the University of Dundee also has an enviable global reputation for the quality and impact of our research. We play a key role in the academic, civic, cultural and economic life of the city and region and are very proud of our position not just as a key player but part of the physical and social fabric of Dundee.

The University is not just an educator, but a neighbour, employer, connector and cultural instigator.

Our staff and students choose to work and study in Dundee because Dundee is a creative, vibrant, and hugely welcoming city with a strong spirit of discovery.





About the University of Dundee

Teaching

The University of Dundee has a long and illustrious history of sending more graduates to the professions than any other Scottish university and is a leading university for shaping the professional life of Scotland and the wider world. Fifty percent of our current students, a much higher proportion than in most research-intensive universities, are studying to enter professions such as medicine, law, nursing, dentistry, engineering, social work, architecture, psychology, business, forensic science and teaching and we are second in Scotland for graduate prospects (The Guardian University Guide 2026).

We are also renowned for the quality of our teaching in Art & Design, with Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design top 10 for Art & Design in the UK (The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026).

Research

Research and innovation lie at the heart of the University of Dundee's mission to transform lives. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), the main quality assessment of research across the UK's Higher Education sector, 84 per cent of our research was assessed as 'world leading' or 'internationally excellent'. Across two REFs, and for the past 14 years, our world-renowned School of Life Sciences has been ranked #1 in the UK for Biological Sciences. From finding cures for neglected diseases to addressing the climate crisis, we harness research excellence to confront the world's most urgent issues.

Enterprise

The University has been a dynamic powerhouse of innovation, enterprise and knowledge exchange in the city of Dundee for decades. In 2023, we were the top University in the UK for spinouts (Octopus Ventures, 2023). Our new Life Sciences Innovation Hub, which opened in 2025, is a key part of the Tay Cities Biomedical Cluster project, and is fostering the next generation of start-up and spin out successes in Health and Life Sciences, in line with Scotland's National Innovation Strategy.





Our university by the numbers

No. 23
in the UK

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026

18,000
students

No. 1

Medicine in Scotland

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026

Bioengineering and Engineering Science in the UK

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026

Dentistry in the UK

The Complete University Guide 2026

Research Quality in the UK

- **Biological Sciences**
- **Biomedical Sciences**

The Complete University Guide 2026

- **Largest teaching hospital in the UK**
- **First city in the world to eradicate Hep C**
Beating the WHO target by 10 years
- **Four drug compounds in clinical development**
Drug Discovery Unit

No. 2

Medicine in the UK

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026

Animation in the UK

The Guardian University Guide 2026

Graduate prospects in Scotland

The Complete University Guide 2026

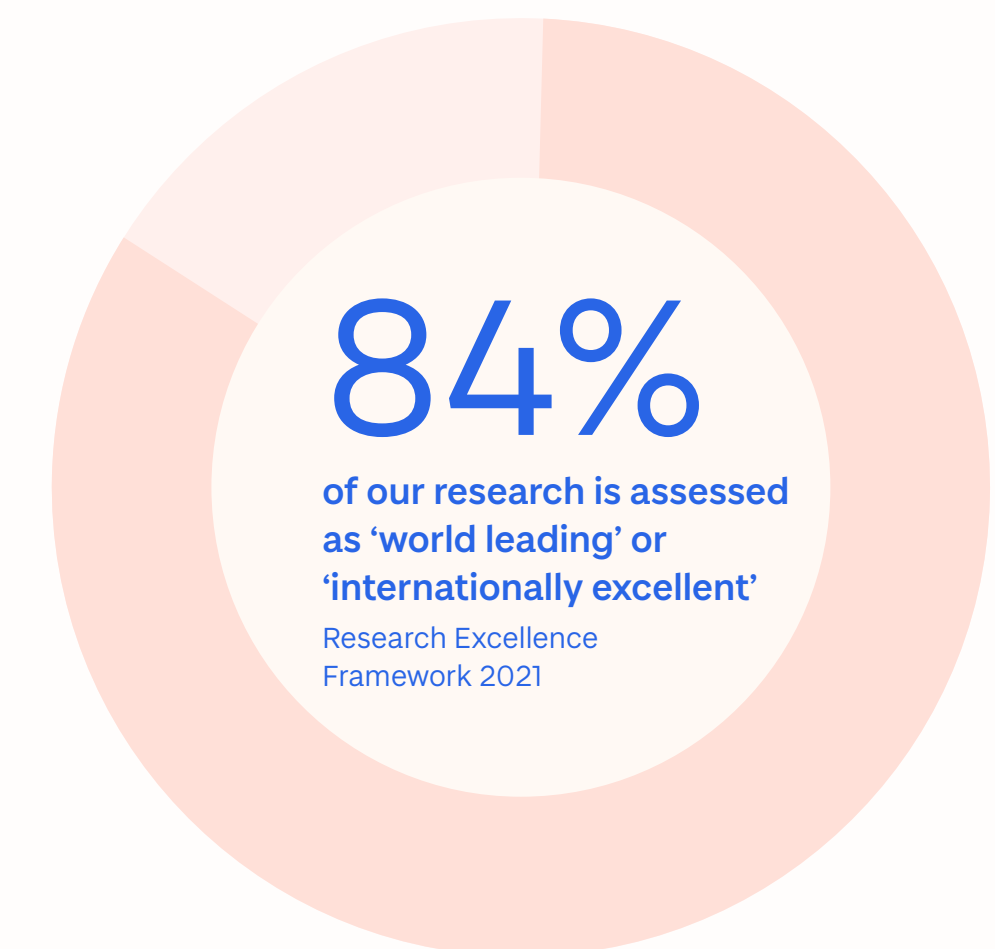
Forensic Science in the UK

The Complete University Guide 2026

Top 20

for Law in the UK

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2026





The University Court

The University Court is the governing body of the University and is responsible for overseeing the institution's activities, agreeing its vision and future strategic direction, and ensuring an environment that allows the University to achieve its objectives and all students and learners to reach their full potential.

The Court appoints the Principal and Vice Chancellor; approves the University budget and strategy, as well as the financial, human resources, estates and other operational plans which underpin their successful delivery; and monitors the University's performance in achieving its goals. The Court is responsible for all regulatory compliance, and for establishing and monitoring effective systems of internal control. The Court is accountable to the Scottish Funding Council for the proper use of public funds.

In addition, the Court's core responsibilities include being responsive to the interests of staff, students and other stakeholders, and ensuring the University adheres to requirements set by public bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC), the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

The Court has 24 members in total, 14 of whom are lay members and 10 of whom are non-lay members. The individual membership categories are currently as follows:

Lay members (14 members)

- Chair
- Deputy Chair
- Rector (or a nominated assessor)
- One member nominated by Dundee City Council Executive
- Ten co-opted lay members

Non-lay members (10 members)

- Principal and Vice Chancellor
- Dundee University Students' Association President
- Independent student member nominated by the Students' Association
- One member of academic staff nominated by the Trade Unions
- One member of non-academic staff nominated by the Trade Unions
- Three Senate Assessors (elected by the Senate)
- Two Staff Council Assessors (elected by the Staff Council)

Further information on current members of the Court, including the Skills Matrix are available on the Court Website:

dundee.ac.uk/corporate-information/court

Committees of Court comprise Finance and Policy, Audit & Risk, Governance & Nominations, People & Organisational Development, Remuneration, Risk Assurance Group and Welfare & Ethical Use of Animals.



The role

Lay members are drawn from outside the University. They can be from any background; from public, private or voluntary sectors, and will have an understanding of or experience in the governance of such organisations

As the University emerges from a period of significant financial challenge and upheaval our Court members will play a critical role in driving forward an agenda for change, overseeing the implementation of a Strategy to Recovery and a new operating model, creating a pathway to financial sustainability and ensuring good governance.

Our ideal candidate will combine expert knowledge of strategic management with a proven track record of contributing to effective, collective decision-making; good governance; and protecting and upholding the principles of good conduct as defined by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

We are particularly looking for candidates who can bring financial acumen, sound understanding of good governance and a breadth of experience in complex organisations. They will have an interest in higher education, and an empathy with the mission, vision and objectives of an ambitious University wanting to change the lives of its students and the wider world.





The role

The University of Dundee is a registered charity and as a charity trustee the role holder must ensure that the charity is administered effectively, and is able to account for its activities in accordance with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and as set out in the guidance from the Office from the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Common sense, an open mind and the ability to engage with complex strategic issues are needed, along with the ability to question intelligently and challenge constructively. Understanding the distinction between governance and executive management is key to the role of the Court member.

All applicants should demonstrate a constructive approach to interpersonal relationships within the Court structure, a commitment to equality and diversity, and an understanding that this is a collaborative role. Experience or a background in the strategic management or governance of large organisations would be beneficial but should not deter interested individuals from applying.

Training is given as part of the role.

Commitment

The Court meets five times a year. These meetings normally take place on a Tuesday afternoon in September, November, February, April and June and generally last between two and three hours. It would be expected that Court members attend an annual retreat encompassing one afternoon and the following day, at which they have the opportunity to discuss issues affecting the University in more detail than is possible at regular Court meetings.

Members can take a detailed view of long-term strategic decisions and the future direction of the University. It is also an opportunity for members to build relationships and a rapport with colleagues in an informal setting. Members of the Court are expected to attend all meetings of University Court in person where possible.

Additionally, all members of Court should expect to be invited to play a role on at least one of the committees of Court. These are the Audit and Risk Committee, the Finance and Policy Committee, the Governance and Nominations Committee, the People and Organisational Development Committee and the Remuneration Committee.

The Finance and Policy Committee normally meets five times a year, while the Remuneration Committee meets at least twice and the remainder meet at least four times a year.

The Governance and Nominations Committee makes recommendations to Court on the appropriate memberships of each of these committees, based on the relevant skills and experience of Court members. Members of committees are expected to attend all meetings.

From time to time, the Court establishes smaller working groups/additional sub-committees, and Court members are also on occasion invited to take part in staff appointments, appeals and grievance panels.

All Court members are expected to play a full role in debates and discussions at Court. Papers for Court meetings are normally dispatched one week in advance of each Court or Committee meeting, and members are required to ensure they are well prepared for each meeting.



Criteria for appointment

The Governance and Nominations Committee has set the following criteria for membership of the Court:

- Members should act as exemplars of the 'Nine Principles of Public Life in Scotland': selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership, public service, and respect
 - Candidates must confirm that they are not disqualified from acting as a Charity Trustee in accordance with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and as set out in the guidance from the Office from the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).
 - An interest in and empathy with the University and its learning and teaching and research vision
 - Understanding of financial planning, reporting and budgetary processes.
 - A readiness to develop an understanding of the University's internal structure and culture and its relationships with other agencies and funders
- A willingness and capacity to act as an ambassador for the University
 - A commitment to the time available to attend meetings, which for Court involves a commitment that normally runs to 12-16 days per year
 - Critical objectivity and the ability to question intelligently, challenge constructively and influence decision making
 - The ability to contribute to the Court's strategic thinking and the management of its performance
 - The ability to build relationships with other Court members and with the senior management of the University and to interact effectively with both.

Eligibility

Candidates for appointment as a co-opted (lay) member of Court must not be employed by the University nor be a full-time student of this or any other university.

Additionally, they must also not have been employed by or been a student of the University of Dundee within the four years preceding the start of their term.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We welcome applications from all who meet the criteria, and particularly encourage those from groups that experience under-representation in our society.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for anyone with a disability who may require them.



Terms of appointment

Appointments are made for a period of four years in the first instance, which may be renewable for a further period of four years.

Remuneration and Expenses

Court members are not paid for the work that they do.

However, lay members are reimbursed for reasonable, legitimate travel expenses for travel within the UK and any other necessary costs incurred in attending a meeting. This includes care costs of dependents

Further Information

A set of documents and links providing further information on the role and the process are available from the following website:
dundee.ac.uk/governance/university/court

Any enquiries regarding the role may be made via email to courtadmin@dundee.ac.uk



How to apply

Interested parties are invited to submit a curriculum vitae and covering letter. They should explain why they feel they meet the criteria set out above and how they would be successful in the role.

The University of Dundee requests that all candidates complete and submit an Equality Monitoring Form (please ask for further details).

Completed applications should be sent to **CourtLayMemberRecruitment@dundee.ac.uk**

Applications should be submitted by Tuesday 30 June at noon.

The appointing committee will review all applications and determine which of them appear to meet the criteria for the role as set out above.

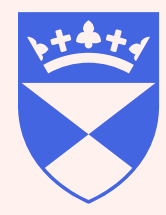
Those applicants shortlisted will be invited for interview. Interviews are likely to take place in late July.

For a conversation in confidence please contact University Secretary, Dr Hulda Sveinsdottir: **hsveinsdottir001@dundee.ac.uk**

Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats please contact Clerk to Court Dr Alison Ramsay: **aramsay002@dundee.ac.uk**

Data Protection and Privacy

Please see the University of Dundee's Privacy Policy: dundee.ac.uk/information-governance/data-protection



University
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