

## UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

### UNIVERSITY COURT

A meeting of the University Court was held at 2pm on 10 December 2025 *via* Microsoft Teams.

Present: Esther Robertson (Chair);  
Alain Bainbridge;  
Nicholas Buckworth;  
Tánaiste Custance;  
Professor Susan Kinnear;  
Noel Lawlor;  
Claire Martin;  
Professor Rory McCrimmon;  
Ron Mobed;  
Dr Andrea Mohan;  
Dr Carlo Morelli;  
Emma Preston;  
Professor Nigel Seaton;  
Jay Surti;  
Dr Martine van Ittersum; and  
Irene Wilson

In Attendance: Kirsteen Campbell (Interim Chief Operating Officer);  
Elise Gallagher (Director of People);  
Lee Hamill (Interim Director of Finance);  
Philip Henry (Interim University Secretary);  
Richard Maconachie (SFC)(*qua* observer);  
Dr Alison Ramsay (Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance)); and  
Louise Soutar (Head of Principal's Office and VC's Chief of Staff)

Apologies: Maggie Chapman, Gregory Colgan, Marcus Flucker, Dr Annie Ingram, Dr Ian Mair, Amina Shah, Bishop Andrew Swift and Margo Williamson.

#### 291. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR OF COURT

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting, which had been convened at short notice in order to enable a full discussion of the proposed terms for Voluntary Redundancy for a small number of staff. Ms Robertson thanked members for their ongoing commitment to the University and noted that this would be the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of Court held during 2025. The Court commended the Senior Policy Officer (Corporate Governance) and her team for their efforts in supporting the work of the governing body during this difficult time.

#### 292. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair invited members to declare if they had, or could be perceived to have, any conflicts of interest in relation to any items on the agenda, beyond those already or previously declared. No new conflicts were declared. The Chair of Court reminded members of their

responsibilities as members of a collective body, regardless of their route onto the Court.

293. **MATTERS ARISING**

The Interim Director of Finance advised the Court that the Financial Update paper presented as Paper D to the meeting of Court on 10 December 2025 had contained an error in relation to the Period 3 Management Accounts. Mr Hamill apprised the Court that a negative movement in forecast revenue between the forecast at Period 2 and Period 3 was due to a recently identified error in relation to the assumptions used in the planning software. This had unfortunately been further compounded by human error.

The root causes had been identified and remediating actions taken to ensure that this could not happen again. Members were advised that the overall impact of this error on the full year forecast versus budget was negligible due to an earlier confirmed revenue upside.

294. **PROPOSED TERMS FOR VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY**

The Director of People introduced the above paper, intended to apprise Court of the proposed terms for Voluntary Redundancy (VR) for a small number of staff. Members were advised that the proposals had been discussed twice by the People & Organisational Development Committee (PODCo), which had endorsed the recommendations to Court for approval. The proposals had been developed with the support of the Finance Directorate and informed by consultation with the Campus Trade Unions after discussion at the University Executive Group (UEG) on multiple occasions during October and November 2025.

Ms Gallagher reminded the Court that the University was committed to reducing staffing levels through voluntary means wherever possible but that there remained a need for further reductions in order to reduce recurring operating costs. While Voluntary Severance (VS) could be applied more generally to reduce costs without directly eliminating specific roles, VR was used when a specific role was no longer required by the employer. Both VS and VR involved the employee voluntarily agreeing to leave the organization where compulsory redundancy was a process whereby the employer identified the staff member to be made redundant, based on objective selection criteria.

Members were advised that UEG had agreed in October 2025 that VR terms should be prepared to facilitate the transition from eight Schools to four Faculties, recognizing that specific governance requirements were entailed when launching VR terms. Following consultation, the UEG and PODCo had recommended to Court that the VR terms as delineated in the paper be approved.

In the course of a lengthy and involved discussion Court considered, *inter alia*, the distinction between VS and VR and were advised that staff members would not be offered VR where an appropriate alternative role existed in the University for which the relevant staff member(s) could apply. Members discussed the relevant merits of both VS and VR, particularly in terms of affordability for the institution.

A number of staff members on Court expressed the view that the proposed VR terms be rejected and requested that the VS terms previously used be reinstated. One member requested that consideration be given to a 25% reduction in pay for all staff in receipt of a salary greater than £100k per annum. The Court was reminded that it was not being asked to approve a VR programme but rather to agree a set of terms which could be offered to staff on a case by case basis where VR was appropriate and the role would no longer exist within the new structure of the University.

The Court proceeded to vote on the proposed VR terms by means of a show of hands. The proposals were approved by a majority vote, with Dr Martine van Ittersum, Dr Carlo Morelli, Emma Preston and Tánaiste Custance requesting that their dissent be formally recorded.

**Resolved:** to approve the proposed Voluntary Redundancy terms by a majority vote.

#### 295. **S25 FUNDING: OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED CONDITIONS**

The Head of the Principal's Office & V-C's Chief of Staff introduced the above paper, intended to provide the Court with a preliminary view from the University Executive Group (UEG) on the proposed Section 25 conditions of funding received from SFC on 26 November 2025. Ms Soutar advised members that the paper contained an overview of the proposed direction of travel in advance of Court receiving more detailed papers for its meeting on 22 December 2025.

Court noted that the preliminary view from UEG was that the Conditions of Funding as indicated in the letter of 26 November 2025 should be accepted, subject to discussion between UEG and SFC around points of accuracy and the potential impact of timelines on the University's going concern status. Members were advised that the UEG further believed that the four 'products' requested by SFC could be delivered by the deadline of 31 December 2025 and should therefore also be accepted.

Court was advised that UEG had met on 9 December to discuss its position and could now confirm the recommendations as contained within the paper. It was therefore proposed that the Court would receive a detailed analysis of the proposed Conditions of Funding, along with a high-level implementation plan, structural change plan, leadership & governance plan and an engagement strategy for consideration at its meeting on 22 December 2025. It would be for the Court to consider at this juncture whether to accept the indicative Conditions of Funding, or any other course of action it deemed appropriate and necessary.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

#### 296. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was declared.

297. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted as 22 December 2025.

Esther Robertson  
Chair of Court  
University of Dundee