WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY COURT?

The Court is the governing body of the University and is responsible for overseeing the institution’s activities, determining its future direction and fostering an environment in which institutional objectives are achieved and the potential of all learners is maximised. Subject to the Charter and Statutes of the University, the Court takes all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the institution. The Senate is responsible for the academic work of the University, subject to the general control and approval of the Court.

The Court approves the University’s strategic plans, as well as financial, human resources, estates, and other operational strategies which underpin them, and monitors the University’s performance in achieving its goals. The governing body is also responsible to the Scottish Funding Council for the proper use of public funds and for establishing and monitoring effective systems of internal control and accountability.

The Principal & Vice-Chancellor is the chief executive and accountable officer for the University, with operational responsibility for academic affairs and the effective management of University services. He chairs a University Executive Group which includes the Vice-Principals and other senior officers. There are four Vice-Principals who provide institutional leadership across our Learning & Teaching, Internationalisation, Research, Knowledge Exchange, Wider Impact, and academic management activities.

There is a Schedule of Delegation in place which defines decision-making powers which are reserved to the Court and those which are delegated to the University Executive Group, Committees of Court and the Senate, as well as to the Principal & Vice-Chancellor, the Secretary and other officers.

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF COURT?

The Court has 24 members in total. A differentiation is made between lay and non-lay members of Court. The former category includes either appointed or nominated members who are neither staff nor students, and the latter category includes the Principal, directly elected staff from the Staff Council and from Senate, nominated staff from trade unions and students of the University. Simplistically, lay members are analogous to independent (or non-executive) directors of other governing bodies or boards of companies and non-lay members are a mixture of executive directors and staff/student representatives.

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1 Available online from the Directorate of Academic & Corporate Governance webpages under ‘policy statements, regulations and guidance’: http://www.dundee.ac.uk/governance/
The individual membership categories are currently as follows:

**Lay members (14 members)**
- Chairperson;
- Deputy Chairperson;
- Rector (or a nominated assessor; the Rector is elected by the student body);
- The Lord Provost of Dundee City Council (or a nominated assessor);
- Two Graduates’ Association Members;
- Eight co-opted lay members.

**Non-lay members (10 members)**
- Principal *ex officio*;
- Two students nominated by the Students’ Association;
- Two members of staff nominated by the trade unions, one of whom is an academic member of staff and one of whom is a member of support staff;
- Three Senate Assessors (elected by the Senate);
- Two Staff Council Assessors (elected by the Staff Council).

Further information on current members of the Court, and the Skills Matrix for members of the Court are available on the Court Website.

**WHAT COMMITMENT IS EXPECTED OF COURT MEMBERS?**

Members of the Court are expected to attend all five meetings of the University Court, including a residential retreat in September. Additionally, all members of Court are expected to play a role on at least one of the Committees of Court. There are five Committees of Court: Finance & Policy Committee (6 meetings per annum), People & Organisational Development Committee (4 meetings per annum), Audit Committee (4 meetings per annum), Governance & Nominations Committee (5 meetings per annum) and Remuneration Committee (3 meeting per annum). Typically the Chair of Court is also the Convener of the Governance & Nominations Committee and a member of the Finance & Policy and Remuneration Committees. 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 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 dispatched a week in advance of each Court or Committee meeting, and members are expected to ensure they are well prepared for each meeting.

The additional responsibilities of the Chair of Court bring the total estimated time commitment for the role to be in the order of 50 days per annum, much of which will require attendance at meetings at the University of Dundee, at any of its three campuses, one of which is located in Kirkcaldy. The Chair of Court may from time to time, in fulfilment of their wider sector responsibilities, also be required to attend meetings across Scotland and in London, as well as elsewhere.
WHAT ARE THE IDEAL QUALITIES OF COURT MEMBERS?

The Governance & Nominations Committee has established the following criteria for membership of the Court, additional criteria apply for the Chair of Court and these are detailed in the Role and Criteria document:

- An understanding and commitment to accepted high standards of behaviour in public life, to the extent that 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 (see Annex A);
- An interest in and empathy with the University of Dundee and its learning & teaching and research vision;
- 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;
- The time available to regularly attend Court and Committee meetings, a commitment which runs to between 10 and 16 days per year;
- The ability to question intelligently, challenge constructively and influence decision making within a Board setting;
- The ability to contribute to the Court’s strategic thinking and 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.

The Court Skills Matrix outlines the broad range of skills and attributes which are desirable amongst the membership of the Court.

ARE COURT MEMBERS REMUNERATED?

With the exception of the Chair of Court from 1 August 2019, Court members are not paid for the work that they do. Of course, the University very much values the contribution that the lay members of Court make to both the Court itself and to the life of the University.

The successful candidate for the position of Chair of Court will be entitled to non-pensionable remuneration at a gross per diem rate equivalent to the Band 1 minimum for chairs set by the Scottish Government in its technical guide for the remuneration of chairs of Non-Departmental Public Bodies. For 2018-19 this equates to a gross daily rate of £321. In addition, the cost of all expenses reasonably incurred in the course of Court duties may be reclaimed, this includes the cost of caring responsibilities.
DUTY
Holders of public office have a duty to act in the interests of the public body of which they are a Board member and to act in accordance with the core tasks of the body.

SELFLESSNESS
Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

INTEGRITY
Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY
In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP
Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS
Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY
Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP
Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

RESPECT
Holders of public office must respect fellow members of their public body and employees of the body and the role they play, treating them with courtesy at all times.