STATEMENT OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibilities of the Court, as the governing body of the University, are:

Strategy and Mission

1. to approve and oversee the delivery of the University’s mission, vision and strategy, setting out its aims and objectives in teaching, research and wider impact and identifying the financial, physical and staffing requirements for their achievement;
2. to ensure the quality of the educational provision of the University and, in consultation with the Senatus, to make such provision as it thinks fit for the general welfare of the students;
3. to oversee the management of all of the revenue and property of the University and to exercise general control over its affairs, purposes and functions, taking all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the institution;
4. to safeguard the good name and values of the University and to ensure that it is responsive to the interests of its stakeholders, including students, staff, graduates, the local community and funding bodies;
5. to assist the University in the promotion and development of its activities in Scotland, the UK and internationally, in a way which protects and enhances its financial sustainability, visibility, reputation and values;
6. to approve financial strategies, long-term business plans and annual budgets for the University and to ensure its solvency and safeguard its assets;
7. to approve Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and monitor the University’s performance against approved plans, budgets, and key performance indicators, benchmarking them where appropriate against comparator institutions;
8. to ensure, in approving KPIs and annual budgets, that due regard is given to the interests of students, staff and other stakeholders;
9. to approve an estates strategy for the management and development of the University’s land and buildings in support of its objectives;
10. to approve a ‘People action plan’ and to ensure that reward arrangements for its employees are appropriate to the needs of the University;
11. to demonstrate leadership and act as a role model in the elimination of unlawful discrimination and the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion, and to ensure good relations across all protected characteristics.

Governance and Control

12. to ensure compliance with established principles of good governance in higher education and moreover ensure the University transacts its business with integrity and in accordance with its Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and other rules and regulations, as well as with Scottish, UK and EU law where applicable;

13. to appoint the Principal & Vice-Chancellor of the University, including the terms and conditions attaching to the appointment, and to put in place suitable arrangements for monitoring his or her performance through consultation with all members of the Court;
14. to appoint a Secretary of the University and to ensure that he or she has separate lines of accountability for the provision of services to the Court and for the fulfilment of executive managerial responsibilities within the institution;

15. to make clear and to review regularly the executive authority and other powers delegated to the Principal & Vice-Chancellor, to other senior officers and to other bodies of the University including the Senate and Committees of Court;

16. to ensure the proper use of public funds awarded to the University as well as adherence to the funding requirements of the Scottish Funding Council in its Financial Memorandum and any other documents;

17. to establish and monitor effective systems of internal financial and operational control and accountability throughout the University, oversee the University’s arrangements for internal and external audit and to approve the University’s annual financial statements;

18. to ensure that arrangements are in place for the proper management and assessment of risk within the University and that appropriate arrangements are in place in respect of the health and safety of students, staff and other persons affected by University operations;

19. to act as trustee for any legacy, endowment, bequest or gift in support of the University’s activities;

Effectiveness and Transparency

20. to ensure, through the appointment of co-opted lay persons in accordance with the Statutes, a balance of skills and experience amongst the membership of the Court sufficient to meet these primary responsibilities;

21. to ensure that the proceedings of the Court are conducted in accordance with the nine principles of public life in Scotland: namely selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership, public service, and respect;

22. to ensure that the Court takes effective steps to communicate its decisions and its work to the staff and students of the University, and to other stakeholders as appropriate;

23. to ensure that procedures are in place in the University for dealing with internal grievances, conflicts of interest and public interest disclosure; and

24. to monitor its own performance and that of its Committees through an annual internal review of effectiveness, with a formal, externally-facilitated evaluation of effectiveness undertaken not less than every five years and to ensure that the Senatus reviews its own effectiveness on a regular basis.

Approved at the meeting of Court held on 24 April 2018