



# Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

## UNIVERSITY COURT

### CONFIRMED Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2019

#### PRESENT

Dr Frances Dow CBE (Chair)  
Elaine Acaster OBE  
Carolyn Bell  
Dr Richard Butt  
Professor Graham Caie CBE  
Colin Duffus  
Dr Anthony Falconer OBE  
Cynthia Guthrie  
Frank Lennon OBE  
Ruth Magowan  
Jackie Macdonald

Ken McGarrity  
Linda McPherson (Vice Chair)  
Melanie Moreland  
Robert Pattullo  
Sarah Phillips  
Stewart Sands  
Dr Eurig Scandrett  
Dr Andrew Scott  
Professor Petra Wend  
Rebecca Wilson

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Professor Fiona Coutts	Dean of School of Health Sciences
Professor Brigid Daniel	Dean of School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management
Malcolm Cutt	Director of Operations and Finance
Irene Hynd	University Secretary (Secretary)
Fraser Rudge	Governance Adviser (Minute Secretary)
Steve Scott	Director of Campus and Commercial Services

#### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting of the University Court. Apologies were noted from Margaret O'Connor and Dr Laura Young MBE. An apology for lateness had been received from Dr Eurig Scandrett.

#### 2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

#### 3. DETERMINATION OF OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There were no items of other competent business determined, and there was no business arising from the items provided for information.

#### **4. CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair advised that significant matters to report would be addressed under other items on the agenda, including arrangements for the recruitment of a successor to Professor Wend, Principal and Vice-Chancellor (Minute 8 refers).

#### **5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Members received a detailed written report from the Principal on recent strategic developments, both within the University and within the higher education sector generally (COURT (19) 01).

MINUTE REDACTED – the record of discussion under Minute 5 is exempt from disclosure under Section 33 (1) (b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Members NOTED that the University had received notification from EIS and UCU of proposals to ballot members on strike action in relation to the rejection of the 2018 national pay award of 2% (with a greater percentage increase for staff on lower grades).

#### **6. MINUTES**

**6.1** The Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2018 (COURT (18) MINS 06) were APPROVED as an accurate record.

**6.2** There were no matters arising

#### **7. FINANCIAL UPDATE**

The Director of Operations and Finance presented a paper (COURT (19) 02), that provided members with an interim financial update. A fuller update on the half-year financial position for 2018/19 would be provided to the Court at its meeting in early April.

Court was advised of the following key points set out in the paper:

- Indications were that the income forecasts for 2018/19 were broadly on target.
- Following the January student intake, overall student numbers for 2018/19 were estimated to be around 200 FTE higher than planned. Within this, Scottish and EU undergraduate numbers were around 150 FTE above target. Estimated tuition fee income for the year was around £200k above the budgeted figure at this stage, although invoicing was not yet complete for all students, and adjustments in respect of discounts and scholarships had not been finalised. Confirmation had been provided to the SFC that it was the continued expectation that the tuition fee income target for 2018/19 would be met.
- MINUTE REDACTED – the record of discussion under Minute 7 is exempt from disclosure under Section 33 (1) (b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.
- On current estimates, additional STPS pension costs of £450k per annum would be incurred from 1 April 2019, with the impact on the 2018/19 cost being £150k. A recent decision by the Office for Students not to support higher education institutions in England with this additional cost was likely to influence the Scottish Government in its consideration.

- Additional costs associated with increased employer contributions to the USS could amount to a further £100k per annum.
- SFC funding for 2019/20 was expected to be no better than a flat cash settlement, with funding arrangements for EU students beyond 2019/20 remaining uncertain.
- Costs were expected to continue to increase at a faster rate than income, meaning that new sources of income would be important in maintaining financial sustainability.

In response to a query, members were advised that the Head of Finance was modelling a number of financial scenarios over the next 3-5 year period. It was suggested by one member that planning should be on a worst case scenario and that members should continue to question assumptions. Members were advised that the Audit and Risk Committee would be working closely with the University's auditors to review institutional financial planning as part of the forthcoming audit schedule.

MINUTE REDACTED – the record of discussion under Minute 7 is exempt from disclosure under Section 33 (1) (b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

## **8. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF A PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR**

Court RECEIVED a paper (COURT (19) 03), which updated members on progress with the arrangements agreed for the recruitment and appointment of a successor to Professor Petra Wend. Members had been presented with a summary project time-line at the December meeting of Court, and were advised that all suggested activities were fully on target or had been completed at this stage.

Members NOTED that Professor Sally Mapstone, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, St Andrew's University, had agreed to join the Selection Committee in the capacity of External Member, and that Perrett Laver had been selected to support the Selection Committee in its work.

A range of stakeholders had participated in briefing and consultation sessions held on campus on 28th and 29th January and facilitated by Perrett Laver. These included group and individual sessions with Executive Board members, Students' Union Officers, Trade Union representatives, Senate and members of the Professoriate not in membership of Senate, and Senior Professional Services Staff. Open sessions had also been held for all staff (two sessions over the two days) and for all students.

Key messages and feedback arising from those sessions would be presented to Court members at the Court Away Day session on the morning of 7 February. Members would also have the opportunity at that session to provide Perrett Laver with contributions on what the priorities of a new Principal should be, and the attributes and experience that should be sought in candidates.

## **9. SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL – OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2019-22**

Members RECEIVED the draft University Outcome Agreement for 2019-22 (COURT (19) 04). The Secretary advised that the draft had been submitted to the Scottish Funding Council on 11 December 2018 and that, at the time of the meeting, feedback from the SFC was awaited.

The Secretary advised further that the OA Guidance had confirmed that the 'intensification' of the Outcome Agreement process would continue in 2019-20, with the Scottish Government having identified a need to secure greater progress with a number of priority outcomes. Institutions were being asked to provide detailed outcomes and commitments, supported by evidence of progress in securing each of the following high level Scottish Government strategic objectives:

- High-quality learning in a learning system which is seamlessly connected for the learner;
- Access to education for people from the widest range of backgrounds;
- Quality learning and good governance in universities;
- Internationally competitive and impactful research;
- Effective knowledge exchange and innovation between universities and industry,

Members had been advised at the December Court meeting that the next iteration of the University's Outcome Agreement would take the form of a summary of progress against the University's current 3-year outcomes, with appropriate commentary provided on amendments and new provisions. There had been no dissent at the meeting to that suggested approach, which was reflected in the draft Outcome Agreement presented for discussion.

In discussion, members explored aspects of the draft Agreement, including the extent of mental health provision in place at the University, the development and approval by Senate of a contextualised admissions policy, and the progress and ongoing challenge involved in addressing gender imbalance within the subject area of Nursing.

Members were advised that the draft Agreement would be discussed with internal stakeholders, and that a Near Final version would be brought to the 3 April 2019 of the University Court. Members were invited to provide written comments to the Secretary.

## **10. HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2016**

Members RECEIVED an update on progress with the legislative changes required to bring the University into compliance with the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 (COURT (19) 05).

Members were reminded that the Scottish Government had advised that it would draft revised Governing Orders for the Post-92 institutions to take account of the above Act, as these revised Orders require to be approved by the Scottish Parliament (this approach having been agreed with the Privy Council). Scottish Government officials had been working to support the relevant institutions, including Queen Margaret University. Amendments required of the Order of Council were relatively modest, and had been communicated to the Scottish Government in April 2018. The University Court had received oral updates on progress at its October and December meetings.

The Secretary advised that the University awaited a draft Order of Council for consideration. There had been detailed correspondence between the University and Scottish Government Officials over the past couple of months on the matter. Scottish Government officials had been advised that the AGM of the company (the University) would be held on 6 February 2019, and that approval would be sought for a special resolution to provide for remuneration of the Chair, in line with the provisions of the Act.

A copy of the resolution and the explanatory note had been shared with Scottish Government officials.

Members NOTED that the Annual General Meeting, held immediately prior to the meeting of Court, had approved the special resolution and that, consequently, the University's Articles of Association were now amended to provide for the remuneration of the Chair of Court in line with the provisions of the Act.

Further advice would be provided at the April meeting of the Court.

## **11. ANNUAL REPORT ON HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) MATTERS**

Members RECEIVED a consolidated report from the Director of Operations and Finance on relevant HR matters arising during calendar year 2018 (COURT (19) 06). Matters highlighted for members' attention included:

- developments in relation to the national pay negotiations 2018/19;
- developments, and implications for the University, in relation to future funding arrangements for the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and the Scottish Teachers' Pension Scheme (STPS);
- a summary of the remit and progress of the Transformation Project;
- consultation on the criteria for identifying staff with significant responsibility for research, the outcome of which would inform the process for selection of staff for inclusion in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise;
- based on HESA statistics, the identification by the Herald and the Sunday Times of QMU as one of only two universities in Scotland to have achieved gender parity in terms of the number of female versus male professors;
- the 2018 Equal Pay Review, based on data from 1 August 2017, reported a mean gender pay gap of 1.69% in favour of females, and a median pay gap of 6.13% in favour of females.

## **12. SENATE**

Members RECEIVED the Unconfirmed minutes of the Senate meeting held on 24 October 2018 (SEN (18) MINS 06). A number of items had been drawn to the attention of the Court, including:

- the development of an action plan for responding to the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) recommendations;
- the launch of three Innovation Fellowships, with supporting funding of approximately £15k from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) University Innovation Fund (UIF);
- the submission in October 2018 to the SFC of the self-evaluation of Queen Margaret University's Outcome agreement for 2017-18; and
- Senate consideration of the first quarter report on progress against the Key Performance Indicators established for Session 2018-19.

The Court recorded its congratulations to Ruth Magowan on achieving Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

**13. HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Members RECEIVED the Unconfirmed minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 5 December 2018 (HSC (18) MINS 04). No items had been drawn to the attention of the Court.

**14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Court will meet on the following dates in 2019 and 2020:

3 April 2019 at 3.00 pm  
26 June 2019 at 3.00 pm  
2 October 2019 at 3.00 pm  
27 November 2019 at 3.00 pm  
5-6 February 2020 (Away Days)  
1 April 2020 at 3.00 pm  
24 June 2020 at 3.00 pm