



**Queen Margaret
University**
EDINBURGH

LAY MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT

ROLE SPECIFICATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

JUNE 2022

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PREFACE

Thank you for your interest in the University Court of Queen Margaret University.

The University Court, which is the University's governing body, is seeking to appoint to a number of vacancies that will arise in its independent (Lay) membership over the calendar year 2022.

The appointment process is being overseen by the Nominations Committee of the Court, members of which are committed to ensuring that the process for appointment supports fully the University's commitment to securing an appropriate balance of independent members on the University Court in terms of equality and diversity. This commitment aligns with the University's purpose and values. We see our Purpose as helping to create a better society through education, research and innovation, and by providing a supportive and creative learning environment in which students and staff thrive. That purpose is underpinned by our Values, which embrace equality, diversity, inclusion, respect, and supporting our communities. Opportunities and access are open to all and on a fair basis.

Details of the current composition of the University Court can be found on the [University's website](#).

In appointing to vacancies, we are looking to rebalance and in some areas, enhance the Court in terms of membership skills and experience, and in terms of member diversity. We would welcome and encourage applications from people who identify as Black, Asian or from a Minority Ethnic background, and to preserve gender balance on the Court, we would welcome and encourage applications from women.

Set out in the pages that follow are the key responsibilities of the role of a Lay Member of Court, together with a description of the qualities and experience being sought in candidates for appointment.

If you share our values and ambition, and are able to subscribe to the commitments set out in this document, we would welcome your application warmly.

For an informal discussion on this role, please contact Irene Hynd at ihynd@qmu.ac.uk

Irene Hynd
University Secretary and
Secretary to the University Court
June 2022

1. THE UNIVERSITY

1.1 History

Queen Margaret University can trace its origins to the foundation in 1875 of the Edinburgh School of Cookery, an institution that operated throughout mainland Britain, pioneering the training of teachers in nutrition, public health and domestic science.

Under our previous title of Queen Margaret College, our courses were accredited by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) from 1975 to 1992. We raised the majority of our programmes to Honours degree level and developed our research activities throughout that period. We were granted taught degree and research degree powers by the Privy Council in 1992 and 1998 respectively, and the title 'Queen Margaret University College' in 1999.

We achieved full University title in 2007, the year in which we also relocated to our campus just outside the City of Edinburgh, at Musselburgh. The first complete university campus to be built in Scotland in a generation, the campus was designed with a brief to place students at the centre of the learning environment.

1.2 Purpose, Values and Strategic Direction

The University Strategy 2020-25, and the accompanying Delivery Plan, sets out how we will respond to evolutionary change, building on the University's key strengths, adapting to overcome obstacles and creating new areas of strength. In so doing, the Plan draws on the University's heritage, holding true to the principles and values on which the University was founded.

We see our **Purpose** as helping to create a better society through education, research and innovation and by providing a supportive and creative learning environment in which students and staff thrive. In seeking to fulfil this purpose, we are clear and realistic about our strengths, focussed on strategic goals, persistent in pursuing opportunities and overcoming barriers and guided by our values.

Our purpose is underpinned by our **Values**. We are a university that is modern in its outlook and facilities, but with a maturity built on a long history of serving the community, both locally and globally, and enhancing its wellbeing. We work in a transparent and inclusive manner and hold to core values in everything we do.

- We value **intellectual curiosity** and the journey of discovery: We design our teaching and research to facilitate this.
- We value **social justice**: We embrace equality, diversity, inclusion, respect, and supporting our communities. These underpin our world view. Opportunities and access are open to all and on a fair basis.
- We value **excellence**: This is embedded in our research, teaching and learning, knowledge exchange and the services we provide. It will be exemplified in the experience of our students, staff and partners.
- We value **ambition**: We inspire our students and staff to achieve the best that they can. We pursue opportunities, often in partnership and collaboration with others, to transform and influence society for the better and enhance our visibility within the higher education sector and the wider economy.
- We value **environmental sustainability**: We recognise the severe threats to our environment and will be a sector leader in response. Our modern campus is a great asset in this work.
- We value **the individual** and encourage **collective support**: Each member of staff and each student has their own journey to make and their own contribution to give. Queen Margaret University provides the supportive environment to facilitate this.

To fulfil our purpose we have developed a set of strategic goals, with associated outputs, that are underpinned by our values and our alignment to the internal and external environment. These are to:

- provide distinctive, accessible, high quality education.
- deliver transformative research and innovation.
- seek out partnership and collaboration.
- invest in the long term future of the university.
- embed sustainability across our portfolio and practices.

Our strategic plan continues to find expression in a number of discrete sub-strategies, including those of Student Experience and Research and Knowledge Exchange. For each of these, we publish high level outcomes, or key performance indicators (KPIs), progress on which is reported quarterly to the University Court, University Senate and to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Research continues to be central to our strategy. The vitality of our research culture promotes synergy between research, knowledge exchange, teaching and other activities, enhancing each individual element of our work.

Our performance in the most recent Research Excellence Framework validated our strategic approach to research, with over 58% of our overall research being rated as world leading or internationally excellent. We are placed 2nd in the UK and 1st in Scotland for the proportion of research in Speech and Language Sciences classed as internationally excellent or world leading (92%). We are ranked 1st in Scotland for the quality of publications in Communication, Cultural & Media Studies. We are in the top 100 UK higher education institutions (HEIs) for research excellence (89th). The results of the 2021 Research Excellence Framework will be published in May 2022.

International competitiveness in research is fundamental to our Knowledge Exchange strategy, which is based on the translation of excellent research to the Scottish indigenous SME base. Our particular offering is that our research in food and drink, rehabilitation sciences, creative industries and hospitality and tourism is accessible and has a direct economic, cultural and societal impact for Scotland. Our aim is to understand society and enhance it, to connect local and international perspectives, to engage the public and external stakeholders and to make significant contributions to policy, planning and development.

We are committed to widening participation amongst students who have previously been inhibited from entering Higher Education for social, economic or cultural reasons but also to taking active steps to maximise their persistence and success. We have adopted a definition of 'under-represented groups' that has extended beyond that of the narrow Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) national indicator and have developed a range of initiatives to increase the participation and retention of those from a broad range of non-traditional groups.

Our widening participation and retention strategy seeks to increase student numbers from non-traditional groups, including those that are first generation to go to Higher Education; from low

progression schools; reside in communities in the lowest 20% and 40% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (MD20); articulating students from Scotland's Colleges, disabled students, or those who are Care Leavers.

We have the 3rd highest graduate employment rate of any Scottish university, and 14th highest employability rate amongst all UK higher education institutions¹, with 97.1 % of those graduating from a full time undergraduate degree course at QMU going on to employment or further training within six months of graduating.

2. GOVERNANCE AT QMU

2.1 The University Court

Every higher education institution in the UK is headed by a governing body, which is responsible for overseeing the institution's activities, determining its future direction and fostering an environment in which the institutional mission is achieved and the potential of all learners is maximised. The governing body ensures compliance with the statutes and provisions regulating the institution and its framework of governance. Subject to these, it takes all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the institution.

The Court is the governing body of Queen Margaret University, established by the Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh (Scotland) Order of Council 2007 which came into force on 1 April 2007.

The University is a company limited by guarantee (Company Number SC007335) and a charity (Scottish Charity No. SC002750) registered with the Office for Scottish Charities (OSCR). Court members are consequently Directors and also Charitable Trustees.

Details of the powers and governance framework of Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh can be viewed on the [University's website](#).

The Court is responsible for carrying out the objectives of the University, ensuring the financial sustainability of the University and approving the strategic plan. In addition, the Court is responsible

¹ Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE), published July 2018

for monitoring the University's compliance with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

The Court is supported by a number of committees, including the Finance & Estates Committee, Audit and Risk Committee, Nominations Committee and Senior Management Remuneration Committee. The Health and Safety Committee and the Equality and Diversity Committee also report to Court.

The Court delegates to the University Senate responsibility for the academic work of the University and for the conferring of degrees and other awards. Operational management is delegated to the University's Senior Leadership Team under the leadership of the Principal and Vice Chancellor, Sir Paul Grice. Details of the Senior Leadership Team can be found on the [University's website](#).

An important aspect of the Court's work is establishing and monitoring systems of control and accountability, including financial control, and reviewing the performance of the University. Court approves the mission and strategic vision of the University, its long-term business plans, key performance indicators (KPIs) and annual budgets, and ensures that these meet the needs of stakeholders.

The Court also appoints the Principal of the University and has in place arrangements for monitoring their performance.

The Chair provides leadership to the Court and works closely with the Principal. The Principal is responsible for providing advice on strategic direction and for the management of the institution, and is the designated officer in respect of the use of Scottish Funding Council funds.

2.2 Court Membership

Committed Court members are crucial to the University's success. Court members are drawn from a range of backgrounds and professions, and include staff, student and Trade Union members. We are committed to ensuring that the membership of the Court reflects the communities that the University serves.

The Court is composed of:

- The Chair of Court.
- Between 11 and 15 lay members, who bring with them skills and experience of value to the University.
- The Principal and Deputy Principal.
- Five staff members, two of whom are elected by staff, one of whom is appointed by Senate, and two of whom are appointed by nomination of Trade Unions representing academic and support staff.
- Two members appointed by being nominated by the students' association of the University from among the students of the University.

Profiles of current Court members can be found on the [University's website](#).

3. ROLE OF LAY MEMBER OF COURT

3.1 Key Responsibilities

Court members play an important part in ensuring that the necessary business of the Court is carried on efficiently, effectively, and in a manner appropriate to the proper conduct of public business. They are expected to make contributions to debate and to make their knowledge and expertise available to the Court as opportunity arises.

Members have a collective and individual responsibility for ensuring that the Court acts in accordance with the instruments of governance of the University and with the University's internal rules and regulations, and to seek advice from the Secretary in any case of uncertainty. Court members exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the University as a whole rather than as a representative of any constituency. In so doing, they agree to abide by the University Court's Code of Conduct.

Court members must make a full and timely disclosure of personal interests to the Secretary in accordance with the procedures approved by the Court. They must, as soon as practicable, disclose any interest which they have in any matter under discussion and accept the ruling of the Chair in relation to the management of that situation, in order that the integrity of the business of the Court and its Committees may be and may be seen to be maintained.

Court members have particular legal responsibilities for the University which is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity.

Court members may be appointed by the Court to at least one Committee of the Court and are expected to play a full part in the business of all Committees to which they are appointed. The expected time commitment for Court members is set out below.

Court members may also be asked to act as advocates on behalf of the University. This may include a role in liaising between key stakeholders and the University, or in fund-raising.

Members are supported fully in exercising all of their responsibilities.

3.2 Attributes and Qualities

Court members conduct themselves in accordance with accepted standards of public life, which includes openness, objectivity, integrity, honesty and accountability.

You will have the ability to act fairly and impartially in the interests of the University as a whole, using independent judgement, and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

You will be an excellent communicator with appropriate negotiation, presentation and influencing skills.

You will have the ability to act as an ambassador and represent the University to the wider community and to operate as a member of a team.

Above all, Court members are supportive of the University's ethos, mission and values, and committed to equality, diversity and inclusivity. You will have a strong, personal commitment to Higher Education, to its governance and to the values of Queen Margaret University.

3.3 Person Specification

Court appointments take account of personal and professional skills and experience in the context of the overall composition of the Court. In appointing to current vacancies, we are looking to rebalance and in some areas, enhance the Court in terms of membership skills and experience, and in terms of member diversity. We welcome and encourage applications from people who identify as Black, Asian or from a Minority Ethnic background, and from disabled people. To preserve gender balance on the Court, we would welcome and encourage applications from women.

We are particularly interested to hear from individuals who can bring expertise and/or experience in the following areas:

- Accountancy and financial services
- Arts and creative industries
- Audit and risk
- Commercial
- Entrepreneurship
- Food and drink

Applicants with other areas of specialist knowledge are welcome to apply.

You will have experience as a member of a board/s or committee/s, or experience of operating at a strategic level in a professional role. Consideration will be given also to individuals with professional expertise who demonstrate the capacity to develop as a skilled member of the Court once appointed to the role. We will provide comprehensive training and support to appointees who are early in their board career.

4. TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

4.1 Remuneration

The role of Lay member of Court is unremunerated, but reasonable travel and subsistence expenses are reimbursed for attendance at Court and Committee meetings, for business conducted on behalf of the University, or duties carried out at the request of the Court. The rates of expenses claimable are the same as for members of staff under the University's financial procedures. Directors and Officers Liability Insurance is in place.

4.2 Commitment

The expected time commitment required of Court members averages between 10-15 days per year. The Court meets on at least 5 occasions per academic year, and enjoys a couple of Strategy Days, normally on campus in the spring. Court members may meet individually with the Chair or Vice-Chair once or twice a year, and may be in membership of one of the Standing Committees of the Court that meet three or four times a year. There is background reading associated with each of these meetings.

In addition to the requirements set out above, Court members are invited to attend events held by the University, including the annual graduation ceremony in early July, professorial lectures, social and celebratory events,

5. HOW TO APPLY

If you share our values and vision, are able to subscribe to the commitments set out above, and consider you meet the person specification, we would be very interested in hearing from you.

Queen Margaret University is committed to ensuring that its Court represents the staff, students and community it serves. As such, we welcome applications that reflect the breadth and diversity of those communities, and that would further enhance the diversity of the Court.

Applications are invited in the form of:

- A current CV or description of work and other relevant experience.
- A supporting statement highlighting how your skills and experience match the role specification.
- The names of two referees who may be contacted.

You are also asked to complete and return an Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form. Please note that this form will be used purely for monitoring purposes. The form will be separated from your application and will not form part of the selection process.

For an informal discussion on the role, please contact [Irene Hynd](#), University Secretary.

Applications are invited by Sunday 28 August 2022, and should be submitted: **by e-mail to:**
ihynd@qmu.ac.uk



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

Members of Queen Margaret University Court

Role Description

- a) Court members commit to conducting themselves in accordance with accepted standards of public life, which are: Duty; Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability and Stewardship; Openness; Honesty; Leadership and Respect.
- b) Independent (Lay) members and elected members hold office for an initial term of 3 years but may serve a second term. Ex-officio members serve for the length of their term in office.
- c) Members exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the University as a whole rather than as a representative of any constituency. They agree to abide by the University Court's Code of Conduct and complete a Register of Interests form annually.
- d) Court members are expected to play an appropriate part in ensuring that the necessary business of the Court is carried on efficiently, effectively, and in a manner appropriate to the proper conduct of public business. They are expected to make rational and constructive contributions to debate and to make their knowledge and expertise available to the Court as opportunity arises.
- e) Members have a responsibility for ensuring that the Court acts in accordance with the instruments of governance of the University and with the University's internal rules and regulations, and to seek advice from the Secretary in any case of uncertainty.

- f) Court members must make a full and timely disclosure of personal interests to the Secretary in accordance with the procedures approved by the Court. They must, as soon as practicable, disclose any interest which they have in any matter under discussion and accept the ruling of the Chair in relation to the management of that situation, in order that the integrity of the business of the Court and its Committees may be, and may be seen to be, maintained.
- g) Court members have particular legal responsibilities for the University, which is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity.
- h) Court members may be appointed by the Court to at least one Committee of the Court and are expected to play a full part in the business of all Committees to which they are appointed.
- i) Court members may be asked to represent the Court and the University externally, and will be fully briefed by the University to enable them to carry out this role effectively.
- j) Court members may also be asked to act as advocates on behalf of the University. This may include a role in liaising between key stakeholders and the University, or in fund-raising.
- k) The likely overall time commitment required of Court members averages between 10-15 days per year. The Court meets on at least 5 occasions per academic year, and has a two-day Away Day on campus in the spring, which may involve an overnight stay. Court members may meet individually with the Chair or Vice-Chair once or twice a year, and may be required to attend sub-committee meetings three or four times a year. There is background reading associated with each of these meetings.
- l) In addition to the requirements set out above, Court members are invited to attend events held by the University, including the annual graduation ceremony in early July, professorial lectures, social and celebratory events,
- m) Court members are not remunerated for their work as Court members, but are encouraged to reclaim all travelling and similar expenses incurred in the course of University business via the Secretary pursuant to the University policy on this issue.

Person Specification

1. Members should demonstrate a strong, personal commitment to Higher Education, its governance and the values, aims and objectives of Queen Margaret University. Lay members of Court should have experience as a member of committees/boards or experience of operating at a strategic level in a professional role.
2. Members should have the ability to act fairly and impartially in the interests of the University as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate. Members should have the ability to act as an ambassador and represent the University to the wider community and to operate as a member of a team.
3. Members should be excellent communicators with appropriate negotiation, presentation and influencing skills.
4. Members should be supportive of the University's ethos, mission and values, and be committed to equality, diversity and inclusivity.



Queen Margaret University EDINBURGH

Key Information Sources

- 1 Court Members' Handbook (including governance structure)
<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/university-court/>
- 2 Senior Officers
<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/chancellor-vice-chancellor-and-senior-management-team/>
- 3 Membership of Court
<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/university-court/>
- 4 Strategic Plan
<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/our-strategic-plan/>
- 5 Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
<https://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/outcome-agreements/2020-21/queen-margaret-oa2020-21.aspx>
- 6 Annual Report and Accounts
<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/finance/>
- 7 Court Statement of Primary Responsibilities
<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/university-court/>
- 8 Scottish Code of Higher Education Governance
www.scottishuniversitygovernance.ac.uk/
- 9 Financial Memorandum with the Scottish Funding Council
<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/media/8d891ec37322977/appendix-06-sfc-financial-memorandum-with-higher-education-institutions.pdf>