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**UNIVERSITY COURT**

Confirmed minutes of a meeting of the University Court held at 3.00 pm on 2 October 2024 in the Large Boardroom, Queen Margaret University.

**PRESENT**

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| --- | --- |
| Pamela Woodburn (Chair)  Janet Archer  Patrick Bartlett  Jay Brown  Professor Richard Butt  Silvia Cardinale  Julie Churchill  Sir Paul Grice  Professor John Harper | Steven Hendry  Ellenore Hobkirk  Dr Kavi Jagadamma  Dr Arturo Langa  Elizabeth Porter  Garvin Sealy  Carol Sinclair  Guy Smith  Bill Stronach  Andrew Watson |

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Irene Hynd Vice-Principal and University Secretary (Secretary)

Dawn Martin Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement (Minute Secretary)

Chris Reilly Interim Director of Finance

Dr Sara Smith Dean of Health Sciences

Professor David Stevenson Dean of Arts, Social Sciences and Management

Nathalie Edwards Policy Adviser (Governance and Compliance) (Observer)

1. **WELCOME AND MEMBERSHIP**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting of the University Court. Particular welcome was extended to Nathalie Edwards, Policy Adviser (Governance and Compliance) who was in attendance as an Observer.

Apologies for absence were noted as having been received from James Miller and Jacqueline Morrison.

1. **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

1. **DETERMINATION OF OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

There was no Other Competent Business identified.

1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**4.1 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 19 June 2024 (paper Court (24) MINS 03) were APPROVED as an accurate record.

**4.2 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

1. **CHAIR’S REPORT**

The Chair reported that her most significant University engagement since the previous Court meeting had been her participation in the graduation ceremonies held at the Usher Hall on 1 and 2 July 2024. The graduation ceremonies were always hugely enjoyable occasions that provided an important opportunity for the whole University community to come together to recognise and celebrate student academic achievement. This year’s ceremonies had been particularly important, representing as they did the final ceremonies over which Dame Prue Leith would preside. Dame Prue would be stepping down as Chancellor of the University at the end of this calendar year, having served with distinction during her seven-year tenure.

The Chair had also attended a meeting of the University Senate, having taken up the standing invitation for Court members to attend. Her attendance had provided the opportunity to observe at first hand Senate members’ careful consideration of, and commitment to, the student experience. Court members were encouraged to take up the invaluable opportunity to observe the Senate and other University standing committees.

Over the summer, the Chair and the Principal had participated in the [Scotsman Fringe First Awards](https://www.qmu.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2024/20240801-qmu-and-napier-sponsor-scotsman-fringe-firsts-awards), the University haven taken up a last minute opportunity to sponsor the Awards in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University. This was a hugely enjoyable experience that had increased QMU’s profile during the Fringe period. QMU had also operated as a ‘Fringe Village’ this year, offering low-cost accommodation and facilities to performers in partnership with the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society. This represented not only important income generation, but important reputational benefits in terms of the University’s profile in the performing arts sector and as a community asset. The Senior Leadership team would be reviewing both the Fringe Village and Fringe First Awards sponsorship with a view to building on this year’s experience. An update would come to a future meeting of the Court.

A final update from the Chair on internal matters was that members could expect an invitation from the Secretariat to meet with her as part of the annual member feedback arrangements.

In terms of external engagement, the Chair looked forward to the upcoming meeting of the Committee of Scottish Chairs (CSC), noting that the CSC meetings presented an important opportunity for sector engagement and networking. The Chair had also been invited to participate in an event at the University of Strathclyde on 9 October 2024 to consider the role of Scottish and UK Higher Education in supporting international development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**6** **PRINCIPAL’S REPORT**

Court RECEIVED a detailed written report from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor (paper Court (24) 22). In speaking to his report, the Principal highlighted the following matters in particular:

**6.1 External context**

The Principal advised that he had been involved in several constructive meetings over the summer with the First Minister, the Cabinet Secretary for Health, and the Minister for Further and Higher Education on matters of importance to the University and to the sector.

*SFC Funding Allocation and Budget 2025-26***:** Universities Scotland continued to make representations to the Scottish Government on the next budget settlement. As advised previously to the Court, Universities Scotland had been resolute in conveying the view that a fundamental review was necessary to deliver a more sustainable longitudinal funding model. However, there was no expectation that there would be any substantive change of approach prior to the next Scottish Parliamentary Election in 2026.

*Scottish Government Reform Agenda:*The Principal had reported previously on a range of Scottish Government led activities under its reform agenda for schools and for colleges and universities (and other training providers). Recent developments included:

* Universities Scotland had recently submitted its response to the consultation on post school education and skills reform. Most members had supported ‘option 2’ (the maintenance of SAAS alongside a reformed SFC, incorporating functions from Skills Development Scotland).
* The new qualifications body (replacing the SQA) was expected to be operational by the end of October 2025. This would have an impact on the University in terms of admissions.
* The Scottish Government had recently published its [response to the Hayward Review](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-response-final-report-independent-review-qualifications-assessment-future/) (Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment). Whilst the Scottish Government acknowledged the importance of balancing assessment methods, it would retain examinations as an integral part of the overall approach.

*SFC Interim CEO Visit:*The Senior Leadership Team had been pleased to host a visit from Martin Boyle, Interim Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Funding Council on 25 September 2024. At the meeting, there had been an opportunity to discuss the challenges facing the University and wider sector, as well as QMU’s achievements and future plans.

*Scottish COVID Inquiry:*The Principal and representatives from five other Scottish Higher Education Institutions had been invited to give further evidence to the Scottish COVID Inquiry in November 2024.

* 1. **Start of semester**

The academic session had started well, with a vibrant atmosphere on campus. It was always a pleasure to welcome students at the start of the new academic year. Work on the new classrooms on Level 0, undertaken as part of the Future Spaces initiative, was now complete, while the opening date for the new spaces in the Learning Resource Centre had been delayed slightly to 3 October 2024. It had been possible nevertheless to conduct tours during the recent Open Day, and these had been well received. Arrangements would be put in place for members to visit the refurbished spaces, potentially before the start of the next meeting of the Court.

The Student Presidents were invited to comment on the start of semester from their perspective. They reported that the welcome and induction weeks had gone well, and that new and returning students were excited to be on campus and to participate in University life. There had been particularly good engagement with the Students’ Union and a high level of interest in the Class Representative and Officer roles. The new International Officer role was established and working well, and elections would take place before 15 October for the new role of Black Minority Ethnic Officer. A high number of students had signed up to join sports clubs and societies, and had participated in the recent fairs and ‘Give it a Go’ events. The Students’ Union was continuing to work proactively to represent students, taking on board any feedback and working in partnership with the University to enhance the student experience.

**6.3 Student recruitment and student numbers 2024-25**

The Principal’s written report included an early estimate of on-campus student numbers for 2024-25, such estimate caveated by the fact that data at this early stage in the academic session captured data for students fully matriculated by 24 September 2024. The initial assessment was that the full-time on-campus fee paying student cohort number would be around 46 (-1.3%) below the number forecast in the 2024-25 budget for Q1 (not including January and second semester intake). The Principal would provide an update to the December meeting of the Court that would reflect with greater accuracy matriculated student numbers at the 1 December census date. A further update in February 2025 would include the semester two entrants.

**6.4 National Student Survey (NSS) Results 2024**

The National Student Survey (NSS) outcome provided for strong results in some areas and programmes, but these were offset by poor results in others. Disappointingly, the overall levels of satisfaction had impacted negatively on the university’s performance in league tables published in the autumn, as explained further in the Principal’s written report.

QMU had been ranked the top university in Edinburgh in the Teaching on My Course category, and the Students’ Union ranked first in Scotland and seventh out of 130 universities in the UK for how ‘well it represents students’ academic interests’. Five programmes had achieved overall satisfaction scores of 90% or above, with one programme achieving 100%. All programme teams would engage with the NSS results through their participation in the university’s Annual Monitoring process. Additionally however, the Taught Surveys Results Working Group had required that programmes with poor results implement NSS-specific action plans with support from the LEAD Centre and the Surveys and Retention Team. At the institutional level, actions were being progressed to improve satisfaction levels to the survey question: ‘How often have you received assessment feedback on time?’. This included the re-development of an assessment tracker to improve oversight of timeliness of return of feedback to students, and continued support for curriculum design and assessment from the LEAD Centre, most particularly for teams participating in validation and review.

In discussion, members explored further the key factors identified at this stage as contributing to the NSS results, and the actions planned in response. The Deputy Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised that there were a number of contributing factors, including industrial action and the Marking and Assessment Boycott, both of which had impacted to varying degrees across QMU programmes and the wider sector. Determination of other drivers, particularly where a programme had performed against trend, continued, along with the identification of appropriate interventions. Members were advised that, as the NSS questions had changed in 2024, drawing direct comparison with previous years was difficult.

The Deputy Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised that the Deans were working closely with programme teams to deliver targeted intervention and support. Discussions were progressing through School Forums, Programme and Student-Staff Consultative Committees (SSCCs). Importantly this multi-level approach provided for students to engage directly with the discussion as committee members, whilst also providing a structured mechanism for programme teams to feed back to students, via Class Reps, on actions being taken to address identified areas of dissatisfaction. It was noted that a number of programmes with identified areas for action were due for quinquennial review in 2024-25; this presented an opportunity for a wholesale review of assessment strategy and other aspects of programme design and delivery.

Welcoming the discussion and the overview of actions already in progress, members recognised the comparatively short window for interventions to impact positively on the 2025 NSS being launched early in semester two. It was agreed that a further briefing on actions progressed would come to the December meeting of the Court. In the meantime, congratulations were extended to those programmes identified as having achieved high levels of overall satisfaction.

**6.5 League tables**

Several league tables had been published in the previous few months. Whilst QMU had performed very well in a number of subject areas, the university’s overall position in the rankings had fallen in The Times & Sunday Times, Guardian, and Daily Mail tables. These variances were in part due to changes in methodologies, weightings and data points used by the compilers. For the more recent tables, the NSS 2024 results had a negative effect. The Principal’s overall reflection was one of disappointment that QMU’s position in most guides had fallen, frustration at the shifting methodologies, and a determination to take positive action in response to contributing factors, including the NSS results. Work would be undertaken to understand better the People and Planet measure introduced to the Times and Sunday Times league table, and the feasibility of improving QMU’s position on that basis.

**6.6 All staff engagement survey**

An all-staff engagement survey would be available between 8 and 29 October 2024. Structured staff listening activities, such as the engagement survey, would generate evidence-based data and insights to inform targeted responses to staff feedback. The survey was being conducted in partnership with an experienced survey provider, People Insights, and would draw on its comparator benchmark data. People Insights would also provide support in identifying priorities from the survey results, and with action planning.

**6.7 40 Faces campaign**

The Principal had hosted a [40 Faces campaign](https://40faces.universities-scotland.ac.uk/) event on behalf of Universities Scotland on 24 September 2024, attended by Jenny Gilruth, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. As advised to members at the June meeting of the Court, the focus of the campaign was to reinforce the importance of widening access, celebrating the good progress since the Commission on Widening Access was set up in 2016, but also focussing on the challenges and what more needs to be done to achieve the 2030 targets. The recent event had been very positive with a renewed commitment and belief that the sector can meet the 2030 target. The Principal was delighted to report that two of the ’40 Faces’ were QMU graduates, Dr Karen Rennie and William Torrie.

The Chair thanked the Principal for his comprehensive report. Members especially welcomed the early indication of a positive trajectory within the student numbers report, whist acknowledging that the December update would provide a more accurate picture.

**7 BUDGET AND FORECAST OUTTURN 2023-24**

COURT members RECEIVED an update on financial performance for the twelve months to 31 July 2024 and the forecast outturn position (paper Court (24) 23).

As noted in the paper and recorded in the Finance and Estates Committee minutes (Paper Court (24) FEC Mins 05), the forecast position was for a surplus of £0.4m, excluding voluntary severance costs of £0.5m. There remained a small number of required accounting adjustments (including pension valuations, provisions, and holiday pay accrual), following which, the year-end position was expected to be in line with the breakeven forecast (excluding VS) reported to the Court in June 2024.

Material variances in income and expenditure were outlined in the paper. Tuition fees income was £0.6m favourable to forecast due to greater fees recovery and improved TNE performance. Other Operating Expenses were £1.9m favourable to forecast, of which £0.6m reflected the capitalisation of CCTV renewal and £0.7m of long-term maintenance that had not been carried out. The cash balance was favourable at £18.1m. The accounts were due to be submitted to the auditors in the week commencing 7 October 2024.

Members welcomed the positive position, noting that this had been achieved under challenging financial circumstances that were impacting to varying degrees across the sector.

**8 BUDGET 2024-25 AND THREE-YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST**

Court members RECEIVED the budget for the financial year 2024-25 and the financial forecast for subsequent years as submitted to the Scottish Funding Council (paper Court (24) 24).

The Interim Director of Finance explained that the budget and three-year forecast had been prepared on a top-down basis informed by assumptions around income, costs, and capital, as set out in the paper. It was clarified that the top-down approach had included appropriate consultation with the SLT around local priorities and challenges.

The submission to the SFC included one adjustment to the paper that had been considered at the June 2024 Court meeting, namely the reduction of the loan refinance from £20m to £15m. The balance sheet had changed because of this, but there were no changes to income and expenditure.

Members were interested to hear more about various matters, including anticipated pressure points and level of ambition within the student number projections. In response, it was advised that the primary challenge would be managing costs. The University (in common with the rest of the sector) had a large fixed-cost base, meaning that there could be a high degree of confidence in much of the projected expenditure. The business model had been developed to maximise commercial income and TNE and online programme development, whilst also planning for growth in on-campus tuition fees. The growth targets were deliberately ambitious, with the 5% uplift in fee income particularly so, but they were nevertheless based on the trajectory in recent years and the planned uplift in tuition fees.

In response to a query, members were advised that a budget of £1.3m had been identified for Project Evolve in 2024-25. Importantly however, there had been no spend to date, and any requested expenditure would need to be set out in a formal business case. The benefits realisation from Project Evolve would become clearer following the conclusion of the ‘To Be’ phase of the Target Operating Model exercise, as explained further under agenda item 12. The primary objective for Project Evolve was to create an operating model that delivered on the future business model, including delivery of TNE and on-line offerings, while realising appropriate levels of savings derived from more effective and efficient ways of working/delivering services.

The Principal reported that a Financial Strategy group had been established and charged with building the supporting financial model. It was suggested that there was a need to understand the financial benefits of TOM in order to build the financial model. Members were advised that the output from the group’s work would be reported to the Senior Leadership Team before Christmas, and its work would inform a five-year financial plan which it was planned would come to the Finance and Estates Committee in March 2025 and to the Court Strategy Day in April 2025.

1. **LOAN REFINANCING**

The CourtRECEIVED recommendation from the Finance and Estates Committee in the matter of a preferred lender for the Barclay’s loan refinancing (Paper Court (24) 25 refers).

As set out in the paper, following the Finance and Estates Committee (FEC) and University Court meetings held in June 2024, an information memorandum was sent out to five banks in early August 2024 requesting terms for a £15m revolving credit facility (RCF) to repay the existing Barclays loan which expired in December 2024.

Members were reminded that the RCF loan format offered greater flexibility than a term loan, with the advantage that fixed repayments to the principal sum borrowed were not mandated. Loan interest payable would be reduced as this would be limited to QMU requirements at any point in time.

Three banks had submitted offers, of which one was considered uncompetitive. Review meetings had taken place with Barclays and with Santander, following which both banks had submitted revised terms. Proposals were considered at the 11 September 2024 meeting of the Finance and Estates Committee and the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 19 September 2024.

The recommendation of the Finance and Estates committee to the University Court was that Santander was the preferred lender (Court Paper FEC (24) Mins 05 refers). This recommendation was supported by the Audit and Risk Committee (Court Paper Audit (24) Mins 03 refers).

It was confirmed to members that SFC approval would be required for the revised loan arrangements, and that the paperwork for this had been prepared and was ready to be submitted. Members were also advised that a revised Treasury Policy was in development for consideration at the joint meeting on 10 December 2024 of the Finance and Estates Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee, and subsequent consideration at the University Court meeting on 18 December.

Having discussed the above, the University Court APPROVED the recommendation from the Finance and Estates Committee that Santander proceed to final loan documentation as the preferred lender for the loan refinancing.

The Chair of the Finance and Estates Committee extended his thanks to the Finance Team for their work on the loan refinancing, noting the resulting increased flexibility and stability over the five-year loan period.

1. **PROJECT GALILEO**

**10.1 Status Update**

Court members RECEIVED a status report from the Interim Director of Finance on progress against the timeline for implementing the new finance system (paper Court (24) 26).

As reported to the Finance and Estates and Audit and Risk Committees at their most recent meetings, the project remained on track and on budget to go live in period 5 of the current financial year (December 2024). The University had appointed Arribatec, a global provider of integrated digital business solutions, to undertake a testing review, the report from which had concluded that the testing phase was in a healthy state. The RAG rating of performance within the paper provided a helpful visual representation on progress, with all deliverables reported as being complete or on track. The project was now moving into the training phase. In parallel, there was a continued focus on communications. In response to a query, it was confirmed that careful consideration was being given to systems’ integration, and that a full risk analysis had been undertaken.

**10.2 Scheme of Delegation**

Court CONSIDERED revisions to the Scheme of Delegation recommended by the Finance and Estates Committee (paper Court (24) 27).

The proposals presented had been benchmarked against sector practice and were intended to empower budget holders and project managers at differing levels, and to strengthen accountability. The scheme provided for expenditure between £20k and £50k being approved by a Dean and SLT member, with the addition of sign off by the Principal for expenditure between £50k - £500k. Court approval of expenditure over £500k was retained.

Court members welcomed the revisions, including the improved level of detail included on procurement compliance and capital expenditure. There was brief discussion on the potential for requisitions to be presented in a form that breached the requisitioner’s delegated approval level eg a project cost being broken down into component parts, that, individually, did not breach the approved maximum spend. It was not expected that this situation could arise, as projects were clearly coded against budgets. Nonetheless, procurement guidance would make this prohibition explicit.

1. **LAND DEVELOPMENT**

Court RECEIVED an update on progress with the Land Development Project (paper Court (24) 28).

Introducing the paper, the Chief Operations Officer highlighted the specific areas recorded below, and advised that the project remained on track, with no new identified risks since the previous Court meeting.

*Local Development Plan (LDP):* The LDP was in the process of being updated by the Local Authority. The University was engaged fully in the process to ensure that it reflected fully the University's vision for the future growth and development of the land around the campus as set out in the Masterplan Delivery Strategy (MDS). A principal focus related to the development of the Commercial Zone on the site of the existing QMU car park. The submission also included an update on the proposals for the development of the Edinburgh Innovation Park.

*Edinburgh Innovation Hub:* The Hub construction continued to progress well in accordance with budget and on target for completion by summer 2025. Matters for future consideration by the University related to the budget (financial model for the first five years) and facilities management (including opportunities for the University to provide certain of these). At this stage, there remained a healthy contingency amount unspent. Recruitment to the senior post of Hub Director within the Hub Operating Company was expected to conclude, with a post holder in place for January 2025. Appointment to a short-term role of Mobilisation Manager would also be progressed.

*Edinburgh Innovation Park:* A vision validation exercise, supported by CBRE, was currently ongoing.

*Financial Model:* The Joint Venture (JV) was preparing a three-statement financial model for the Hub (profit and loss, balance sheet and cash flow) for the first five years of operation. This would include consideration of working capital commitments within the JV and potential transfer of surplus funds from the construction project. Chiene and Tait had been appointed as accountants for the financial model, which would come to the next meeting of the Finance and Estates Committee. Members were reminded that QMU had not invested monies in the Project upfront.

Members welcomed the positive update. Various matters were covered in discussion, including levels of expected occupancy, marketing, and opportunities for QMU staff to join the conversations. It was confirmed also, in response to a specific question, that the Hub had been designed to operate at Net Zero.

The Chief Operations Officer advised that projected initial occupancy was around 25%. As noted previously, there was an expectation that some of the early occupants would provide healthcare services, this being congruent with QMU’s areas of expertise. However, the longer-term aspiration was for a diverse occupancy mix. Several prospective tenants had submitted early expressions of interest, and it was expected that there would be increased awareness and engagement once the planned signage by the A1 was in place, and other marketing activities were in progress. No assumptions had been made about specialist equipment at this stage, but discussions were in progress regarding considerations such as the IT infrastructure (noting the importance of future proofing) and catering facilities. There was a tacit understanding that the university would provide facilities management, but this needed to be worked up.

Members were advised that the Innovation Steering Group would be reconfigured, following the appointment of the incoming Hub Director (employed by the JV), as an operational group with a remit to support academic colleagues to identify and engage with spin out and wider opportunities. The group would also have an important role in supporting communications, complementing the ongoing marketing and promotional activity. Reports from the group would be provided routinely to the Court.

Lay member, Elizabeth Porter, in membership of the Joint Venture Committee, confirmed that the project was progressing well in line with the high-level plans and as reported to members. Members were reminded of the importance of maintaining clear lines of delineation between the Hub development and the governance and operation of the University.

**12 PROJECT EVOLVE**

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Court RECEIVED a progress report from the Chief Operations Officer (paper Court (24) 29).

Members were reminded that Project EVOLVE was the overarching name for a programme of connected workstreams, which in combination were intended to deliver financial sustainability and a future focussed operating model. The initial focus of EVOLVE was the Target Operating Model (TOM) approach to the review and redesign of a range of identified professional services processes and functions. The TOM ‘As Is’ exercise had concluded earlier in the year, alongside the TRAC (Transparent approach to Costing) return and ABC (Activity Base Costing).

The next phase of the TOM was the ‘To Be’ exercise, which would be progressed during October through a series of workshops with professional services staff designed to identify process and service improvements across a range of student facing functions. The workshops would focus on student recruitment and admission; student administration; business infrastructure; and digital transformation (in recognition of the importance of automation and wider digital activity).

Noting this, members discussed the underlying basis of the projected student numbers within the Appendix, included to illustrate the changing profile of the student population, including expected growth in TNE and online provision. Members were advised that the numbers provided would be subject to further iteration.

Members were advised that a Project Evolve Execution Plan, currently in development, would be brought forward to the Court.

**13** **SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL**

The Court RECEIVED a briefing on the published guidance relating to the Outcomes Framework and on Quality for Colleges and Universities for the period 2024 to 2031 (paper Court (24) 30), and the implications for Court in terms of reporting and oversight.

Members were reminded that the revised arrangements had been developed in response to the recommendations in the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) 2021 [Review of Coherence and Sustainability](https://www.sfc.ac.uk/reform/review/).An important ambition in developing the new reporting arrangements had been advised as a reduction in the burden of reporting on institutions and University Courts.

Members were briefed on the following frameworks/returns in particular:

* The Scottish Funding Council’s *Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model (OFAM)*, which had been introduced to replace the assurance and accountability arrangements for colleges and universities represented by the former Outcome Agreement arrangements.
* The *Research Assurance and Accountability Return* (as part of the OFAM).
* The *Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund* (KEIF).
* Scotland’s *Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF),* which had replaced the former Quality Enhancement Framework (for universities) and the How Good Is Our College? Framework (for colleges).
* The *Self Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP).*

Members were advised that the SEAP replaced the former ‘Annual Statement on Quality’, and the accompanying ‘Annual Assurance Statement’ from the University Court. The submission would include some elements of the former Outcome Agreement self-evaluation reporting requirements.

Members were also provided with a brief description of the ongoing development of the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education,* on the basis that adherence to those requirements would form part of the assessment of the university’s performance in the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework.

To aid members’ understanding of the complex matrix of reporting that these arrangements involved, a table of known deadlines, with stated governance and sign off requirements, was presented as an appendix. In line with those requirements, members would receive copies of relevant submissions at the Court December meeting. This would include the SEAP and the OA 2023-24 Self-Evaluation.

**REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

**14 FINANCE AND ESTATES COMMITTEE**

The Court RECEIVED the Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Estates Committee held on 11 September 2024 (paper FEC (24) MINS 05). All matters identified for members’ attention had been addressed earlier in the Court meeting.

**15 SENATE**

Court RECEIVED the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 26 June 2024 (paper SEN (24) MINS 03). There were no matters brought to members’ attention.

**16 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

COURT RECEIVED the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 19 September 2024 (paper ARC (24) MINS 03). All matters for members’ attention had been covered earlier in the Court meeting.

**17 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

COURT RECEIVED the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Nominations Committee held on 12 July 2024 (paper NOM (24) MINS 02).

Court APPROVED the following recommendations for appointment to vacancies in the Lay Membership:

*Appointment to current vacancies*

Ann Hill, former Director of Teaching and Learning at a large UK College, and former Director of Learning Technologies

Sofia Khan, Scholar Development Officer at the Robertson Trust.

*Appointment to a vacancy arising in June 2025*

Tejesh Mistry, Chief Executive, Voluntary Health, Scotland.

### *Vacancies on Court Standing Committees*

Court APPROVED the appointment of Ellenore Hobkirk to a vacancy in the Senior Management Remuneration Committee*.* The SMRC would meet formally in late autumn.

*Vacancy in the Directorship of QMU Enterprises Limited*

Court APPROVED the appointment of Lay Court member Patrick Bartlett to a vacancy in the directorshipof QMU Enterprises Limited.

Members NOTED with interest the healthy level of applications to the GIVE scheme, and the Committee’s discussion of arrangements for the appointment of a Chancellor of the University upon the retiral of Dame Prue Leith (Dame Prue would continue to hold the title of Chancellor to the end of calendar year 2024).

**18 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

COURT RECEIVED the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 25 June 2024 (Paper HSC (24) MINS 02). There were no matters brought to members’ attention.

**19 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The University Court would meet as follows in Academic Session 2024-25:

Wednesday, 18 December 2024 at 2.15 pm\* in the Boardroom

Wednesday, 19 February 2025 at 3.00 pm in the Boardroom

Wednesday, 16 April 2025 – Strategy Day – all day event

Wednesday, 18 June 2025 at 3.00 pm in the Boardroom

*\*Members are asked to note the earlier start time, and that the meeting will be preceded by a short tour of the relaunched Learning Resource Centre, redesigned and refurbished as part of the Future Spaces project.*

DM

October 2024