

## **Guide to University Governance**

This document sets out the responsibilities and modus operandi of the University's key decision-making bodies; the Court, the Senate and the Senior Management Group. It also states how these bodies work together to ensure effective communication and mutual understanding in taking forward the work of the University. The document is in four Sections:

- I Court
- II Senate and the Council of Senate
- III The Senior Management Group
- IV Effective Communication and Cooperation

**Revised October 2014**

## **Section I : Court**

### **1. What is the University Court?**

The Court is the University's governing body and is the legal persona of the University. The University Courts at the ancient Scottish Universities, including Glasgow, were created by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858. Under the Universities (Scotland) Act 1889, the University Court became a body corporate, with perpetual succession and a common seal.

### **2. Who is on the University Court?**

The Court's composition has changed a number of times since 1858. It currently consists of the Rector, the Principal, the Chancellor's Assessor, a representative of Glasgow City Council, five assessors elected by the General Council, seven Senate Assessors elected by Senate, two employee representatives, the President of the Students' Representative Council, one assessor elected by the Students' Representative Council, and five co-opted members. A quorum is seven.

Court members who are not members of the University staff or student body are referred to as "lay members". The current composition reflects the University's wish to have the appropriate level of expertise needed to govern a modern Higher Education institution. More details on the current membership of Court are at

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/about/facts/whoswho/universitycourt/>

The role of key officers on Court is:

**Rector:** The Rector is elected by the students of the University for a period of three years and is also, ex-officio, the President of the University Court. The Rector chairs such parts of the Court meetings as the Court may from time to time decide; this is normally the opening and closing of Court meetings, Minutes of the last meeting, Matters arising and the reports from the Principal and Secretary of Court.

**Convener of Court:** The lay Court members elect a senior lay member ('the Convener') from among their number. The Convener chairs those parts of the Court meetings not chaired by the Rector, including reports from Court committees, and undertakes all other responsibilities expected of a chairman, e.g. performance review of the Principal, attendance at the national Committee of University Chairs of governing bodies.

**Secretary of Court:** the office holder, who is also the Director of Administration, is responsible for the issuing of the Court agenda and papers and for advice to the Convener of Court ahead of and during Court meetings.

### 3. What does Court do?

The present powers of the Court are defined in the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1966. These include the administration and management of the whole revenue and property of the University, the amendment of the composition, powers and functions of bodies in the University, the creation of new bodies, review of decisions of Senate, and, on the recommendation of Senate, the regulation of degrees and admission and discipline of students.

The Court is involved in the development of, and ultimately approves, the University's strategic plan. It approves any major financial decisions, such as whether or not to borrow money; it also approves the University's proposed budget. It authorises the acquisition or disposal of University property (all the property belonging to the University at the passing of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1889 was vested in the Court). Court is responsible for the appointment of professors, lecturers and examiners (1889 Act), and administrators (1966 Act). It also regulates their salaries and pension arrangements (1966). Court is also responsible for setting fee levels for students (1966) and is responsible to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for certain financial matters, as detailed in the Financial Memorandum with the SFC. Court's responsibilities are set out in its statement of Primary Responsibilities (Annex 1). In addressing these, Court members are required to comply with Court's Code of Conduct (Annex 2).

A number of the Court's functions are delegated to committees which report to Court and which seek Court's approval for major decisions. The seven main committees of Court are:

- Audit Committee
- Estates Committee
- Finance Committee
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee
- Human Resources Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Remuneration Committee

Further details of these committees, including their remits, are at

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/courtoffice/universitycourtandcourtmeetings/>

The Court has agreed to delegate authority to act on its behalf in urgent matters between meetings of Court to the Principal, Convener of Court and the Secretary of Court, acting together. Any action taken under delegated authority has to be reported to the next meeting of Court. Court has also given authority to the Secretary of Court to act on its behalf between meetings on matters of routine business. The Secretary of Court is answerable to Court for any action which he/she takes on its behalf and a written report is made to the next meeting of Court detailing any such action taken for endorsement by Court.

Exercise of Court powers is, in certain prescribed circumstances in the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1966, by Ordinance, which requires consultation with the General Council and the Senate and then Privy Council approval; in other circumstances by Resolution, which requires consultation with the General Council and the Senate; or by simple decision without the need for formal consultation. Examples of matters regulated under Ordinances are the foundation of the earlier Chairs/Professorships, provisions for the execution of deeds, and amendments to the

composition of the main University bodies (Court, Senate). Examples of matters regulated by Resolution are Degree regulations and amendments and the foundation of more recent Chairs/Professorships.

#### **4. How does Court do its work?**

Meetings of the Court are normally held five times a year. A typical Court agenda will contain the following items:

- Minutes of the last meeting
- Matters Arising
- Report from the Principal; this will include a summary of items arising from SMG business and key strategic matters which may require the approval of Court
- Report from the Secretary of Court
- Report on key area of University business, e.g. strategy, budget, Key Performance Indicators
- Reports from Court Committees
- Report from the Rector
- Communications from Council of Senate meeting

Other regular items appear in the schedule of Court business summarised below (Annex 3). The agenda for a Court meeting will identify issues that it recommends Court should discuss (starred 'A' items). A number of the reports to Court also contain 'B' items that are routine for formal approval (but are not expected to be discussed) or for information.

Standing Orders for the conduct of Court's business are available at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/courtoffice/universitycourtandcourtmeetings/>

The main committees of Court meet on a similar number of occasions per year as Court, several weeks before each Court meeting. A report from each of the committees, including its minutes, papers on major issues and details of any items for decision by Court, is provided to the Court meeting.

Papers are posted to Court members a week before the meeting. The Court agenda is put on the Court Office website at the same time. Draft Court minutes are put on the website once a draft is complete, and a final version is put on the website following formal approval of the minutes at the next meeting. Since 2012, Court papers have been put on the Court Office website after each Court meeting.

## **Section II: Senate and the Council of Senate**

### **1. What is Senate?**

Senate is the senior academic body of the University of Glasgow, responsible for the University's academic activity, including the maintenance of the University's academic standards. Its role is defined in legislation (the 1858 and 1966 Universities [Scotland] Acts refer) as 'to regulate and superintend the teaching and discipline of the University' and 'to promote research'.

In 2014, Senate established the Council of Senate to deal with all normal Senate business – see below.

### **2. Who is on Senate?**

There are two main categories of Senate members: *ex officio* and **elected**. The *ex officio* category comprises:

- The Principal (see below)
- The Clerk of Senate (see below)
- The Vice-Principals
- Professors of the University

The elected members are drawn from the (non-professorial) academic staff of the University. These members are elected for three-year periods on a rolling basis from the Colleges and they total one-third of the number of *ex officio* members.

There is no distinction in formal status between *ex officio* and elected members.

Senate presently comprises c. 600 members.

Even if they are not members of the Council of Senate (see below), members of Senate receive papers for meetings of the Council of Senate. They have a standing invitation to attend meetings of the Council of Senate, to propose items for discussion, and they may participate in debate, although they may not participate in Council votes unless they are members of the Council.

The next meeting of Senate is scheduled to be held in October 2016, at which point it will review the activities of the Council of Senate during its first two years of operation.

### **3. What is the Council of Senate?**

Constitutionally, the Council of Senate is a committee of Senate. It was established in 2014 by Senate and empowered to carry out all of the normal business of Senate.

The formal constitution of the Council of Senate may be found at:  
<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/senateandcommittees/>

#### 4. Who is on the Council of Senate?

The following are members of the Council of Senate:

Ex officio members: The Principal (Convener)  
The Clerk of Senate  
The Vice-Principals  
Heads of School  
Directors of Research Institutes  
The Secretary of Court

Student members: Twelve student members, appointed by and from the Students' Representative Council, and drawn from across the University in proportions corresponding approximately to the composition of the overall student body.

Elected members: There are twice the number of elected members as of *ex-officio* members, elected by and from the professorial and elected members of Senate.

There are presently 75 elected members of the Council.

The elected members are appointed by the Colleges, with each College appointing numbers of members in proportion to their share of the total number of students and research and teaching staff in the University. A minimum of 20% of the elected members of Council in each College must be non-professorial members of Senate. The period of appointment is three years, and elected members may stand for a second, but not a third, consecutive term. Members appointed to the Council of Senate are individually and collectively responsible to the Council; they are not appointed as College delegates.

#### 5. What does the Council of Senate do?

One of the main legal responsibilities of Senate is the awarding of the University's degrees. In practice, detailed consideration of proposed programmes is devolved to the Colleges and Council of Senate committees. Nominations for **Honorary Degrees** from the **Honorary Degrees Committee** are approved at Council meetings.

In discharging Senate's responsibilities for teaching and research, the Council of Senate delegates related detailed issues to key specialist committees<sup>1</sup>: **Education Policy & Strategy** (or

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<sup>1</sup> For details of the range of Council of Senate Committees and their remits, see <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/senateandcommittees/>

EdPSC) and the **Academic Standards** (or ASC), both of which deal with learning and teaching matters, and **Research Planning & Strategy** (or RPSC). These committees provide the Council with regular reports, and the Council considers (not exclusively) the strategic dimensions and implications of any proposals<sup>2</sup>. As a matter of course, the Council identifies the reports from EdPSC and RPSC for discussion. In practice, most major University policy developments come before the Council via one of these committees.

Proposals may also be brought to the Council of Senate by the Principal and in reports from the **Senior Management Group** (see below).

The Council also receives regular reports from the **Student Support & Development Committee (SSDC)**. SSDC serves as a forum for the University and the Students' Representative Council to work in partnership to identify, address and monitor, at a strategic level, matters affecting student support and development with the aim of enhancing the quality of the student experience.

Committees and others developing proposals are requested to provide an indication at the earliest feasible stage of initiatives likely to be submitted for the Council's consideration. This is to allow members time to inform themselves of the issues concerned and to discuss these informally with colleagues. The Senate Discussion Forum may be used to facilitate such discussion.

In line with its responsibilities delegated by Senate, the Council also receives reports arising from the activities of officers and committees delegated to deal with student-related matters – **academic appeals, complaints and student conduct issues**. (See below on the Senate Assessors.)

The Council of Senate's agenda also always includes '**communications**', some of which are of a purely formal nature, from **the University Court**. The Council also sends its communications to meetings of Court. These will include any matter which the Council has considered and which requires the endorsement of the Court. The Clerk of Senate presents the Communications from the Council to Court. The Secretary of Court does the same for communications from Court at Council of Senate meetings. In addition, the Senate Assessors on Court may provide further commentary on Court communications at Council meetings<sup>3</sup>.

Other formal matters the Council deals with include the **appointment of representatives** to a number of external bodies – school governing bodies, etc.

At the start of the session, the Council receives a note of the main items of business expected in the coming session. As indicated above, initiatives under development are reported to the

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<sup>2</sup> College Deans for Learning & Teaching, Graduate Studies and Research chair key College committees, including Learning & Teaching Committees, and occupy positions on EdPSC and RPSC, thereby maintaining the strong link between the Colleges and Senate. College Learning & Teaching Committee conveners ensure there is appropriate coordination between the College's constituent Schools. To facilitate, papers for the University Learning & Teaching Committee are copied to all School Heads of Learning & Teaching.

<sup>3</sup> See below on how interaction between the Council of Senate, Court and the SMG takes place.

Council at the earliest appropriate stage. Every other year, the Conveners of the main committees explain committee remits and highlight current issues.

## **6. How does the Council of Senate do its work?**

### ***Meetings***

There are five scheduled meetings of the Council of Senate in each year. The timing reflects the pattern of the academic year. **Dates of forthcoming meetings** are always provided with the Council papers and are also available on the Senate Office web pages. **Meetings are normally held at 2.00 pm on Thursday afternoons, and customarily take place in the Senate Room in the Gilbert Scott Building.** Tea and coffee are available for members from 1.45 pm in the area outside the Senate Room. It is very difficult to predict the duration of meetings. The normal maximum length of meetings is ninety minutes. Members who require to leave meetings may do so, normally at an appropriate point between agenda items.

Meetings are convened by the Principal. On the rare occasion where the Principal is not present, the Senior Vice-Principal or one of the Vice-Principals convenes. The convener is supported by the Clerk of Senate and Director of the Senate Office. The Senate Office drafts the Senate minutes.

Meetings customarily begin with the formal induction of new professors as members of Senate.

### ***Agenda & discussion***

There are typically c. 15 items on the Council's agenda, although not all are discussed. The agenda is discussed beforehand by the Council **Business Committee**. This committee comprises the Principal (as convener), Clerk of Senate, Vice-Principals, and President of the Students' Representative Council, together with eight elected members of the Council (with a minimum of one member of the Council from each College), elected by the elected members of the Council. The Business Committee provides an annotated agenda which identifies issues that it recommends the Council should discuss (i.e., 'starred' items), may offer comment on topical matters, and checks to ensure that actions previously agreed have been progressed appropriately.

- Part A lists items that require formal approval, but which are not expected to be discussed.
- Part B comprises items for discussion.
- Part C provides items for information.

Members have the opportunity at the beginning of meetings to ask that further items are starred. Members are, however, strongly encouraged to notify the Senate Office (see below) in advance of the meeting of issues they would like starred for discussion. This allows the Office to contact relevant officers to ensure they are prepared and thus helps to resolve any concerns at the meeting, rather than necessitate or prolong further consideration of the issue under discussion.

Part B of the agenda mostly comprises items of strategic importance for consideration, reports from the main committees and the formal approval of the minutes of the last Council meeting.

The agenda also includes '**Principal's Q&A**' as a standing item. Here, the Principal reports to Senate on questions and issues that have been submitted (in advance of meetings) by members. Members may submit proposals for questions to the Principal for response and discussion at Senate. Proposed questions should be submitted in writing to the Senate Office two weeks before Senate meets for consideration by the Principal. Members whose questions have been accepted will be notified and their questions will be included in the papers.

The agenda also includes **Convener's Business**, where the Principal provides a report on important matters currently affecting the University. Under **Clerk of Senate's Business**, the Clerk of Senate also provides a report on matters concerning the Council and Senate and, as noted above, the Secretary of Court presents the **Communications from the University Court**.

Normally, the Principal will invite the senior officer responsible to introduce items starred for discussion. Others who have been involved in preparing proposals or for whom proposals have significant implications may also be invited to comment before open discussion commences. The SRC will also be asked as a matter of course to express a view on issues under discussion.

At the meeting of the Council held in June, the Council receives a presentation on the University's finances, ahead of the finalizing of the budget for the forthcoming year.

The June meeting also receives a report of any members or former members whose deaths have been announced during the year and the Principal invites the Council to stand for a minute's silence to mark its respects.

The size and breadth of the Council means that there will often be a range of viewpoints on any issue under consideration. On occasion, a decision will be taken on the basis of a show of hands, or, for closely balanced and/or contentious matters, a counted vote may be taken. These have traditionally been very rare. On such occasions, the Principal has both a deliberative and a casting vote.

### ***Proposal of agenda items***

Members of Senate as well as those of the Council are also invited to propose items for inclusion on the Council agenda. Proposals should be submitted in writing (preferably by email) to the Senate Office not less than two weeks before the Council meets. The proposal should include any necessary contextualising information. Proposed items are considered by the Council Business Committee at its pre-Council meeting, and members whose suggestions have been accepted are notified in advance.

### ***Papers***

Papers for Council meetings are normally posted on the Senate Office web site on the Thursday of the week preceding the meeting and are available to all members of the full Senate. The Senate Office sends an email to all members notifying them when the papers have been uploaded. New members are provided with information on downloading papers. Members of Senate or the Council who experience any difficulties in this regard should contact the Senate Office. Papers are available on the Senate Office web site wherever it is not considered necessary to keep them confidential.

Not all agenda items have accompanying papers. As noted above, committees provide reports that focus on key matters – formal minutes of committee meetings are not submitted. Committees will sometimes append full copies of documents associated with issues they have been considering. Reports from committees note where there has been a range of views on an issue and, where appropriate, in making recommendations, list options for the Council to consider, together with their rationales. Recommendations which are not discussed are considered to have been approved at the meeting concerned. This includes recommendations contained within the papers received for formal approval that are not discussed.

### ***Other practical matters concerning meetings***

Typically, c.100 people attend Council meetings, comprising Council and Senate members and some non-members, such as Directors of University Service units who have an interest in business under consideration. Non-members of Senate who wish to attend Council should contact the Senate Office in advance.

A small number of seats are reserved. The Principal, Clerk of Senate, and Vice-Principals sit at a table facing the assembly, together with the Director of the Senate Office (who is in attendance at all meetings). The Heads of College normally occupy seats on the front row in order to participate in the induction of new professors. No other seats are reserved.

### ***Outwith meetings***

The Council extends authority to the Principal and Clerk of Senate to decide matters on its behalf between meetings and during the summer months between meetings – ‘summer powers’. All such decisions are reported to Senate at its next meeting for formal endorsement.

An **online forum** has been established to permit members of Senate to exchange views on forthcoming business. The forum may be accessed by logging onto MyCampus.

**A copy of the Communications from the Council to the University Court**, available to all staff and students, is issued on the Senate Office web site after every Council meeting. The Communications summarise matters discussed and decisions taken by the Council.

Information concerning established policy, regulations, codes, etc., including the University Calendar, is available on the Senate Office web site – See:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/>

The Senate Office notifies groups of staff and students affected of recent policy decisions and their implications.

Members of Senate with queries concerning any aspect of Senate activity should contact the Senate Office for advice (see above for contact details).

## **7. Key Officers and the Senate Office**

### ***The Principal***

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor is Head and formally Chief Accounting Officer of the University. The Principal is formally the President of the Senate and convenes Senate meetings. The Principal is Convener of the Council of Senate.

### ***The Clerk of Senate***

The position of the Clerk of Senate has existed at the University of Glasgow since the eighteenth century. It is traditionally held by a senior academic member of the University. The post-holder has Vice-Principal status (full title: Clerk of Senate and Vice-Principal) and is a member of the University's Senior Management Group. The Clerk is appointed by and from the Senate for a four-year period. The Clerk is formally responsible for the management of Council of Senate business and has formal responsibility for the regulation of academic policy and practice. The Clerk also has important responsibilities for the on-going relationship between the University and its students and with respect to the assurance and enhancement of the quality of the University's teaching provision – notably, for University degrees that are provided by our validated institutions<sup>4</sup>. The Clerk also has extensive responsibilities for ceremonial events at the University. In addition to the staff of the Senate Office (see below), the Clerk of Senate works closely with the Principal and Vice-Principals, Chief Advisers of Studies and the Directors of support services.

The present Clerk of Senate is Professor John Briggs, Professor of Geography. Email: clerk-of-senate@glasgow.ac.uk

### ***Senate Assessors on Court***

Under present arrangements, the composition of the University Court includes seven members (of a total of 25) appointed by and from the Senate. The seven 'Assessors' are drawn from the membership of Senate across the University. The group of Assessors comprises four professorial members and three elected members. Assessors serve for a period of four years. They are extensively engaged in the work of the Court, notably as members of Court and other central committees and associated working groups. Senate Assessors also participate as panel members in the major six-yearly review of Schools' teaching, learning and assessment organised by the Senate Office ('PSR' or Periodic Subject Reviews – see below) and are often appointed to working groups established to deal with particular initiatives. Senate Assessors are full members of Court. As such, they are individually and collectively responsible to Court in the same way as all other Court members. Senate Assessors are not formal delegates of Senate and, accordingly, are not charged with presenting Senate's views to Court. Part of their task, however, is to help inform Court of the University's academic activities. Stemming from that, and to inform themselves, they consult with academic and other colleagues across the University. As part of that exercise, they may participate in the discussions on the Senate Discussion Forum<sup>5</sup> and they

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<sup>4</sup> That is, institutions which do not have the power to grant degrees themselves and which offer programmes of study approved by and formally owned by the University.

<sup>5</sup> The Forum may be accessed by logging onto MyGlasgow.

may also hold surgeries to provide further means of gathering University members' views and facilitating communications between the academic community and Court.

For further information concerning the role of the Senate Assessors on Court, see –

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/senateandcommittees/senateassessorsoncourt/>

### ***Senate Assessors for Academic Appeals, Student Complaints and Conduct***

Student appeals, complaints and some conduct issues are dealt with initially by College officers and committees. Unresolved and more serious cases are referred to Senate level. Accordingly, Assessors are appointed by Senate to act on its behalf in these three areas, and appoints in each area a Senior Senate Assessor to oversee cases. Appointment periods are of three or four years' duration. The Senior Assessor for Appeals is also the Convener of the Senate Appeals Committee. The Student Conduct Committee is convened by the Principal or by a Vice-Principal. The membership of the associated committees is drawn from across the Colleges.

The various University Codes covering Appeals, Complaints and Conduct are contained in the *University Calendar*. See –

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/policies/calendar/>

### ***The Senate Office***

The Senate Office provides a range of academic services to staff and students across the University and to a number of external stakeholders.

The Senate Office's remit takes its cue largely from the roles of Senate and the Council. Thus, it plays a coordinating role in academic governance for the University, provides support for and helps to develop, communicate and implement aspects of the University's policies and practices in respect of Learning & Teaching. In this, it supports Senate and its members and Senate's main committees (excepting RPSC -this is supported by staff of the office of the Vice-Principal Research<sup>6</sup>). It also manages production of the *University Calendar* (compendium of regulations). Senate Office staff provide advice on regulatory matters, in conjunction with the Clerk of Senate. The Office works closely with the Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) as well as the Clerk of Senate, and with staff and students across the University.

Consistent with the constitutional role of Senate itself, the Office manages the University's centralised systems for the enhancement and assurance of the standards and quality of its degree programmes and associated policy. This includes the University's external examiner system as well as the PSRs noted above. It also manages the University's relationship with the external agency that assesses the quality of its teaching – the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education – and associated aspects of the University's dealings with the Scottish Funding Council.

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<sup>6</sup> See: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/rsio/>

The Office also provides a number of student-related services. In this, it manages the systems employed by Senate in respect of academic appeals, student complaints and student conduct. Accordingly, it works closely with the Assessors appointed by Senate in these areas of activity.

Members of the Senate Office work with the Clerk of Senate on the organisation of many of the University's main ceremonial events.

More information on Senate Office and its staff is available at the Office web site - <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/> - and members should not hesitate to contact the Office with any queries concerning Senate operations or any other aspect of the Office's work. The Director of the Senate Office is Dr Jack Aitken.

#### **Contact Details**

**Senate website:** <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/>

**Director of the Senate Office:** [jack.aitken@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:jack.aitken@glasgow.ac.uk) (0141 330 3292)

**Senate Office (general enquiries):** 0141 330 6063

#### **8. Standing Orders of the Council of Senate**

Standing Orders of the Council of Senate are available at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/senateandcommittees/standingorders/>

#### **9. Standing Orders of Senate**

Standing Orders of Senate are available at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/senateandcommittees/standingorders/standingordersofcouncilofsenate/>

## **Section III : The Senior Management Group**

### **1. What is the Senior Management Group?**

The Senior Management Group (SMG) is convened by the Principal and comprises the senior executive officers of the University. These officers are appointed by the University Court to provide leadership, within the context of the University's Strategic Plan and to manage the University's human, physical and financial resources, within the context of the policies approved by the Court.

### **2. Who is on SMG?**

Its membership, which is determined by the Principal currently includes:

The Principal

9 Vice Principals, being:

- 4 Heads of College
- The Senior Vice-Principal
- The Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching)
- The Vice-Principal (Research & Enterprise)
- The Vice-Principal (Knowledge Exchange)
- The Clerk of Senate

The Secretary of Court

The Director of Finance

The meeting is clerked by the Head of the Principal's office.

### **3. What does SMG do?**

The SMG has responsibility for ensuring that the University policies are effectively implemented and that this is done in a coordinated way across the Colleges and University Services. It has a role in developing corporate initiatives and policies, for consideration by Senate and Court. SMG maintains a watching brief on the University strategy and in particular on progress against the strategic KPIs and it takes action as required to ensure that the University is positioned to meet them. SMG also has an ongoing responsibility to monitor, assess and address risk, and in liaison with Court, update the strategic risk list annually.

### **4. How does SMG do its work?**

#### ***Frequency of meetings***

The SMG meets once a month every month throughout the year. Meetings are usually scheduled for 9.00am to 2.00pm.

## ***Agendas***

Agendas are generated by members and cover a broad range of issues relating to the University strategy, finance/budgets, human resources, research management and performance, learning and teaching, internationalisation. SMG receives regular reports on strategic risks, major IT initiatives, biannual reports on media activity and fundraising activity, a yearly report on Health & Safety and the Glasgow International College. It has the following standing items: Convener's business, admissions and recruitment, monthly university management accounts, audit reports, action log.

## **Communications**

The Principal and the other SMG members attend meetings of Senate and Court, and they have an important role in ensuring that there are effective communications between all three bodies (Senate, Court and SMG) and that, when important matters of University business are being considered, Senate and Court are well informed.

The Principal reports to Court and Senate on SMG business.

Minutes of SMG meetings are circulated to Heads of School and Research Institutes and verbal update reports are given at University Services Management Group.

It is intended that summary reports will in future be issued following each SMG meeting.

## **Principal's Advisory Group**

In addition to SMG, the Principal convenes the Principal's Advisory Group (PAG), which comprises the members of SMG, together with the Heads of School and Directors of Research Institutes. PAG meets monthly.

The purpose of PAG is to deal with ongoing operational matters, and to provide a forum and opportunity for members to update colleagues and raise issues relating to their specific areas of responsibility.

#### **Section IV : Effective Communication and Cooperation**

Communications are exchanged between the Council of Senate and Court after each of their meetings and the Clerk of Senate presents communications from the Council to Court at Court meetings. In the same way, the Secretary of Court presents communications from Court to the Council and the Senate Assessors on Court may provide further commentary on the communications from Court at Council meetings.

The Principal is a member of Court as well as the President of Senate and Convener of the Council of Senate.

The President of the Students' Representative Council is also a member of Court and of the Council of Senate.

Senate Assessors have membership of committees of Court, and there is Court representation on the main Council of Senate committees.

To assist mutual awareness, the Council and Court publish the agenda for forthcoming meetings on their web pages. Subject to the need to reserve some matters of business, Council and Court papers are available to all in the University on the respective web sites.

At the outset of the academic year, the Principal and Convener of Court advise the University community of business expected to feature on the Council and Court agendas during the coming session. Reports are issued to the University by email following meetings advising on the main matters considered and decisions made. As the Council deals with a substantial number of policy developments, the Senate Office maintains a web page listing policies including when each policy was approved (or amended) and a short summary. See: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/policies/>

Informal arrangements are also maintained - such as the Senate Guest Night dinners - to provide occasions for members of Senate and Court to meet.

Significant matters of policy which have a primarily academic bearing, the province of the Council of Senate, may also have resource implications, and will therefore require the approval of Court. Similarly, policy matters which primarily concern resources may also have consequences for academic activity, and in such situations policy decisions will be taken by Court only after a clear process of consultation with the Council of Senate, aimed at achieving an outcome that is supported by both bodies.

Consultation may simply involve seeking a direct response from the next appropriate meeting of the body concerned, conveyed by means of Court-Council communications. Sometimes the matter may be more complex and/or far-reaching, and it will be important to ensure that communications between the Council of Senate and Court are clear and that both bodies are well briefed. In such situations, SMG has an important role to play in promoting mutual understanding of Council and Court viewpoints and in seeking consensus between the two bodies.

The arrangements in place for communications between Court, Senate/Council and SMG should obviate disagreements amongst these bodies. However, occasionally the Principal - either on his/her own initiative, or having received advice from Senate/Council or Court - may decide that an issue is of sufficient importance to the academic work of the University that a formal Joint Council/Court Working Group should be established. The Group would have a remit to consider the matter and to formulate recommendations to the Council and Court, and its establishment would require the approval of both bodies.

A Joint Council of Senate/Court Working Group would have an equal number of Court and Council members (six each is suggested). Court and the Council would select representatives to the Group on the basis that no member of the Joint Working Group would have a direct interest in the matter under discussion.

The Joint Working Group would have the power to call any member of the University to provide information, clarification or other evidence, either in writing or verbally. All members of the Group would observe strict rules of confidentiality: it would therefore be able to discuss all relevant issues and consider data of a confidential nature.

Meetings of the Joint Working Group would be called as quickly as possible, discussions taken forward without delay, and the Group would be required to complete its work within a timescale agreed between Court and the Council, or, failing such agreement, within 28 days of the establishment of the group. The aim of the Group would be to formulate recommendations for consideration by the Council and Court which, if not unanimously agreed by the Group, would be acceptable to at least two-thirds of its members.

## **University of Glasgow**

### **STATEMENT OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

#### **General**

To be satisfied that appropriate mechanisms are in place:

1. to administer and manage 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;
2. to safeguard the good name and values of the University and to ensure that the institution is responsive to the interests of its stakeholders, including students, staff, graduates, the local community and funding bodies;
3. to make provision, in consultation with the Senate, for the general welfare of students;
4. to ensure the solvency of the University and to safeguard its assets ;
5. to ensure compliance with the University's Statutes, Ordinances, Resolutions and other rules and regulations of the University, as well as national and international law where applicable;
6. to appoint the Principal and 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;
7. to appoint a Secretary of Court and to ensure that with regard to his or her managerial responsibilities in the University, there is an appropriate separation in the lines of accountability;

#### **Strategic Planning**

8. to approve the mission of the University and its strategic plans, setting out its aims and objectives in teaching and research, and identifying the financial, physical and staffing requirements for their achievement;
9. to approve a financial strategy, long-term business plans and annual budgets;
10. to approve an estates strategy for the management and development of the University's estate and buildings in support of institutional objectives;
11. to approve a human resources strategy and to ensure that reward arrangements for its employees are appropriate to the needs of the University;
12. to monitor the University's performance against approved plans and key performance indicators;

#### **Exercise of Controls**

13. to make clear and to review regularly the executive authority and other powers delegated to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, to other senior officers and to

- other bodies of the University including the Senate and Committees of Court, such authority and powers to be set out in a Schedule of Delegated Authorities;
14. to ensure the proper use of public funds awarded to the University, observance of the terms of the Financial Memorandum between the University and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and compliance with the University's Outcome Agreement with the SFC;
  15. to establish and monitor effective systems of internal control and accountability throughout the University;
  16. to oversee the University's arrangements for internal and external audit and to approve the University's annual financial statements;
  17. to ensure that arrangements are in place for the proper management of health and safety in respect of students, staff and other persons affected by University operations;
  18. to be the University's legal authority and, as such, to ensure that systems are in place for meeting all the University's legal obligations, including those arising from contracts and other legal commitments made in the University's name.

### **Effectiveness and Transparency**

19. to ensure, through the appointment of co-opted lay persons in accordance with the Statutes, and through liaison with the University's General Council with regard to its Assessors, a balance of skills and experience amongst the membership of the Court sufficient to meet its primary responsibilities;
20. to ensure that the proceedings of the Court are conducted in accordance with best practice in higher education corporate governance and with the principles of public life drawn up by the Committee on Standards in Public Life;
21. to ensure that procedures are in place in the University for dealing with internal grievances, conflicts of interest and public interest disclosure;
22. to monitor its own performance and that of its Committees, with a formal evaluation of effectiveness undertaken not less than every five years.

**Adopted by the University Court: 9 October 2013**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF COURT**

This Code of Conduct applies equally to all members of Court. The Court endorses the seven principles of public life as defined by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (see following page). In practical terms, these principles require that the Court and its members should observe the highest standards of integrity, objectivity and honesty in the transaction of all its business.

Members of Court should:-

- make all reasonable efforts to attend every meeting of Court. In the event of unavoidable absence, a member should inform the Secretary of Court prior to the meeting;
- read the papers to be considered by Court (normally circulated to members on the Tuesday prior to each meeting), consider their contents and seek any additional information or necessary clarification from the Secretary of Court, the convener of the committee concerned or the author of the paper;
- ensure, through the Chair, that their views relevant to an item under discussion are heard by Court;
- always bear in mind the best interests of the University;
- declare any personal or business interests which may conflict with their responsibilities to the University; leave the meeting and not participate in the decision-making process if there is a conflict of interest;
- participate in ensuring that discussions are held and decisions taken in an honest, open and objective manner and that taking sectional positions is avoided;
- when a consensus decision cannot be reached, vote objectively and dispassionately. If a member votes against a motion which is carried by the majority of those present, he/she should subsequently support the decision or, exceptionally, ask that his/her dissent is recorded. In extreme circumstances, for example if the matter is felt to be one of conscience or principle, a member may resign from the Court; and
- bring the same qualities of honesty, openness and objectivity to any work they have agreed to undertake on Court Committees or on working parties established by Court.

## **SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE**

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions 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 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**

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.

These principles were set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life

**ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF COURT BUSINESS**

- (September/ October)* • *Strategy Discussion Day)*
- October** • Report from Head of College (pre-Court briefing)
- Report on any action taken under delegated powers over summer
- Report on Strategy Discussion Day
- Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Committee remits and dates
- Statement of Primary Responsibilities
- Scheme of Delegated Authorities
- Schedule of Court business for forthcoming year
- Report on previous year's attendance of Court and Committees
- Learning & Teaching update and KPIs from Vice Principal
- Summary Income and Expenditure report (Finance Committee)
- Nominations Committee recommendations for forthcoming year
- Annual report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution-led Review of Teaching Quality (ELIR)
- Honorary Degree nominations
- (November)* • *(Half day briefing on Governance, Funding and HE Policy) (if required)*
- December** • Report from Head of University Services (pre-Court briefing)
- Audited Accounts/Financial Statements for previous year (including subsidiaries' financial statements and GU Trust statements)
- Report on Investments (Finance Committee)
- Summary Income and Expenditure report (Finance Committee)
- Audit Committee annual report
- Human Resources KPIs
- February** • Report from Head of College (pre-Court briefing)
- SRC annual report
- Draft Outcome Agreement for next year from Vice Principal
- Finance KPIs
- Summary Income and Expenditure report (Finance Committee)
- April** • Report from Head of College (pre-Court briefing)
- Research update and KPIs from Vice Principal
- SFC Main Grant Allocations for forthcoming year
- Summary Income and Expenditure report (Finance Committee)
- (May/June)* • *(Half day briefing on University Finances) (if required)*
- June** • Report from Head of College (pre-Court briefing)
- Strategic Plan (annual update) including KPIs
- Capital Programme (annual update for approval)
- Budget Overview for forthcoming year/Financial Forecasts
- Report on Investments (Finance Committee)
- Summary Income and Expenditure report (Finance Committee)
- Estates KPIs