

**Committee Conventions**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The University first published Committee Conventions in 2008. This is an update to those original guidelines. The objective of these guidelines is to ensure there is a consistent approach to agendas, minutes, papers and reports across the University.

**PROPOSED APPROACH**

**General**

2. The remit and composition of the University’s Governance Committees are lodged within the University Committee Database, managed by Policy & Planning. Committees managed at Faculty and Service Area level should also have defined remits and compositions held and managed locally. In preparation for the role of committee secretary, it is essential to examine the remit and composition of the relevant committee, as well as copies of previous minutes, agendas and papers.

3. It is crucial to familiarise yourself with the role the committee has within the broader committee structure. A chart showing the current governance committee structure can be seen at on the [Committee Structure](http://www.stir.ac.uk/policyandplanning/governanceandcommittees/committeestructure/) webpage. This allows you to see which other committees you should seek regular reports from, as well as those to which you are required to report. As such, you should also familiarise yourself with the schedule of key committee dates for each year, also available on the available on the [Committee Structure](http://www.stir.ac.uk/policyandplanning/governanceandcommittees/committeestructure/) webpage.

4. An effective relationship between the Committee Chair and Committee Secretary is essential to ensure that the business of the committee is conducted appropriately. As a minimum, it would normally be expected that a draft agenda should be discussed with the Chair of the Committee well in advance of papers being issued and that draft minutes should be agreed by the Chair prior to circulating to members or disseminating more widely. For many of the core University Committees there is a more formal series of agenda briefings which involves a wider group of interested parties. Some committees also operate on the basis of a detailed briefing note which is prepared by the secretary to the committee and details the key issues which are likely to be raised under each item, who is scheduled to present particular items, and other matters of which the Chair ought to be aware in managing the committee.

5. The Secretary should ensure that all facilities and resources the Committee needs are available. This includes booking the room, ensuring that any audio-visual equipment requires is available and considering refreshments for longer meetings.

6. It is often helpful to take minutes and papers from previous meetings to each meeting of the committee, in case you are asked to check or verify a piece of information from a previous meeting. This is easiest to do if you can take electronic copies using a tablet or laptop. You should also find out whether there are any standing orders which govern the operation of the committee, and, where there are, take these along with you. For governance committees such as University Court and Academic Council a copy of the University Calendar is also useful to take along to facilitate checking of any Ordinances, Regulations or other requirements.

7. For large committee meetings or where the secretary may not know all the people present, it is often helpful to take along a listing of all committee members to the meeting, with a space for signatures by those present.

8. If the discussion on an item of business has finished and you are uncertain as to what the formal decision has been, you should seek clarification from the Chair as to what has been decided.

9. All University meetings should be time-limited to two hours wherever possible.

10. All committee documents should be produced using the Arial 11 point font. The use of abbreviations and acronyms should be avoided where possible or explained for all but the most commonly used acronyms.

**Distribution of papers**

11. It is a general convention that papers for all committees should be issued a full week in advance of the meeting date. Whilst it is recognised that this cannot always be adhered to, every effort should be made to issue papers in sufficient time to allow for them to be read in full by all committee members. Meetings may then be conducted on the basis that all members have read the papers prior to the meeting. There should therefore be no need for lengthy presentations of papers which have already been circulated.

12. Many committees now make use of electronic distribution of agendas and papers. This has the advantage of cutting down on distribution and printing costs and reducing the time it takes to get papers to committee members. Some points to take into consideration when using electronic distribution:

* Be careful not to fall into the trap of circulating more papers or longer papers because it is easy to do.
* Papers should ideally be circulated as a single pdf file making it easier for members using tablets or laptops to navigate through the papers.
* Using a single pdf file makes it even more important to have a consistent style for all papers.
* Distribution methods must be secure particularly for highly sensitive or confidential papers.

**Professional Role of the Committee Secretary**

13. The role of Committee Secretary is quite explicitly not expected to be a passive one. Along with the Chair, the Secretary should play a key role in managing and advancing the business of the committee and will in many cases be the expert and authority in that committee’s area of work, heavily involved in the preparation of its papers and reports. The Committee Secretary should read over all papers before they are distributed to ensure that the content and presentation are appropriate and consistent.

14. You will monitor actions to ensure that business is followed through and should use your knowledge of the committee, its business and its place within the governance structure to draw attention to any procedural issues, additional information or aspects of University governance which will have an impact upon the decisions being taken. You should ensure meetings are productive and consider ways in which the process can be streamlined and improved.

**Data Classification**

15. The University has a [Data Classification and Handling Policy](http://www.stir.ac.uk/media/services/registry/planning/legalcompliance/DataClassificationPolicy.pdf), which requires all data, including documents, to be classified into one of four categories (Public, Internal, Restricted, Confidential). The Policy provides further information on what these categories mean and how they should be used. This is particularly relevant for committees where all committee papers and reports should be explicitly categorised into one of these groupings.

**Agendas**

15. It is often helpful in managing the business of a committee to make use of a starring system of items which merit discussion. This simply means that the items which are annotated with a star, e.g. \*5. will be discussed by the committee. Those items which are not starred are not discussed and are disposed of as indicated on the agenda, e.g. noted or approved.

16. All agendas should clearly note: the title of the committee, the date, venue and time of the meeting, details of how to add items to the agenda or achieve starring of currently unstarred items, contact details in the event of any other queries relating to the business of the committee and a listing of the items of business which are scheduled to be covered at that meeting. This would normally include (in this order):

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Items for Approval

Items for Report

Any Other Open Business

Reserved Business

Date of Next Meeting

17. At the first meeting of every committee in each year, the agenda should include an item on the remit and composition of the Committee, to allow for this to be reiterated and noted by all members.

18. The agenda for the meeting should make clear what the committee is expected to do in terms of each item of business. This is normally captured in terms of one of the following phrases:-

To **consider**….

To **approve**….

To **note**….

To **recommend**….

Attention can usefully be drawn to the relevant verb through underlined or bold text.

19. If the business of the Committee requires it, agendas may be divided into two sections: (a) open business, which will usually consist of documents or topics that have been categorised as ‘Public’ or ‘Internal’ in terms of the Data Classification & Handling Policy, and (b) reserved business, for items of business classified as ‘Restricted’ or ‘Confidential’. All members of staff should assume that all open business, i.e. agendas, papers and minutes, of all formal committees will be publicly available, either via the University’s publication scheme or on request. Structuring the agenda in this way, and classifying each paper, will mean that committee members will be clear on the status of individual documents and will allow the Freedom of Information Unit to deal more easily with individual freedom of information requests relating to the committee’s business. Sample open and reserved business agendas are given at Appendix A & B.

**Papers & Reports**

20. Papers should be kept as brief as possible, with clear direction on recommendations or action required. A template for committee papers is given at Appendix C*.* Each paragraph and each page of the paper should be numbered to make discussion of the paper at the Committee easier.

21. All committee papers should be clearly marked in terms of the data classification status. If for some reason it is not appropriate to include text in a document showing its status, this could also be done in the documents properties in the comments field. Guidance on updating document properties can be found [here](https://support.office.com/en-ie/article/View-or-change-the-properties-for-an-Office-file-21d604c2-481e-4379-8e54-1dd4622c6b75#bm17).

22. When a Committee reports to another Committee, the paper should take the form of a report. The report includes any minute from the meeting that is relevant to the Committee it is reporting to. An example is shown at Appendix D. Any items for approval should be set out clearly at the beginning of the report followed by items for noting.

23. Oral reports and tabled papers (i.e. those that are not circulated in advance) should be kept to a minimum. Written reports circulated a week prior to the meeting should be the norm.

**Minutes**

24. The minutes of the meeting should generally aim to capture the sense of the meeting, along with any decisions taken, whilst seeking to be brief and succinct in so doing.

25. As communications from committees frequently take the form of minute extracts, you should ensure that each minute extract within the overall report makes sense in its own right, without the need for additional background information or clarification.

26. Coverage of each item within the minutes should normally conclude with a clear indication of the decision or action taken by the committee. This would normally be recorded by use of the following terms:-

The Committee **approved**….

The Committee **noted**…

The Committee **recommended**….

Attention can usefully be drawn to the relevant verb through the use of underlined or bold text.

27. Minutes of meetings may be intended to serve a number of different purposes. The purpose of the minutes affects the level of detail required and committee secretaries should restrict what is included to essential information only. For example:-

* + If the purpose is simply to identify who agreed to do what, an action list will be sufficient.
	+ If the intention is to provide an audit trail for University decisions and the reasons for those decisions, you should record the decision and the reason for taking that decision.
	+ If the minutes are intended to communicate more detailed information to people who were not present at the meeting, then a fuller record of what was said may be required. However, you should consider whether there are more effective ways of communicating information than using committee minutes.
	+ If a particular committee is being used as a sounding board for a new policy or approach, it may be sufficient for the minutes to record that the committee discussed the issue, with the person working on the area making fuller notes of the discussion; on other occasions, a fuller minute of the discussion would be appropriate.
	+ Sometimes different sections of the same set of minutes are intended to serve different purposes, so it may be appropriate for different styles to be adopted within the same document.
	+ It should be noted that committee minutes are not a transcript of a discussion but an official record of the meeting.

28. When minutes and reports are written, it should be assumed that they will be published or could be released as part of a Freedom of Information request. It does not necessarily follow that because an agenda paper is covered by an exemption or has been classified as Restricted or Confidential, the relevant minute of its discussion will also be exempt. If the secretary believes that the minutes do contain sensitive information, they should be clearly marked as Restricted or Confidential. A sample set of minutes is given at Appendix E.

### **Identification of Individuals in Minutes, Papers & Reports**

### 29. The interaction of Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation can cause difficulties in this area. All minutes, papers and reports are potentially accessible to the public, either through routine publication on the University’s website or on request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FoISA). However, the Data Protection Act 1998 aims to secure individuals’ rights to privacy by protecting information that is held about them.

30. In writing minutes, papers or reports careful consideration should be given to whether it is necessary to identify individuals. The extent to which individuals are mentioned by name in minutes and reports should be minimised. This necessitates a style of “It was suggested that…” rather than “Professor Y suggested that...”.

31. If it is necessary to identify a speaker in order for significance of the comments to be clear, this should normally be done by reference to the role they play in the Committee (e.g. the Chair) or to the office held within the University (e.g. “The Director of Finance”).

32. Similarly, students’ names and other personal data should not be recorded unless absolutely necessary. For example, this will be required in the minutes of Academic Appeals meetings, but will not be required in reporting a summary of decisions to Council.

33. References to personal events in the lives of members which may be mentioned in the course of proceedings (e.g. births, periods of illness) should not be recorded in the minutes.

**Referencing/Numbering**

34. A coherent and consistent approach to referencing and numbering of all aspects of the work of a committee should ease the process of tracking down a particular paper or minute extract, should this prove necessary. The following principles should apply:-

35. All referencing should be done on the basis of the academic year as opposed to the calendar year, e.g. 19/20

36. At the start of the academic year, all references for the committee should revert to 1, but numbering should be continuous over the course of the academic year for papers.

37. Each paper to be considered should be referenced with the initials of the committee, the year and the paper number, e.g. UC(19/20)23. This reference number should then appear against the heading in the minutes where the item was considered, e.g.

 5. KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT UC(19/20)23

38. The Agenda and Minutes for each meeting should be referenced with the initials of the committee, the year and the sequence number of the meeting, e.g. UC(19/20)Agenda 3, ESEC(19/20)Minutes 3.

**Availability of Agendas, Minutes and Papers under Information Access Legislation**

39. Minutes of unreserved business for University Court and Academic Council will be published on the University’s website, available via the University’s FoI Publication Scheme at [www.foi.stir.ac.uk](http://www.foi.stir.ac.uk). University Court papers classified as Public or Internal will also be routinely published.

40. Papers of Council, and records of all other committees not routinely published, may be subject to a request for access under the FoISA. In some instances information from committee minutes and papers will be exempt from disclosure under this legislation where it contains personal information where: it is commercially sensitive, information which may endanger the physical or mental health or the safety of an individual, or information which may substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs. Individuals are entitled to request access to personal information about them contained in minutes and papers through the subject access provisions of the Data Protection Act.

41. Requests for information from committee records should be referred to the FOI Unit (foiunit@stir.ac.uk).

42. Guidance on Freedom of Information exemptions and procedures can be found on the University’s [FoI web pages](http://www.stir.ac.uk/policyandplanning/legalcompliance/freedomofinformation/).

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

43. If you would like any further information on any of the foregoing, you should contact Policy & Planning (SACSAdmin@stir.ac.uk)

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

**UNIVERSITY COURT**

A meeting of the University Court will be held at 2.00 pm on Monday 16 March 2020 in the Court Room, preceded by lunch at 1.00pm in Room 4C6.

Members unable to attend the meeting, and who have not already tendered their apologies, are asked to let the Policy & Planning Office (Tel: 01786 466670/467025, email: PPGCommittees@stir.ac.uk) know by no later than 12 March 2020. For reasons of economy please advise us by the same date if you do not intend to take lunch.

Olivia Owen

Deputy Secretary

**AGENDA**

A starring system is used for the business of the Court. Items which are starred (\*) will be discussed and all other items will be noted or approved without further discussion. Any proposals for additional starred items should ideally be submitted to the Deputy Secretary no later than noon on Friday 13 March 2020.

**\*1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To note any declarations of interest from Court members, as appropriate

**2. MINUTES UC(19/20)Minutes 2**

To approve the minutes of the meeting of University Court held on 16 December 2019

**3. MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA**

**(i) Residences Update (Minute 9, Dec 2019) Oral Report**

To receive an oral update on the Residences Re-development project from the Director of Finance

**\*4. KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT UC(19/20)23**

To note the recent developments in the external environment

**\*5. REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE IN UC(19/20)24**

**SCOTLAND**

To consider the Report of the Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland

**\*6. GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

**(i) Court Appointment UC(19/20)25(i)**

To receive a report from the Court Appointments Committee

To homologate Chair’s action in filling vacancies in membership of Committees

**\*(ii) Review of Court Effectiveness UC(19/20)25(ii)**

To receive a update on the Review of Court Effectiveness

**\*(iii) Review of Committees UC(19/20)25(iii)**

To approve a the proposed changes to committee structures

**\*7. HR UPDATE UC(19/20)26**

To receive an update on HR matters including the outcome of the Employment Appeal Tribunal

**\*8. ACADEMIC COUNCIL UC(19/20)27**

To consider the report from the meeting of 4 March 2020

**\*9. JOINT POLICY, PLANNING & RESOURCES COMMITTEE UC(19/20)28**

To consider the report from the meeting of 17 February 2020

**\*10. AUDIT COMMITTEE UC(19/20)29**

To consider the report from the Audit Committee meeting of 24 February 2020

**11. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

**12. NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of Court is scheduled for 15 June 2020.

Policy & Planning

March 2020

**UNIVERSITY COURT – 16 MARCH 2020**

**RESERVED BUSINESS**

**13. MINUTES UC(19/20) Minutes 2R**

To approve the Reserved minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2019

**14. MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA**

**\*15. ORDINANCE 30 Oral Report**

To receive an oral update on action taken by the Principal under Ordinance 30

**16. EMERITUS TITLE**

To approve the granting of the title Professor Emeritus to Professor Plum from the date of his retirement on 31st March 2020

**17.** **ANY OTHER RESERVED BUSINESS**

Policy & Planning

March 2020

**UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING**

**UNIVERSITY STRATEGY & POLICY GROUP**

**Introduction**

1. This section should include a brief introduction to the paper (e.g. to what does it relate, and why has it been developed?)

**Purpose**

1. This should set out the purpose of the paper (e.g. is it for approval, for consideration, for noting, or for recommendation to a Governance Committee for formal approval?)

**Background**

1. This section should include any information that will help the reader to understand the context behind the paper. Depending on the nature of the paper, this section might not always be necessary, or it might be possible to have either an ‘introduction’ or a ‘background/context’ section.

**Main body/Proposals**

1. This section should set out the main issues or proposals that need to be considered. It is likely that the heading of this section will change depending on the content of the paper, and indeed there might be sub sections within this main section.

**Equality implications**

1. This section should set out any equality implications arising from the proposals in the main body of the paper. All new or revised policies, procedures or proposed key decisions should pay due regard to potential equality implications, and should undergo equality impact screening. The findings of screenings/impact assessments (where appropriate) can be set out in this section. If there are no equality implications, this should be clearly stated. Further advice on this section can be obtained from Policy & Planning.

**Resource implications**

1. This section should be used to set out the potential resource implications of any proposals contained within the paper. This might include financial investment required, or human resources needed to deliver the proposals.

**Data Classification**

1. This section should state how the document is classified in terms of the [Data Classification & Handling Policy](http://www.stir.ac.uk/media/services/registry/planning/legalcompliance/DataClassificationPolicy.pdf) e.g. This document is classed as *public/internal/restricted/confidential*.

**Recommendations**

1. This section should clearly summarise the recommendations that the Committee is being asked to consider. Examples might include:

The USPG is invited to:

* Approve the creation of a working group, led by a Deputy Principal, to consider XXX.
* Approve investment of £30,000 in the development of XXX.
* Agree that this paper should proceed to University Court for approval in [date] 2019.

Author’s name

Date of paper

**UNIVERSITY COURT – 16 March 2020**

**Report from Academic Council**

(Chair: Professor Black)

The following matters are reported from the meeting of Academic Council on 4 March 2020.

**Items for approval**

**(a) Review of Committees**

Council **received** a report on phase 2 of the review of committee structures. Council **noted** that clarification of committee responsibilities with regard to research integrity (Research Ethics Committee) and developing a quality culture (Education and Student Experience Committee and Research Committee as appropriate) would be addressed in committee guidance that was under development.

Thereafter Council **endorsed** the recommendations within the report for approval by the University Court.

*Review of Committees appears as a separate item on the Court Agenda.*

**(b) Employability Strategy**

Council **received** the University’s proposed employability strategy (attached as Annex 1) and draft implementation plan. The strategy had been developed to support the University’s strategic plan target of increasing the proportion of graduates entering graduate level jobs to 85% by 2016 by embedding employability across the curriculum and providing greater support to faculties through the establishment of an ‘Employability Hub’.

Council **endorsed** the strategy for approval by the University Court and **noted** that the implementation plan would be subject to further discussion and development that would include a review of resourcing.

**Items for noting**

1. **Research and Knowledge Exchange**

Council **received** a report providing an update on a number of issues including the research review being conducted in preparation for Research Excellence Framework (REF). In discussion the following points were **noted**:

* The research review process would be completed by 19 October. No decisions would be made as to which units of assessment would be submitted or what the grade point average cut off would be until the evidence from the review had been considered. Following the research review the Deputy Principal (Research) would be conducting meetings with each faculty and unit of assessment co-ordinator to ensure the University’s position, in terms of reputation and funding, was optimised going into the REF.
* The research review had identified evidence of good practice for dissemination throughout the University. This would be addressed through a series of roadshows on the REF that were currently being scheduled as well as through ongoing support from the Research and Enterprise Office.
* Research awards for the current year had reached £16.5 million, an increase of 100% over the previous year. Research Councils were favouring larger collaborative bids and the Research and Enterprise Office was providing support to faculties for large grant applications.
* The University Fellowship scheme had been a success attracting over 300 high calibre candidates for eight places. The PhD studentship programme had also proved successful with 30 new fully funded studentships.

**(b)** **Council received the following:**

* Annual reports from its Committees:
	+ Admissions, Progress and Awards Committee
	+ Quality Enhancement Committee
	+ Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee
* A summary of the new guidance note on quality from the Scottish Funding Council.
* Annual report on the outcome of student disciplinary cases considered by the Discipline Committee for 2018/19.
* Annual report on the outcome of student complaints for 2018/19.
* Annual report on student academic appeals for 2018/19.

Susan Scarlett

05.03.20

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2020**

**Present:** Mr A Allen (Chair), Prof B Brown, Mr C Cooper, Prof D Davis, Prof E Evans, Mr F Fox, Prof G Green, Mr H Harris, Ms I Ireland, Prof J Jones, Mr K King, Ms L Lewis, Prof M Morgan

**In Attendance:** Mr N Nicolson, Ms O Owen, Prof P Phillips, Prof Q Quinn, Mr R Roberts, Prof S Smith, Mr T Taylor, Ms U Upton (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Mr V Vincent, Mr W Williams, Ms Y Young, Ms Z Zaoui

The following people were welcomed to their first meeting of University Court:

* Professor Morgan - new member appointed as a representative from Academic Council
* Professor Green - new member appointed as a representative from Academic Council

**\*1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from members.

**2. MINUTES UC(19/20)Minutes 2**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2019 were approved as accurate records.

**3. MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA**

**(i) Residences Update (Minute 9, Dec 2019) Oral Report**

An oral update was given by the Director of Finance on financing of the Residences Re-development project. It was reported that, with the inclusion of £5m legacy work as well as the new build, the estimated cost of the residences project was c£43m for which borrowing was required. Court was reminded that at its meeting on 16 December it was reported that Heads of Terms had been agreed with Santander for a finance facility of c£23m; and the Santander facility together with the two existing revolving credit facilities (RCFs) of £10m each would make up the £43m. It was reported further that an arrangement of that scale would require Court approval so to allow matters to be concluded prior to its next meeting on 15 June 2020, Court delegated responsibility to finalise the funding arrangements to a sub-group consisting of the Chair of Court, the Chair of the Joint Policy, Planning & Resources Committee, the lay member of Court on the Programme Board and the Principal.

The Director of Finance reported that since the last meeting of Court revised finance terms had been received from Santander which were significantly different from those received previously but that negotiations has progressed to the point where legal agreement had been drafted and were at a near final stage. Court was informed that by removing the legacy works (referred to previously) borrowing would reduce to c£38m with Santander providing £18m on top of the existing RCFs.

Court noted that there would be a meeting of the sub-group on 27th March and there was confidence that an acceptable deal could be agreed by the end of March 2020. A report from the sub-group would be provided to the next meeting of Court.

**4. KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT UC(19/20)23**

Court received a report on recent developments in the external environment and their potential impact upon the higher education sector. Two recent developments were highlighted. These included progress in developing Key Information Sets and it was noted that some members of the House of Lords would be opposing the setting of differential fees for RUK students when the Scotland Bill was discussed.

Court noted the update.

**5. REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE IN UC(19/20)24**

**SCOTLAND**

Members considered the report and the recommendations made by the Review of Higher Education Governance in Scotland chaired by Prof White. During the course of the discussion the following points were noted:

* The papers presented provided a briefing for members of Court.
* The need for an evidence base to underpin a number of recommendations if they were to be taken forward.
* The need to identify the key recommendations with which to engage in terms of the consultation.
* A number of recommendations were good practice which repeated existing governance arrangements at the University.
* A number of the recommendations related to management rather than governance and there was a blurring between the two.
* Universities in Scotland were autonomous independent bodies and the response should reflect this fact.

It was agreed that a sub-group would be established to prepare a draft response. The draft would be circulated to Court members before it was submitted.

**[Action: Principal/Deputy Secretary]**

**6. GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

**(i) Court Appointment UC(19/20)25(i)**

Members noted the report from the Court Appointments Committee including the reappointment of Mr Peacock to Court until 31st July 2024. Court homologated the action taken by the Chair to appoint Mr Smith to Joint Policy, Planning & Resources Committee (JPPRC) from 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2023. It was agreed to delegate powers to the Chair to fill the current vacancy on Audit Committee.

Members would shortly be asked to provide information about their skills and experience in order to prepare a skills matrix of Court members.

**\*(ii) Review of Court Effectiveness UC(19/20)25(ii)**

Members noted the report from the first meeting of the Working Group on Court Effectiveness. In particular it was noted that the Working Group were requesting that all members and attendees of Court should complete the survey on the effectiveness of the governing body by 2nd April 2020. It was acknowledged that those members who had only recently been appointed would not be able to provide feedback to all questions.

Reassurance was given that names were only being asked for in order to enable analysis of the responses by category of membership and to follow up with people who had not responded. Assurances were given that the names would only be seen by the person preparing the analysis of responses and would not go to other members of the working group.

**\*(iii) Review of Committees UC(19/20)25(iii)**

Court considered the report on Phase 2 of the review considering committee structure and effectiveness. Members welcomed the clarity between the role and function of governance committees and the responsibilities of executive/management groups and officers.

It was **agreed** to give further consideration to establishing links between the Audit Committee and the Safety, Health & Environment and University Research Ethics Committees to ensure that any issues relating to risk were brought to the attention of the Audit Committee.

**[Action: Academic Registrar]**

It was **agreed** to circulate a full list of the revised committee membership once the newly created vacancies had been filled.

**[Action: Clerk to Court]**

Court **approved** the recommendations presented in the report on phase 2 of the review of committee structures.

**7. HR UPDATE UC(19/20)26**

Members noted the update in relation to the recent Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT). The EAT had found in favour of the University which amounted to a significant clarification of the law. University and College Union (UCU) had sought leave to appeal the decision to the Court of Session and the University was waiting to hear the outcome of this request. It was likely that this would be granted due to the importance of the judgement.

Court noted the update.

**8. ACADEMIC COUNCIL UC(19/20)27**

Court received and noted a report on the meeting of Academic Council on 4 March 2020. Items for noting included reports on Key Information Sets, employability and the UK Borders Agency (UKBA). Members noted that UKBA had recently withdrawn the highly trusted sponsor status from some institutions in the higher and further education sector. A number of actions had been agreed to ensure that robust processes continued to be in place to meet UKBA requirements.

Court noted the report from the meeting.

**9. JOINT POLICY, PLANNING & RESOURCES COMMITTEE UC(19/20)28**

Court received a report from the first meeting of the Joint Policy, Planning & Resources Committee on 17 February 2020.

The Chair of JPPRC highlighted the management accounts, and in particular, the forecast lower surplus than originally predicted, although to put the forecast outturn of c£2m in context it was noted that there had been a £3m cut in core grant funding in 2019/20.

Court noted the report from JPPRC.

**10. AUDIT COMMITTEE UC(19/20)29**

Court received and noted a report from the meeting of Audit Committee on 24 February 2020 which included the current version of the Risk Register of Strategic Risks.

Court approved the extension to the Internal Auditors contract by one year to 31 July 2021 and approved the re-tendering of the External Auditors contract that was due to expire on 31 December 2020.

Court agreed to delegate authority to the Audit Committee to carry out the tendering process for the External Auditors contract.

Court noted the report from the Audit Committee.

**11. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

 There were no items of other business.

**12. NEXT MEETING**

Court noted that the next meeting of Court was scheduled for 15 June 2020.

Policy & Plannng

March 2020