

UNIVERSITY COURT

THE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED OF MEMBERS OF COURT

Introduction

In line with good practice in governance of higher education, this document aims to set out in broad, high-level, terms the role performed by members of Court and the competencies and experience expected of them. However, Court does not wish to be overly-prescriptive in this regard, as to do so might inhibit the ability of the University to attract and appoint individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds and experience.

General matters

All members of Court are equal in status and are bound by the same standards of conduct, with no distinction made between lay, ex officio, nominated/elected and student members in that respect.

Lay members should have a clear interest in higher education in general and in furthering the development of the University of Stirling in particular. They must identify with, and believe in, the University's mission and vision and have the ability to make a meaningful contribution to Court's work.

Nominated and elected members drawn from the University staff and the Students' Association should have a desire and ability to make a meaningful contribution to the further development of the University through their membership. It is important that such members recognise that, while they have been nominated or elected by or from among certain constituencies, they should not act as if delegated by the group they represent or be bound when speaking or voting by any particular constituency or mandate. Rather, they should contribute to Court's debates and decisions on the basis of their views of the best interests of the University as a whole.

Role outline and competencies required

Court members are expected to be able:

- To act as informed and objective friends of the University;
- To recognise and understand the distinction between the executive management of the University (which is the responsibility of the Principal and senior officers) and the oversight of the University's activities (which is the responsibility of Court as the governing body);
- To conduct themselves, individually and collectively, in accordance with the accepted principles of accepted behaviour in public life, which embrace selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership;
- To develop an understanding of the University, including its vision and mission; its teaching and research activities, and its internal structure and culture;
- To use their expertise to participate in, and contribute to, Court's decision-making in general and in those areas where they have specific skills and experience in particular;

- To question intelligently, debate constructively, challenge rigorously and decide dispassionately, and to listen sensitively to the views of others, inside and outside meetings of the Court;
- To exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the University as a whole rather than as a representative of any constituency or other interest group;
- To develop an understanding of the Scottish (and, where appropriate, UK) higher education system and of the University's relationships with relevant external agencies, including the Scottish Funding Council, the Scottish Executive and Scottish Enterprise.
- To be willing to serve on Court committees and other working groups as and when necessary;
- To respect the confidentiality of Court business on those occasions as and when this is necessary;

Background and experience (lay members)

Court wishes to ensure that it is an appropriately diverse body that properly represents the breadth and diversity of the communities that the University serves. The following comprises a list of the kinds of background and experience that the University considers may provide the basis for appointment to lay Court membership, and might best ensure that members are able to fulfil the role outline set out above. It is, however, intended to be neither exclusive nor exhaustive:

- Experience of working at leadership and/or board level within a large business, commercial organisation or publicly-funded body;
- Excellent understanding of business and financial issues;
- Expertise in higher education research and ethics;
- Expertise in governance or legal matters;
- Entrepreneurial or other relevant business experience in the commercial/industrial world and/or in public service.
- Expertise in the professions (finance, health, scientific etc);
- Expertise in human resources management and development;
- Expertise in issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Expertise of media, communications, marketing, fundraising, and/or public relations;
- Expertise in property and estate development;
- Experience of working in an international arena or in international markets;
- Political expertise at the local and/or national levels;
- Demonstrable interest in the University of Stirling and its future development;
- Previous successful experience as a lay governor of a public institution or organisation;
- Experience and expertise in one or more areas of activity in which the University has an academic discipline;
- Demonstrable interest, concern and involvement in the City of Stirling and its institutions or in the Stirling region;
- Current or recent experience and involvement in the work of a Funding Council, Research Council, non-University research institute, major charity, the voluntary sector or similar organisation;
- Experience of teaching, research, administration or management in the education or related sectors, including, primary, secondary or tertiary education;