

**UNIVERSITY COURT**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020**

**Present:** Mr H Adam (Chair), Dr Robert Black, Dr P Cowell, Ms P Crawford, Prof J Donaldson, Mr K Fraser, Ms S Gordon, Prof A Green, Mr S Haldane, Prof P Hancock, Mr G Hastie, Mr D Kearney, Mr G MacLeod, Prof M MacLeod, Prof G McCormac, Ms B McKissack, Ms C Morrison, Mr J Muirhead, Prof H Nehring, Rev M Roderick, Councillor C Simpson and Ms A Smith.

**In Attendance:** Mr G Duff, Ms C Gallagher, Ms J Harrison, Mr L McCabe, Mr M McCrindle, Mr C McNally, Ms J Morrow, Prof J Phillips, Dr J Rogers, Ms E Schofield, Prof L Sparks, Mr L Spillane, Dr David Telford, Mr M Nichol (Clerk), Prof N Wylie, Dr L Zhuang and Ms E Nicholroy (item 5).

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Ms M Allison and Mr H Grossart.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES UC(20/21) Minutes 1**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2020 were **approved** as an accurate record.

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

Members receivean update on the outcome of delegated authority to USPG to approve the fee level for EU entrants for 2021/22.

**4. KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT UC(20/21) 12**

Court received the report on latest external factors that presented potential challenges to the University, and recent policy developments in the external environment relevant to the Higher Education (HE) sector.

Members discussed in particular the Covid-19 landscape, including the Governments’ plans to manage the movement of students prior to Christmas and the University’s successes in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide league table.

Court **noted** the recent developments in the external environment.

***PLANNING AND BUDGETING***

**5. UNIVERSITIES SUPERANNUATION SCHEME Oral**

Court received a presentation from Emelda Nicholroy, Head of Pensions and Policy (Universities and College Employers Association) on the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

**6. UNIVERSITY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2019/20**

Court received an overview of the Financial Statements 2019/20 and the following associated papers:

1. The Financial Statements for 2019/20 as recommended **UC(20/21) 13(i)**

by the Joint Policy, Planning & Resources Committee and

Audit Committee.

1. Audit Highlights Memorandum from the External Auditors **UC(20/21) 13(ii)**
2. Letter of Representation from the University **UC(20/21) 13(iii)**

It was confirmed that the University’s 2019-20 Financial Statements were prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP): Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2015 and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard FRS102.

Members discussed in particular the accounting surplus for the year 2019-20 generated by the University group and the impact on the 2019-20 position by pension provision movements specifically related to the movement on the USS pension provision, augmentation on the USPS pension and USPS expenses. Court discussed the significant effect of the global coronavirus pandemic on the University’s income, cashflow, liquidity position, borrowing facilities and progress against each of the Strategic Plan performance indicators. It was confirmed the University was covenant compliant for 2019-20.

Court **approved** the year-end financial statements and **noted** the Letter of Representation from the University and the Audit Highlights Memorandum from the external auditor.

**7. CORONAVIRUS LARGE BUSINESS INTERUPTION LOAN SCHEME (CLBILS) UC(20/21) 14**

Court received an update onthe preparatory work and negotiations undertaken in order for the University to secure finance under the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Scheme (CLBILS)**.** Members discussed in particularprotocols for the authorisation and monitoring of the use of the CLBILS facility.

Court **approved** the completion of the formal arrangements in respect of the CLBILS facility as set out in the paper. Court also **noted** the protocol for authorisation and utilisation of the funds set out in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the paper.

**8. UPDATE ON FINANCIAL PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES UC(20/21) 15**

Court received an update on the financial position, the institutional response to the pandemic and progress against institutional priorities.

Members discussed in particular the forecasted outturn position for the academic year 2020/21 and the significant movements across income and expenditure lines including forecast tuition fee income, forecast commercial income and staff expenditure.

Court **noted** the Institutional Priority and Financial Planning update.

**9. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE UPDATE UC(20/21) 16**

Court received an update of the 2019/20 capital expenditure outturn and the capital expenditure plan for 2020/21. Members discussed in particular the indicative expenditure for 2020/21 and the revised completion date for Campus Central.

Court **noted** the Capital Expenditure Update.

**10. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN UC(20/21) 17**

Court received an outline of next steps pertaining to the proposed development of an ‘interim’ Strategic Plan covering the period 2021 – 2023.

Members discussed the proposed working principles underpinning the development of an interim Strategic Plan, the overarching Strategic Objectives and the proposed review of associated Key Performance Indicators. In addition, members discussed the indicative development timeline and the approach to communicating activity associated with an interim Strategic Plan.

Court **approved** the proposed development of an interim Strategic Plan.

***GOVERNANCE***

**11. AMENDMENTS TO STATUTES AND ORDINANCES UC(20/21) 18**

Court considered and **approved** the proposed amendments to Statute 9 and Ordinance 72.

***POLICIES***

**12. DUE DILIGENCE AND ASSURANCE POLICY UC(20/21) 19**

Members received an overview of the Due Diligence and Assurance Policy for research bids and awards and discussed the key elements intended to identify and address potential risks of financial or reputational damage whilst working with external partners.

Court **approved** the Due Diligence and Assurance Policy for Research Bids and Awards.

**13. SEVERANCE POLICY UC(20/21) 20**

Court received an overview of proposed revisions to the Severance Policy in line with the SFC’s Financial Memorandum and the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance.

Court **approved** the revised Severance Policy

**14. RESPECT AT WORK AND STUDY POLICY UC(20/21) 21**

Court received an overview of proposed amendments to theRespect at Work and Study Policy (formally the Bullying & Harassment Policy).

Court **approved** the revised Respect at Work and Study Policy.

***COMMITTEE REPORTS***

**15. UNIVERSITY COURT UC(20/21) 22**

Court received theannual reflective report on the effectiveness of Court that provided a headline overview of the activities in 2019/20 and an overview of the remit and membership of Court.

Members discussed the findings and response rate to the effectiveness questionnaire issued to Court members and the importance of taking the time to complete subsequent effectiveness questionnaires issued to members as part of the annual review of effectiveness.

Court considered and **noted** the annual reflective report from Court 2019/20.

**16. ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

Members received the following reports from Academic Council:

1. Annual Report Academic Council Effectiveness 2019/20 **UC(20/21) 23(i)**
2. Report from meeting of 2 December 2020 **UC(20/21) 23(ii)**
3. Enhancement-Led Institutional Review Reflective Analysis **UC(20/21) 23(iii)**

Court **noted** the Annual Academic Council report and the report from the meeting of 2 December 2020.

Court **approved** in principle the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review Reflective Analysis.

**17. JOINT POLICY, PLANNING & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Members received the following reports from JPPRC:

1. Annual reflective report from JPPRC for 2019/20 **UC(20/21) 24(i)**
2. Report from the meeting of 23 November 2020 **UC(20/21) 24(ii)**

Court **considered** both the report from the meeting of 23 November 2020 and the annual reflective report from JPPRC.

**18. AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Members received the following reports from Audit Committee:

1. Annual Report from Audit Committee 2019/20 **UC(20/21) 25(i)**
2. Internal Audit Annual Report for 2019/20 **UC(20/21) 25(ii)**
3. Report from meeting of 16 November 2020 **UC(20/21) 25 (iii)**

Court **approved** the extension of the contract to deliver internal audit services by one further year to 31 July 2022 and **noted** the update on internal audit progress and the internal audit plan 2020/21.

**19. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE UC(20/21) 26**

Members received the annual report from the Remunerations Committee for 2019/20 that included a summary of matters that the Committee considered during the year.

Court **considered** the annual report from the Remuneration Committee for 2019/20 and **approved** the revised Remuneration Committee remit.

**20. GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Members received the following reports from the Governance and Nominations Committee:

1. Annual Report from GNC 2019/20 **UC(20/21) 27(i)**
2. Report from meeting of 22 October 2020 **UC(20/21) 27(ii)**

Members discussed key activities of the Committee during the year 2019/20 and matters the Committee had considered.

Court **noted** the annual report from the Governance and Nominations Committee and the report of the meeting held on 22 October 2020.

**21. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE UC(20/21) 28**

Members **received** the annual report from the University Research Ethics Committee that detailed key activities of the Committee during the year 2019/20 and matters the Committee had considered.

Court **considered** the annual report from the University Research Ethics Committee for 2019/20 and **noted** the annual report on Research Integrity.

***ACTIVITY UPDATES***

**22. STUDENTS’ UNION UPDATE UC(20/21) 29**

Members received an update on recent Students’ Union activities including a peer support initiative ‘Pandemic Pals’ that provided students with mutual support throughout the pandemic, student engagement activity, participation in the 16 Days of Activism campaign against gender based violence by running in a fundraiser for Stirling Women’s Aid and progress on a review of the Students’ Union constitution.

Court **noted** the update on activity from the Students’ Union.

**23. UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING STUDENTS’ UNION ACCOUNTS UC(20/21) 30**

Members received an overview of the annual report and financial statements for the University of Stirling Students’ Union.

Court **noted** the annual report and financial statements for the University of Stirling Students’ Union for 2019/20.

**24. STAFF AND EMPLOYMENT UPDATE UC(20/21) 31**

Members received an update on staff and employment matters and noted in particular the financial assistance available via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the commitment to paying the Living Wage as a minimum rate of pay for all directly employed staff, additional rest days that extended the Christmas break for staff, and mental health and wellbeing support provided to employees through health campaigns, access to an Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health services.

Court **noted** the staff and employment update.

**25. EQUALITY UPDATE** **UC(20/21) 32**

Members received an update on matters relating to equality, inclusion and diversity and discussed in particular Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) statutory reporting obligations, an extension ofthe Institutional Athena SWAN bronze award by one year until November 2021, the revised joint strategy with the Students’ Union to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence, progress on the development of a Race Equality Strategy and the approach to digital accessibility.

Court **noted** the update.

***RISKS***

**26. RISKS ARISING Oral**

Court **considered** risks associated with items discussed in the context of the agreed risk appetite statement.

**27. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER UC(20/21) 33**

Member **considered** and **noted** the updated Register of Strategic Risks.

***OTHER ITEMS***

**28. OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2020/21 UPDATE UC(20/21) 34**

Members received an update on the 2020/21 Outcome Agreement.

Court **noted** the update on the Outcome Agreement and **awarded delegated authority** to the Principal and Chair of Court to approve, following USPG endorsement, Outcome Agreement documents scheduled for submission in January 2021.

**29. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

There was no other competent business.

**30. NEXT MEETING**

Members **noted** the next full meeting of Court was scheduled for 29 March 2021.

**Policy & Planning**

**December 2020**