

The Role of the Secretary to Court

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ABERTAY UNIVERSITY

THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY TO COURT

Introduction

The University Secretary is a member of the Executive Group and shares responsibility for the strategic leadership of the University and works closely with other senior members of academic and administrative staff to achieve the efficient and effective management of the University and, in this context, he/she reports directly to the Principal & Vice-Chancellor.

As Secretary to Court, appointed to this role by Court and having a direct reporting line to the Chair of Court, the University Secretary plays a key role in the operation and conduct of the University Court, ensuring that Court acts within its powers and follows proper procedures. The Secretary is the principal officer of Court and acts on the instructions of the governing body.

1. Appointment and Reporting

- a) The Secretary to Court is appointed to that post by Court itself, and in accordance with the provisions of the University's governing Order of Council.
- b) Irrespective of any other responsibilities the appointee may hold, in relation to his/her responsibilities as Secretary, the Secretary is responsible solely to Court and reports direct to the Chair of Court in relation to Court business.

2. The Business of Court

- a) The Secretary is required to provide Court with authoritative guidance about its responsibilities under the charter, statutes, articles, ordinances and regulations to which it is subject, including legislation and the requirements of the Funding Council, and on how these responsibilities should be discharged.
- b) The Secretary should ensure that new or revised responsibilities for Court (e.g. arising from new legislation) are drawn to Court's attention.
- c) The Secretary has a responsibility to alert Court if he/she believes that any proposed action would exceed Court's powers or be contrary to legislation or to the Funding Council's Financial Memorandum.
- d) The Secretary has sole responsibility for providing legal advice to or obtaining it for Court and shall be provided with a budget for that purpose, and for advising Court on all matters of procedure.
- e) The Secretary shall ensure that all documentation provided to members of Court is concise and its content is appropriate.
- f) The Secretary will also act as Secretary to Committees of Court or be responsible for ensuring that adequate clerical support is provided to them, and shall be provided with a budget for that purpose.

- g) The Secretary shall maintain the Register of the Interests of the members of Court.
- h) The Secretary shall be responsible for the custody of the University Seal and for its proper use.
- i) The Secretary shall be responsible for arranging an induction programme for new members of Court and shall draw the attention of Court members to training activities arranged by AdvanceHE and other appropriate providers.
- j) The Secretary shall arrange for the re-imbusement to Court members of the expenses they incur in carrying out Court business, and shall be provided with a budget for the purpose.

3) Working Relationships and Conflict of Interest

- a) The Secretary will combine the function of Secretary with a senior management role in the University. He/she must exercise care in separating these two functions.
- b) If the Secretary perceives any conflict of interest between his/her separate functions, he/she should report it forthwith to Court. If Court believes it has identified a conflict of interest of this nature, the Secretary will be offered an opportunity to respond to any such question.
- c) The Secretary will be required to form effective working relationships with the Chair of Court and the Principal & Vice Chancellor of the University. The Secretary is required to consult the Principal and keep him/her fully informed on any matter relating to Court business (other than in relation to the Remuneration Committee's consideration of the Principal's emoluments).
- d) The Secretary is required to advise the Chair in respect to any matters where conflict, potential or real, may occur between Court and the Principal & Vice-Chancellor.
- e) The Secretary will be required to form effective working relationships with other senior managers in the University in order to facilitate the effective conduct of Court business. The Secretary is a member of the Executive Group of the University and the Senior Management Team.
- f) The Secretary shall make a full and timely disclosure of his/her personal interests in the Register.
- g) Court will safeguard the Secretary's ability to carry out his/her duties.

4. Personal

- a) The Secretary will have a strong personal commitment to Higher Education and the values, aims and objectives of the University.
- b) The Secretary will at all times regulate his/her personal conduct in relation to Court and the University in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life, embracing selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership, and maintain confidentiality as appropriate.

- c) The Secretary will participate in procedures established by Court for the regular appraisal/review of his/her performance as Secretary. These procedures will be separate from procedures for the appraisal/review of any other responsibilities the Secretary may hold.
- d) The Secretary is required to maintain a high standard of personal and professional self-development and will be appointed by the University a member of the Association of Heads of University Administration.

Approved by Court on 15 April 2020

Version Control Table

Version number	Purpose/ Changes	Author	Date
1.0	Approved by Court	University Secretary	15 October 2005
1.1	Update re title	S. Stewart, University Secretary	1 September 2009
2.0	Periodic review informed by the independent review of the effectiveness of Court completed during 2011/2012. Revised version approved by Court.	University Secretary/ Governance & Nominations Committee	15 March 2013
2.1	Coversheet amendments	F. Caldwell, Policy Officer	27 February 2014
2.2	Reviewed and no revisions made	University Secretary	27 March 2018
2.3 Draft	Reviewed and minor revisions made to reflect changes in titles of external and internal bodies	University Secretary	13 February 2020
2.4 Draft	Further revision agreed by the Governance & Nominations Committee	Governance & Nominations Committee	25 February 2020
2.4	Approved by Court	Governance & Nominations Committee	15 April 2020