

The Role of the Chair of Court

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ABERTAY UNIVERSITY

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR OF COURT

Introduction

The Chair is responsible for the leadership of Court. As Chair of its meetings, he/she is responsible for ensuring that the necessary business of Court is carried out efficiently, effectively, and in a manner appropriate for the proper conduct of public business.

1. Leadership

- a) The Chair should ensure, *inter alia* through a good working relationship with the Chairs of the Committees of Court and the Secretary to Court, that Committee business is carried out in a proper manner, efficiently and effectively, and that regular and satisfactory reports are presented to Court.
- b) The Chair should ensure that Court acts in accordance with the instruments of governance of the University and with the University's internal rules and regulations, and should seek advice from the Secretary to Court in any case of uncertainty.
- c) The Chair should ensure that Court exercises collective responsibility, that is to say, that decisions are taken corporately by all members acting as a body. The Chair will encourage all members to work together effectively, contributing their skills and expertise as appropriate, and will seek to build consensus among them.
- d) The Chair should ensure that Court approves and operates a procedure for the regular appraisal/review of the performance of individual members of Court, and should participate as appraiser/reviewer in that process. The Chair should encourage members to participate in appropriate training events such as those organised by the Secretary and by external organisations such as AdvanceHE.
- e) The Chair will be formally and informally involved in the process for the recruitment of new members of Court, and should encourage all members to participate in induction events organised by the University.
- f) The Chair will be responsible for the appraisal/review of the performance of the Principal & Vice-Chancellor, and will make recommendations to the Remuneration Committee accordingly.
- g) The Chair will be responsible for the appraisal/review of the performance of the Secretary to Court, taking care to ensure that any other duties the Secretary may perform for the University are excluded from consideration, and will make recommendations accordingly.

2. Standards

- a) The Chair is responsible for ensuring that Court conducts itself in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life, embracing selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- b) The Chair shall ensure that the Secretary maintains an up-to-date Register of the Interests of members of Court, and shall make a full and timely personal disclosure. The Chair

shall ensure that any conflict of interest is identified, exposed, and managed appropriately, in order that the integrity of Court business shall be - and shall be seen to be - maintained.

- c) Since the University is a Charity, the Chair shall be responsible for ensuring that Court exercises efficient and effective use of the resources of the University for the furtherance of its charitable purposes, maintains its long-term financial viability, and safeguards its assets, and that proper mechanisms exist to ensure financial control and for the prevention of fraud.

3. The Business of the University

- a) The Chair is responsible for ensuring that Court exercises control over the strategic direction of the University, through consideration and approval, and that the performance of the University is adequately assessed against the objectives which Court has approved.
- b) The Chair should at all times act in accordance with established protocols for the use of delegated authority or Chair's Action (ensuring that such protocols are drawn up if none exist). All instances of the use of delegated authority or Chair's Action should be reported to the next meeting of Court.
- c) The Chair should endeavour to establish a constructive and supportive but challenging working relationship with the Principal & Vice Chancellor, recognising the proper separation between governance and executive management, and avoiding involvement in the day-to-day executive management of the University.
- d) Information about the Committees of Court on which the Chair sits is available from the Secretary to Court.

4. The External Role

- a) The Chair will represent Court and the University externally. The Chair will be a member of the Committee of University Chairs and the Committee of Scottish Chairs.
- b) The Chair may be asked to play a role in liaising between key stakeholders and the University, or in fund-raising. This role in particular should be exercised in a carefully coordinated fashion with other senior officers and staff of the University.

5. Personal

- a) The Chair will have a strong personal commitment to Higher Education and the values, aims and objectives of the University.
- b) The Chair will at all times act fairly and impartially in the interests of the University as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.
- c) The Chair is expected to attend all meetings of which he/she is Chair or a member, or give timely apologies if absence is unavoidable.
- d) The Chair will make him/herself available where appropriate to attend induction/training events organised by the University or other appropriate bodies such as AdvanceHE.

- e) The Chair may wish to receive feedback on his/her performance as Chair *via* the appraisal/ review procedure for ordinary members of Court.
- f) The office of Chair is not remunerated, but the Chair is encouraged to reclaim all travelling and similar expenses incurred in the course of University business, *via* the Secretary. Directors and Officers Liability Insurance is in place.
- g) The appointment as Chair of Court is for three years with the possibility of one extension of one further three-year period of office.

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
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 Committee	15 March 2013
2.1	Minor editorial changes and coversheet amendments.	F Caldwell, Policy Officer	26 February 2014
2.2	Minor editorial changes	University Secretary	27 March 2018
2.3 Draft	Reviewed and minor revisions made to take account of changes to external organisation	University Secretary	13 February 2020
2.3	Approved by Court	University Secretary	15 April 2020