GENERAL ROLE DESCRIPTION AND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT

This document and its associated responsibilities apply to all members of Court and those who attend Court meetings.

Overview

The University Charter stipulates that there shall be a Court whose members shall be kept informed by the Board of Trustees about the University’s strategic aims, ambitions and initiatives and who will have the opportunity to provide comments, offer advice and wise counsel, and other support to the Board of Trustees at the Annual Meeting of Court in accordance with the Statutes. The constitution of Court is defined by Statute.

Court acts as an agent for a two-way communication through which the University presents updates to its broader constituencies and key stakeholders and receives feedback and advice on matters relating to University business. For more information about Court’s specific duties and responsibilities, please read Court’s Terms of Reference and Membership document.

1. Membership, including standards and core values

The role of Court members is to:

• Champion and promote the interests and reputation of the University
• Understand, support and provide advice and wise counsel to the University in order to foster, establish, and maintain beneficial links between the University and its wider community and society;
• Act as ambassadors for the University and raise awareness of its achievements, expertise, and aspirations locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally;
• Help the University to establish links with employers and organisations to promote and provide opportunities for interactions such as internships, volunteering, research and training and development.

Members shall have due regard to the University’s Strategic Objectives 2018-2023.

Court must be conducted efficiently, effectively, and in a manner appropriate for the proper conduct of public business, and members are expected to attend, to make constructive and helpful contributions to debate and to contribute and share their knowledge and expertise available to Court as the opportunity arises or requires.

Members have a responsibility for ensuring 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 Clerk in any case of uncertainty.

Members have a responsibility 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 (Nolan Principles). They must at all times regulate their personal conduct as members of the Court in accordance with these standards.

Members must at all times act in accordance with this document and the membership and terms of reference document
2. **Removal of Members of Court**  
In accordance with Statute 31 (removal of officers, auditors and members) Court may remove members of Court other than those who are Ex Officio Members, for good cause.

‘Good Cause’ in this Statute means one or more of the following:

(i) conviction for an offence rendering the person convicted unfit for the execution of the duties of the office;

(ii) improper conduct, incompatible with the duties of the office;

(iii) conduct constituting persistent refusal, neglect or inability, including mental or physical inability, to perform the duties or comply with the conditions of office.

3. **Personal**  
a) Members will have a strong personal commitment to Higher Education and the values, aims and objectives of the University.

b) The role of Court members is referred to in section 1 of this document.

c) Members of Court are selected in a way that aligned with the University’s Strategic Objectives 2018-2023. These are:

1. Education and the student experience
2. Research, innovation and partnerships
3. Our staff and ways of working
4. Internationalisation and global relations
5. Physical and digital infrastructure
6. Sustainability

d) Members are expected to attend all meetings of Court (and any associated committees, where appropriate), of which they are a member, or give timely apologies if absence is unavoidable.

e) Members should make all efforts to attend any induction activities arranged by the University, which will be drawn to their attention by the Clerk.

4. **Time commitment involved**  
a) The likely overall time commitment required of members is circa 1-5 days per year, including reading time for papers

b) Typically, Court meets on an annual basis, and each meeting will last for a full day. Meetings usually start no earlier than 9am and finish no later than 4pm. Lunch and refreshments are provided. The format of the day is typically likely to include:

(i) A “state of the nation” speech from the Vice-Chancellor (and/or a member of the senior executive team) and a “Review of the Year” from the Chair of the Board of Trustees;

(ii) A Plenary on a topic of burning interest/a difficult challenge facing the University, which will be aligned with the University’s Strategic Objectives.

(iii) Breakout sessions for Court members to debate the issues relating to the challenge put to them in the earlier session;

(iv) Lunch

(v) A tour of a specific department, school or laboratory, likely after lunch.

c) Members of Court will be invited to submit questions in advance of each meeting, to be debated at the meeting. More information about how to submit a question is included in
d) Court papers are sent out not less than seven days before each meeting and it is expected that members will have read the papers in advance of the meeting and be prepared to voice their opinions and make comments. Members should allow approx. ½ to 1 day per meeting to prepare and to do any appropriate background reading in advance of the meeting. For more information about agenda dispatch deadline and summons, please see the Court Standing Orders (CRT3).

e) The University will make every effort to make use of technology to allow members of Court to either attend the Court meeting electronically (‘live streaming’) or to watch the proceedings after the event.

*Other committees/panels/working groups*

f) Depending upon members’ areas of expertise and interest, there may be opportunities throughout the year to participate in ad hoc advisory or working groups. Such opportunities will be communicated to Members when they arise.

*Invitations to University Events*


g) Members of Court may also be invited to University events. Such events provide an opportunity for Court members to gain greater exposure to University activities and to meet with staff and students. Whilst attending such events is of course optional, they do provide insights and information which can be helpful to being an effective champion and ambassador for the University.

h) *Communication with Court members during the year*

The University will ensure that Court members are kept abreast of key University developments throughout the academic year, either via the Court website, or other communication channels assisted by the University’s External Relations Division.

5. **Remuneration**

Members of Court **do not** receive remuneration but the University reimburses reasonable travel and other expenses incurred in connection with the exercise of their duties as members of Court (including reasonable costs associated with caring responsibilities). Expenses should be submitted to the Clerk. Members should adhere to the [University’s Travel and Subsistence Policy](#) when submitting expense claims. International travel costs will **not** be reimbursed.

6. **Appointment Process**

*Note: In its first year, some Court members’ terms of office will be staggered. This will be communicated to the relevant Court members in advance of their taking up their first term of office.*

**Elected Members**

- Elected members serve 4-year terms, renewable for a further 4 years, in accordance with recognised good practice across the sector.
- Thirty Alumni Association Representatives are elected by and from the Alumni Association, of whom five are elected exclusively from the international alumni (but if no international members put themselves forward for election, then the full number of representatives can be appointed in such manner as the Alumni Association shall determine);
- Five Emeriti representatives are elected by and from the emeritus professors using a first past the post electoral process.

Elections are conducted using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) process, and Members will be advised about elections at the appropriate juncture by the University Governance team.
Nominated Members

• Nominated members serve 4-year terms, renewable for a further 4 years, in accordance with recognised good practice across the sector.
• Twenty Members are nominated by their organisations, drawn from civic, cultural and community organisations or bodies including (but not limited to) organisations or bodies located in or around the city of Bristol;
• Twenty Members are nominated from unions, professional organisations, business community and industry or other knowledge-intensive organisations including (but not limited to) organisations or bodies located in or around the city of Bristol;
• Five representatives are nominated from amongst those formally elected to represent the people of the City of Bristol and its surrounding areas.
• As part and parcel of regular (4 yearly) Court effectiveness reviews, the list of organisations in this membership category will be reviewed and refreshed to ensure currency of alignment with the strategic objectives of the University.

The Vice-Chancellor and the University Executive Management Team, in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Nominations Committee, and the Chancellor, will appoint Nominated members, assisted by the University Governance team.

Additional Members

• The Chancellor may appoint up to twenty Additional Appointed Members from the body of honorary graduates or nominations put forward by civic, cultural and community, professional, industry and business organisations or bodies including (but not limited to) organisations or bodies located in or around the city of Bristol. The nomination process shall be conducted in such manner as the Nominations Committee of the Board considers appropriate from time to time.

Ex officio Members

• The Chancellor;
• The Pro-Chancellors;
• Honorary Fellows.

Attendees (not eligible to vote)

• Twenty individuals elected by and from employees of the University
• The elected Sabbatical Officers of the Union of Students
• The Board of Trustees (including, for the avoidance of doubt, the Chair, Deputy Chair and Treasurer)
• The Vice-Chancellor
• The Pro-Vice-Chancellors,
• The Registrar
• The Chief Operating Officer
• The Deans of Faculty
• The University Secretary
• The University Librarian
• The Bursar
• The Secretary & Clerk to Court

7. Resignation

Any member of Court may resign by a letter sent to Court through the University Secretary.

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