# UNIVERSITY COURT
## MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1. Authority

1.1 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, opinion, 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.

1.2 As an important stakeholder Group, Court’s role is to provide counsel and to support the University in achieving its mission. Court is not required to make any decisions, except for those listed in section 4 below, and its specific duties are as follows:

### 2. Purpose

2.1 Court acts as an agent for two-way communication through which the University presents updates to its broader constituencies and key stakeholders and receives feedback and comments on matters relating to University business.

2.2 The purpose of Court is to bring together those who have a shared interest in:

- Championing and promoting the interests and reputation of the University
- Understanding, supporting and providing 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;
- Acting as ambassadors for the University and raising awareness of its achievements, expertise, and aspirations locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally;
- Helping 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.

2.3 Members of Court are selected in a way that ensures the membership is aligned with the University’s Strategic Objectives 2016-2023. 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

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1 Note that Governance oversight of the University is provided by the Board of Trustees (and Senate as appropriate) as stipulated in the University Charter and Statutes.

Court Terms of Reference
governance@bristol.ac.uk
### Membership

#### 3.1 Membership of Court is set out in Statute 11, as follows:

**Core Members**

*Elected*
- Thirty Alumni Association Representatives elected by and from the Alumni Association, of whom five should be 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 elected by and from the emeritus professors

*Nominated*
- Twenty Members 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 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 from amongst those formally elected to represent the people of the City of Bristol and its surrounding areas.

*Ex officio*
- The Chancellor;
- The Pro-Chancellors;
- Honorary Fellows.

**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 considers appropriate from time to time.

**Attendees**
- 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
Other members of the University's staff may be invited by Court to attend meetings of the Court as may be appropriate to the business of the meeting. For avoidance of doubt, Attendees will not be entitled to vote at meetings of Court.

4. **Specific Duties and Responsibilities**

4.1 Court serves as a bridge between the wider community and the University and provides a source of ideas, influence and support from the wider community to assist the University in the pursuit of its mission.

4.2 According to the Statutes of the University (Statute 13), the Court has the following duties:

### A. **Comment and Advice**

At each Annual Meeting, Court shall receive:
- a report from the Board of Trustees of its proceedings during the preceding academic year, including a report on changes to the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances, that relate, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, directly to Court;
- a report from the Vice-Chancellor & Provost and the University’s Senior Management on the execution of the University’s strategy in the preceding year;
- a report on the financial statements for the preceding financial year.

Court may offer independent opinion on any matter or activity relating to the University and may:
- pose questions to the Chair of the Board of Trustees on the activity of the Board in the preceding year and the plans for the year ahead;
- pose questions to the Vice-Chancellor & Provost, and the University’s Senior Management team on the execution of the strategy of the University;
- pose questions to the University Treasurer on the financial statements;
- ask questions and offer comment to the Board of Trustees and the University’s Senior Management team on any aspect of the University’s business.

### B. **Appointment of Officers**

Court shall appoint the Chancellor and the Pro-Chancellors on the nomination of the Board of Trustees.

### C. **Extension of Periods of Office**

Court shall have power to approve extensions to prescribed terms of office for the Chancellor and Pro-Chancellors.

### D. **Appointment of members of the Nominations Committee (of the Board)**

Court shall appoint two of its Members to serve on the Nominations Committee, established by the Board of Trustees.

### E. **Removal of members of Court for Good Cause**

Court may remove members of Court other than those who are Ex Officio Members, for good cause, as defined by Statute 31.

5. **Standing Orders**

5.1 Court shall have standing orders which will aid in the regulation of the conduct of Court meetings. The Court Standing Orders are aligned with University Statutes/ordinances in relation to Court (see Statute 12).

6. **Effectiveness Monitoring and Compliance with Terms of Reference**

In accordance with good governance practice, the Court will undertake a full and robust review of its effectiveness every 4 years. The effectiveness reviews will include the following:
- Ensuring that Court has the sufficient skills, knowledge and independence to achieve its purpose. This will include a review and refresh of the organisations in the 'Nominated Members' membership category to ensure alignment of Court membership with the University’s strategic needs at any given moment in time.
- Ensuring that Court remains of appropriate size that its responsibilities can be undertaken effectively and speedily
- Ensuring that Court has rigorous and systematic process agreed for recruiting and retaining its members, and a useful and positive induction process for new members.

7. **Governance Office Support**

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