



Duties and Responsibilities of Members of the University Council

Council members play a key role in the governance of the University as set out in the Statement of Primary Responsibilities of Council and, more formally, in Section 6 of University Statute XIII. Members of Council have an individual and collective responsibility to use their best endeavours to ensure that the objects of the University are being met and that Council properly and diligently exercises its functions and responsibility as the principal governing body of the University to ensure its overall good management and well being.

It is important to note that the senior executive officers of the University, led by the Vice-Chancellor, are accountable to Council for the operational management of the University and are required to ensure that Council is provided with full and timely information to enable it to carry out its responsibilities. Council also receives advice and recommendations from its own specialist committees, from joint committees established with the Senate and, in the case of academic matters, from the Senate. Council members do not therefore have an executive role but should aim to develop a constructive and supportive, but challenging, advisory relationship with the University.

The responsibilities of members include the following:

- (a) Playing an active role in ensuring the business of Council is carried out efficiently, effectively, and in line with the standards required in the proper conduct of public business (see below). They are expected to make constructive contributions to debate and to make their knowledge and expertise available to Council as the opportunity arises.
- (b) Participating in induction and training events provided by the University or other bodies as appropriate.
- (c) Maintaining an awareness of the activities of the University and of the higher education sector in general. (Presentations on key issues are made on a regular basis to Council and members are sent the University's Newsletter and other publications.)

- (d) Reading the papers circulated for each meeting of Council and any other committees of which they are members, attending meetings regularly and contributing to discussion and decision-making.
- (e) Observing the confidentiality of Council business.
- (f) Observing the seven principles of public life drawn up by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the “Nolan” Committee).
- (g) Maintaining an up-to-date entry in the Register of Interests which is held by the Secretary to Council circulated each year to members for updating.
- (h) Contributing to the regular reviews of the effectiveness of Council.

Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness – Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or their friends, or their particular area of responsibility.

Integrity – Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity – In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability – Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and action that they take. They should give reasons for their decision and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty – Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership – Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Liability

University Committee decisions are made on a collective basis and it is very unlikely that individual members of the Council will be at risk of claims of negligence as long as they act at all times in accordance with the responsibilities and principles set out above.

However, it should be noted that they are covered by the University's Professional Indemnity cover in respect of the costs of any claim of negligence which may be made against them in the course of carrying out of their duties as a member of the Council.

Statement of the Responsibilities of Council

The [University Charter](#) establishes Council as the Governing Body of the University, subject to other terms of the Charter and the Statutes, and its responsibility for:

1. general control over the University and all its affairs, purposes and functions.
2. the management and administration of the revenue and property of the University.
3. the custody and use of the Common Seal of the University.

The Council has identified a number of primary responsibilities arising from these general duties under the Charter:

Planning and monitoring

1. To approve the mission and strategic vision of the University, long-term academic and business plans and key performance indicators, and to ensure that these meet the interests of stakeholders.
2. To ensure processes are in place to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the University against the plans and approved key performance indicators, which should be, where possible and appropriate, benchmarked against other comparable institutions.
3. To ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate the student academic experience and maintain the quality and standards of academic awards.

Financial, legal and risk

4. To approve the annual budget and financial statements, to ensure the establishment and monitoring of systems of control and accountability, including financial and operational controls and risk assessment, and procedures for handling internal grievances and for managing conflicts of interest.

5. To be the principal financial and business authority of the University, to ensure that proper books of account are kept, and to have overall responsibility for the University's assets, property and estate.
6. To be the institution's legal authority and, as such, to ensure that systems are in place for meeting all the institution's legal and regulatory obligations, including those arising from contracts and other legal commitments made in the institution's name.
7. To ensure that the University has appropriate procedures for the management of risk and to oversee the operation of these procedures.

Employment

8. To be the employing authority for all staff in the University and to be responsible for establishing a human resources strategy.
9. To appoint the Vice-Chancellor as Chief Executive and Principal Academic and Administrative Officer of the University, in accordance with paragraph 7 of the Charter, and to put in place suitable arrangements for monitoring his/her performance.

Governance arrangements

10. To appoint the Secretary to Council, and to ensure that, if they have managerial responsibilities in the University, there is an appropriate separation in the lines of accountability.
11. To establish processes to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of Council itself.
12. To conduct its business in accordance with best practice in higher education corporate governance and with the principles of public life drawn up by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
13. To ensure that the University's Charter, Statutes and Ordinances are followed at all times and that appropriate advice is available to enable this to happen.
14. In accordance with paragraph 19 of the Charter, to consider any recommendations from Senate on matters with academic implications and to refer the same to Senate for consideration where the Senate has not previously been consulted.
15. To delegate authority to the Vice-Chancellor for the appointment of University nominees to the boards of public bodies, limited companies and other institutions.

General

16. To safeguard the good name and values of the University.

17. To make such provision as it thinks fit for the general welfare of students, in consultation with Senate.
18. To promote equality, diversity and inclusivity throughout the University, including in relation to its own operation.
19. To ensure that appropriate provision is made for the preservation of health, safety and environmental standards.

It follows from the above that Council is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the University and its subsidiary companies and enable it to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with the relevant parts of the Royal Charter, company law, the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting for Further and Higher Education and other Accounting Standards.

In addition, within the terms and conditions of funding for higher education institutions between the Office for Students and the terms and conditions of Research England Grant the University, through its accountable officer, is required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the University and its subsidiary companies and of the surplus or deficit and cash flows of the University and its subsidiary companies for that year.

In preparing the financial statements, Council has to ensure that:

- suitable accounting policies are selected and applied consistently
- judgements and estimates are made that are reasonable and prudent
- applicable Accounting Standards have been followed
- the going concern basis is used unless it is inappropriate to presume that the University will continue in operation.

Council has taken reasonable steps to:

- ensure that funds from the Office for Students (OfS) and Research England are used only for the purposes for which they have been given and in accordance with the terms of conditions of funding for higher education institutions and the terms and conditions of Research England Grant respectively, and any other conditions which OfS/Research England may from time to time prescribe
- ensure that income from the Department for Education is applied for the purpose for which it has been received and in accordance with the funding agreement with the Department
- ensure that income from the Education & Skills Funding Agency and research councils is applied for the purpose for which it has been received and in accordance with the funding agreement with the relevant body

- ensure that there are appropriate financial and management controls in place to safeguard public funds and funds from other sources
- safeguard the assets of the University and its subsidiary companies and prevent and detect fraud, and
- secure the economical, efficient and effective management of the resources and expenditure of the University and its subsidiary companies

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