

**AC (22/23) Minute 4**

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**Minute of the meeting held on Tuesday 30 May 2023**

**Present:** Professor Sir G McCormac (Chair), Professor K Blair, Dr A Desbois, Professor I Docherty, Professor J Donaldson, Professor L Forbat, Professor K Grant, Professor A Green, Professor A Jump, Dr M Lovatt, Professor M MacLeod**,** Professor D McGhee, Professor M Priestley, Ms J Stevenson, Dr I Tabner, Professor J Tinson.

**In attendance:** Ms I Beveridge, Ms J Morrow, Ms E Schofield, Dr D Telford.

**Apologies:** Professor Paul Dudchenko, Dr Andre Gilburn, Professor A Hadland, Professor H Nehring, Dr E Macleod, Ms T Miller, Professor R Norman, Professor N Parish, Professor J Phillips. Mr M Sammels, Professor L Sparks, Dr C Wilson, Ms L Wilson, Professor N Wylie.

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| **1.** | **MINUTES** | **AC (22/23)**  |
|  | The minutes from the previous meeting held on 8 March 2023 were approved, subject to an amendment under item 4 – ‘Teaching and Learning’ to note the word ‘include’ to replace ‘involve’, in reference to a faculty-led approach in the development of the learning and teaching element of the strategic plan.  | **Minute 3** |
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| **2.** | **MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA**Council noted that there were no matters arising. |  |
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| **3.** | **STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR AND****AN UPDATE ON THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT** | **Oral Report** **AC (22/23) 26** |
|  | Council received a briefing from the Chair and an update on the external environment, which covered developments relating to matters including:* The Home Secretary Suella Braverman had made a statement on 23 May 2023 regarding immigration and the government’s aims to reduce net migration. The statement had announced a set of measures which the government considered would contribute to a reduction in net migration. The measures included: removing the right for international students to bring dependents unless on programmes currently designated as PGR; removing the right for international students to switch out of the student visa route into work routes before the completion of their studies; reviewing the maintenance requirements for students and dependents; dealing with unscrupulous agents; communications to the HE sector and students on immigration rules; improved and more targeted enforcement activity.

It was understood that engagement would take place with the sector on specific approaches to implement the measures, and that the government wished revisions to the system to proceed as soon as possible after consultation. The intended date of implementation was 1 January 2024, however lobbying had already begun to have this revised to a later date since some universities had already taken tuition fee deposits from applicants for places in the spring 2024 intake. The full impact of the planned measures would be monitored and further understood over time.* The University had entered into a new partnership with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) on an innovative scheme that would create employment opportunities for young people in the Forth Valley. Within the scheme, suppliers would be expected to engage with local schools via DYW if they were successfully awarded a contract under the University of Stirling's City Region Deal Programmes. It was anticipated that the scheme would enable work experience, apprenticeships, mentoring and training courses to be offered to young people, and overall for hundreds of employment opportunities to be created.
* A Marking and Assessment Boycott by some members of UCU had been underway since 20 April 2023. Most of the University’s students would be unaffected by the boycott but mitigating plans and arrangements were being progressed to support and enable student outcomes to be confirmed, and graduating students to be granted their degrees, where there was impact. Information had already been published on the University’s website via a set of FAQs and further communication with students was being planned.
* The development of the University’s new Strategic Plan was continuing. There had been excellent contributions from across faculties and services, from both students and staff, in the World Café and engagement sessions that had recently taken place, and work was underway to further develop the initial draft plan that would be discussed by the Senior Management Team and then considered by University Court in June 2023. The draft plan would then subsequently be shared with the wider University community for comments and views.
* Council noted the updates.
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| **4.** | **INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES (IAS) UPDATE**  | **AC (22/23) 27** |
|  | Council received an update on current IAS activities and forward plans. Continuing focus and development in respect of student and supervisor training had enabled a range of positive progress and good practice to be achieved. Council discussed the PGR studentships programme that had been progressing as part of the Institute’s PGR Community Development Strategy, and on the basis of the three year budget to fund the equivalent of 16 full studentships each year. 617 valid applications had been received for the first round of studentships and 39 cluster proposals had been submitted by staff members. The successful applicants would be notified in June 2023 with the aim of their starting in October 2023. Communications with unsuccessful applicants would be carefully considered to ensure key messaging around the continuing opportunity to study with the University, of other funding sources open to them and about future phases of the studentship programme.Council noted the updates provided in the paper. |  |
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| **5.** | **AMENDMENT TO ORDINANCE 22**  | **AC (22/23) 28** |
|  | Council considered an amendment to Ordinance 22 – Appointment of Honorary Staff.Ordinance 22 provided provisions for a range of honorary appointments, where the appointment would make a contribution to the academic life of a Faculty. Currently, Court may appoint honorary: Professors; Associate Professors; Senior Lecturers; Lecturers; Senior Research Fellows; and Research Fellows.The [Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership](https://fvnhsuniversitycollege.org/), established on 1st October 2022, brought together knowledge, expertise and experience to seek to secure research funding and support the development of learning opportunities in health and social care. The partnership had created opportunities for world-class researchers and teachers, who were also clinically relevant and potentially from professional groups not normally associated with the University, to meet the criteria for honorary appointments. However, the range of currently available honorary titles was not necessarily attractive to such colleagues who would want a title in keeping with their standing within their clinical field. It was therefore proposed that the following titles would be added to Ordinance 22: Clinical Professor; Clinical Associate Professor; Clinical Senior Lecturer; Clinical Lecturer.  Council endorsed the proposed amendment for onward submission to University Court for approval. |  |
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| **6.** | **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES** |  |
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| **6.1** | Council received the report from the Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC) meeting held on 11 May 2023.Council noted the report. | **AC (22/23) 29** |
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| **6.2** | Council received the report from the University Research Committee meeting held on 4 May 2023.Members discussed the importance of continuing applications to the Horizon Europe programme of funding.It was noted that there was a continuing opportunity for staff to provide comment and feedback on the draft new Research and Innovation Strategy which was anticipated to be approved in early autumn 2023.Council noted the report. | **AC (22/23) 30** |
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| **6.3** | Council received the report from the Joint Policy, Planning and Research Committee meeting held on 23 May 2023. Council noted the report. | **AC (22/23) 31** |
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| **7.** | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** |  |
|  | Academic Council noted that further to a petition, the potential for there to be a statutory, legal duty of care placed upon universities, was to be debated in the UK Parliament on 5 June 2023. The government had previously noted that higher education providers already had a general duty of care towards students and that further legislation may be disproportionate. The outcome of the debate and any further developments would be closely monitored.  |  |
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| **8.** | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** |  |
|  | Wednesday 13 September 2023 at 2pm. |  |
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