

**AC (22/23) Minute 1**

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**Minute of the meeting held on Wednesday 14 September 2022**

**Present:** Professor M MacLeod(Chair), Professor K Blair, Professor I Docherty, Professor J Donaldson, Dr A Gilburn, Professor K Grant, Professor A Green, Professor A Hadland, Professor A Jump, Dr M Lovatt, Dr E Macleod, Professor D McGhee, Professor R Norman, Professor N Parish, Professor J Philips, Professor L Sparks, Ms J Stevenson, Dr I Tabner, Professor J Tinson.

**In attendance:** Ms I Beveridge, Ms J Morrow, Ms E Schofield, Mr D Soutar (secretary), Dr D Telford.

**Apologies:** Prof Sir Gerry McCormac, Dr Andrew Desbois, Prof Paul Dudchenko, Prof Liz Forbat, Ms Tash Miller, Prof Holger Nehring, Prof Mark Priestley, Dr Clare Wilson, Ms Lucy Wilson, and Prof Neville Wylie.

**WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

Following appointment as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in August 2022, the Chair welcomed Professor Kirstie Blair to her first meeting of Academic Council.

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| **1.** | **REMIT, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP** | **AC (22/23) 1** |
|  | The current remit, composition and membership for Academic Council were noted. |
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| **2.** | **STANDING ORDERS** | **AC (22/23) 2** |
|  | Academic Council’s Standing Orders were noted. |  |
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| **3.**  | **MINUTES** | **AC (21/22)** **Minutes 4** |
|  | The minutes from the previous meeting held on 1 June 2022 were approved. |
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| **4.** | **MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA** |  |
|  | Members noted there were no matters arising. |
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| **5.** | **STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR AND****AN UPDATE ON THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT** | **Oral Report** **AC (22/23) 3** |
|  | Council received a briefing from the Chair and an update on the external environment, which covered developments relating to matters including:* Following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, the Principal’s statement to the University community had reflected on her link to the University, most notably her signing of the University of Stirling's Royal Charter in 1967 and her visit to the campus in 1972 to formally open the Queen’s Court, a space that remained at the heart of the University today.
* The University demonstrated its position as Scotland’s University for Sporting Excellence as University of Stirling athletes brought home a record 16 medals from the 2022 Commonwealth Games.
* During the summer of 2022, the University had held six graduation celebrations for 2020 and 2021 graduates who had not had the opportunity to attend graduation due to the Covid19 pandemic, and four graduation ceremonies for 2022 graduates, with more than four thousand students attending.
* A change affecting Higher Education in England had been notified with the announcement that the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) would no longer be the designated quality body for the sector in England as of March 2023. Whilst this did not directly affect the sector in Scotland, there could nonetheless be an impact and Academic Council would be further updated as appropriate.
* The addendum to the existing Strategic Plan covered the period to the end of 2023, and engagement activity would take place during academic year 2022/23 to develop the new Strategic Plan for the University.

Council noted the updates.  |
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| **6.** | **STUDENT NUMBER UPDATE** | **AC (22/23) 4** |
|  | Council received an overview of the forecast student intake and indicative population for 2022/23.It was outlined that, should the number of enrolled students fall in line with the forecasted levels, the University would achieve its largest intake of UG RUK students since 2012/13. The PGT overseas cohort was also projected to be the University’s largest ever intake. It was noted that the population of home students was slightly below forecasted numbers. Overall, the University was in transition from being a recruiting institution, to a selecting institution for international students. Council noted the update.  |
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| **7.**  | **ELIR 4 FOLLOW-UP REPORT** | **AC (22/23) 5** |
|  | Council received a summary of the ELIR 4 Follow-up Report.As part of the core process for ELIR, each Higher Education Institution was required to provide a report, 12 months after the publication of the review reports, on follow-up actions taken in response to the outcomes of the review. Council considered the report that had been prepared in response to the University’s ELIR 4 which took place in spring 2021. Council noted that progress had been achieved in both addressing each of the recommendations made in the review and building further on the areas that were commended as good practice, and this had been overseen by the ELIR Monitoring Group. Council endorsed the report for onward submission to University Court for approval. |
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| **8.** | **ANNUAL REPORT ON INSTITUTION-LED REVIEW** | **AC (22/23) 6** |
|  | Council received the annual report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on Institution-led Review in 2021/22.Council noted that the report outlined the University’s Institution-led Review activity in the preceding academic year and included a statement of assurance from the University Court that the University was undertaking Institution-led Review in line with SFC guidelines on quality assurance and enhancement. Council endorsed the report for onward submission to University Court for approval.  |
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| **9.** | **STUDENT surveys** | **AC (22/23) 7** |
|  | Council received the annual report on the results of the NSS, PTES, PRES, and the Stirling Experience Survey (SES) student surveys.Overall, the set of results was very positive. The report noted several instances of good practice that would be shared across the University as well as opportunities for reflection and enhancement. The paper noted key outcomes across all four surveys. For NSS, it was noted that performance in 2022 had been strong and the University ranked in the top 30 amongst UK HEIs for the third consecutive year. For SES, it was outlined that the performance was more positive than the previous academic year. For PRES, the University performed above average, although it was noted that numbers were very small in terms of respondents. The University performance in PTES was noted as being positive. A programme of activity had commenced to discuss the results with faculties and identify key themes and areas for improvement. The outcomes from these discussions would progress through ESEC and appropriate sub-committees.Council noted the report. |
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| **10.** | **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES** |  |
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| **10.1** | Council received the report from the Education and Student Experience Committee meeting held on 14 June 2022.Council noted the report. | **AC (22/23) 8** |
|  | Council received the annual report from the Education and Student Experience Committee. Council noted the report. | **AC (22/23) 9** |
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| **10.2** | Council received the report from the University Research Committee meeting held on 31 August 2022.Council noted the report. | **AC (22/23) 10** |
|  | Council received the annual report from the University Research Committee. The report noted that there had been changes to the composition and format of the committee during the academic year. Council noted the report. | **AC (22/23) 11** |
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| **11.** | **COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS** | **AC (22/23) 12** |
|  | Council received a paper presenting nominees to be appointed to the Honorary Degrees Committee (HDC) and the University Appeals Panel (UAP).  Council approved the nominees. |
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| **12.**  | **GRADUATION DATES** | **AC (21/22) 13** |
|  | Council received the proposed dates for graduation ceremonies in the period up to summer 2026.Council approved the proposed graduation dates. |
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| **13.** | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** |  |
|  | Council discussed challenges in the current operating context relevant to staff turnover and staff recruitment, particularly in light of increasing student numbers, and the impact this was having at present on enrolment and progression. Proactive steps were being taken in a number of areas to address the challenges both in the immediate and longer terms, not only in respect of staffing arrangements but also through developments in working practices and structures.  |
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| **14.**  | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** |  |
|  | Thursday 1 December 2022 at 2pm  |  |
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