Closing date: Noon 2 April 2021
Reference number: WVBZ
University of Aberdeen

Open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others

Aberdeen is a broad based, research intensive University, which puts students at the centre of everything it does. Outstanding in a wide range of discipline areas, Aberdeen has also been credited for its international reach and its commercialisation of research ideas into spin out companies. The University has over 16,000 matriculated students and 3,600 staff representing 130 nationalities. We encourage bold thinking, creativity and innovation, and we nurture ambition with many opportunities for professional and personal development in an inclusive learning environment which challenges and inspires.

Current Context

The University will build on the significant achievements above in 2021 and beyond. Underpinning our high performance and significant growth is a £100m investment in Aberdeen’s estate which will include the completion of a new Science Teaching Hub, the regeneration of the historic King’s Quarter, and a new Business School building. The University has also invested in 50 new academic posts, and 2020 saw the launch of 5 Interdisciplinary, cross-institution Research Centres that will catalyse world-leading research in our areas of research strength. The 5 Interdisciplinary Challenges are: Energy Transition; Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity; Environment and Biodiversity; Data and Artificial Intelligence; and Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing.

The University of Aberdeen is a recent recipient of The Queen’s Anniversary Prize, awarded to recognise world-class excellence in innovation and practical benefit to people and society. The University was given this award for health service research leading to improvements in academic and clinical practice and delivery of health care.

International

Aberdeen is also increasing its international presence, positioning the University as a global organisation, and growing its collaborations overseas, a key one being its established partnership in Qatar. We are proud to be the first UK University to operate on a dedicated campus in Qatar. Phase 1 of this partnership with AFG College has successfully recruited over 600 students. Phase 2 will see the creation of a substantially larger campus, with capacity for at least 5,000 students and research activity. For further information on our Qatar campus, visit https://www.abdn.ac.uk/qatar/.
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 2019/20 the University achieved an income of £233.8M, an increase of £5.3M resulting in an underlying surplus of £6.5M. Given the financial impact of the pandemic, this reflects the steady improvement over recent years in the University's financial position and the steps that have been taken to overcome the challenges resulting from Covid-19 over the past year.

The pandemic adds to the challenges that the HE sector currently faces, including a continuation of real term cuts to government funding, increased competition within overseas markets, higher pension contributions and the continuing uncertainty surrounding Brexit. Navigating these challenges, while continuing to grow the University’s financial position, remains a key strategic priority.

Further information on the University’s financial position is available in our Annual Report and Financial Statements: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/annual-report-accounts--7872.php
ABERDEEN 2040

On our 525th anniversary as a University we launched Aberdeen 2040, our strategic vision for the next 20 years. Four strategic themes will shape our learning and discovery, underlined by 20 commitments we have made against each theme:

**INCLUSIVE:** We welcome students, staff and partners from all backgrounds, organisations and communities. We value diversity.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY:** We innovate in education and research by generating, sharing and applying new kinds of knowledge. We learn together.

**INTERNATIONAL:** We connect with others and extend our networks and partnerships around the world. We think across borders.

**SUSTAINABLE:** We understand and nurture our environment, and take care of our resources, including our people and our finances. We work responsibly.

**OUR EDUCATION:** Recognised as the Scottish University of the Year in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019, we remain true to our roots as an ancient Scottish university, combining breadth and depth in our degree programmes and drawing strength from the quality of our research. Our flexible curriculum encourages students to grow as independent learners and therefore to thrive as graduates in the diverse workplaces of the future and become change-makers across the globe. Our education is open to all and we are setting ambitious targets to further widen access.

**OUR RESEARCH:** Researchers at the University of Aberdeen have been at the forefront of innovation and excellence throughout the centuries, generating insights in medicine, science, engineering, law, social sciences, arts and humanities. This research has contributed to five Nobel prizes as well as other awards such as the Queen’s Anniversary prize. Our research is intellectually rigorous, working within our established areas of excellence as well as new methods of enquiry. We will continue to generate new knowledge addressing economic and societal issues with ambition and imagination, ensuring that it is globally excellent and locally relevant.

For further details on the Aberdeen 2040 strategy, please visit www.abdn.ac.uk/2040.
GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The University of Aberdeen is a registered charity and a legally independent and autonomous institution. The governance framework of the University flows from various Acts of Parliament, statutes, ordinances and resolutions from which the University derives the power and authority to carry out its activities. There are three main components of the University's formal governance structure – Court, Senate and the General Council – with the management structure headed by the Principal and Senior Management Team.

Court

The Court is the governing body of the University and its principal role is to oversee the management of the revenue, property and other resources of the University. It comprises 25 members, the majority of whom are Independent members but with staff and student members. It approves the institutional mission and strategic vision and has a number of corporate and legal responsibilities. In common with other ancient universities, the Rector elected by the students plays an important role in representing and supporting them and also has the right to chair Court meetings. The Court is supported in its discharging its responsibilities through its sub-committees, the membership of which is drawn from across the membership of Court. The Court’s four standing sub-committees are: Audit and Risk, Policy and Resources, Governance and Nominations, and Remuneration. The Court, together with the Senate, also receives reports from three further joint committees: Education, Research Policy, and Student Experience.

Further information about the remit, composition and membership of the Court is available at: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/court-information.php

Senate

The Senate has governance responsibility for all academic matters, subject to the powers of Court. It is responsible in particular for regulating teaching and academic standards, and the promotion of research. The Senate also approves all degrees to be conferred. The membership of Senate consists of ex officio members, academic members elected from across the Schools and student representatives.

Further information about the Senate is available at: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/senate/index.php

General Council

The General Council comprises all University graduates and certain academic staff and is empowered “to take into consideration all questions affecting the well-being and prosperity of the University, and to make representations from time to time on such questions to the University Court”. The Court’s composition requires that at least four of its twelve Independent Governors must be members of the General Council.

Further information about the General Council is available at: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/general-council-1636.php

Senior Management Team

The Court delegates responsibility for delivering the University’s Strategic Plan, as well as the overall management of operations, to the Principal and Senior Management Team (SMT). The University’s Senior Management Team is led by the Principal & Vice Chancellor – Professor George Boyne – who is the chief academic and executive officer of the University. The Principal is supported directly by the Senior Vice Principal and the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer.

An organisational chart of the Senior Management structure is provided below:
ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

The University’s academic structure comprises 12 Schools, each of which is overseen by the Senior Vice-Principal and operates within a framework of devolved budgetary and planning responsibility:

- Biological Sciences
- Business School
- Divinity, History and Philosophy
- Education
- Engineering
- Geosciences
- Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture
- Law
- Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition
- Natural and Computing Sciences
- Psychology
- Social Science

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STRUCTURE

Professional Services activities are delivered through 9 Directorates. Each Directorate reports to the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer:

- Academic Services and Online Education
- Development Trust
- Digital and Information Services
- Estates and Facilities
- External Relations
- Finance
- People
- Planning
- Research and Innovation
THE UNIVERSITY AND THE REGION

OUR ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

As one of the oldest institutions in Aberdeen, we have historically been at the centre of the life and success of the city and region, and we continue to play a leading role in supporting the economic, social and cultural life of the local community, working with a wide range of organisations including being a key partner within the Aberdeen City Region Deal and Opportunity North-East.

Our large-scale and high profile public events programme includes highlights such as the annual May Festival and International Women's Day Conference, amongst other year-round events and an annual programme of services and commemoration events in the historic King’s College chapel.

ABERDEEN AND ABERDEENSHIRE

With a population of approximately 230,000, the city stands between the Rivers Dee and Don. This historic city has many architectural splendours and the use of its sparkling local granite has earned Aberdeen the name of the Silver City. Recognised as the energy capital of Europe, Aberdeen nevertheless retains its old-fashioned charm and character making it an attractive place in which to live, study and work.

Aberdeen enjoys excellent communication services with other European cities - e.g. flying time to London is just over one hour with regular daily flights. There are direct air links to London (City, Heathrow, and Luton), Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Southampton, Belfast and East Midlands within the U.K. There are also flights to international hub airports: Amsterdam (Schiphol), and Paris (Charles De-Gaulle as well as flights to other European destinations (http://www.aberdeenairport.com). Road and rail links are also well developed.

The Grampian Region which took its name from the Grampian Mountains has a population of approximately 545,000. It is made up of five districts – Aberdeen, Banff & Buchan, Gordon, Kincardine & Deeside and Moray. The city and the surrounding countryside provide a variety of urban, sea-side and country pursuits. Aberdeen has first class amenities including His Majesty's Theatre, Music Hall, Art Gallery, the P&J Arena, Museums, and Beach Leisure centre. Within a short time, beach pursuits, equine activities, salmon, trout and sea fishing, hill-walking, mountaineering, golf, sailing, surfing and windsurfing can be reached. The city and the surrounding countryside are repeatedly given high ratings for quality of life in surveys.

Aberdeenshire is one of Scotland’s most appealing regions. Royal Deeside and the Cairngorms National Park are within easy access of the city, and there are a variety of towns and villages scattered along the coastline. Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire cater for a wide range of tastes in sporting and cultural activities.

To find out more about Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire go to www.visitabdn.com
SENIOR GOVERNOR

The Senior Governor must ensure that the Court is led effectively in reaching collective decisions and is able to demonstrate good governance and although the role holder does not have executive powers, they will support the Principal and Senior Management Team in delivering our key strategic objectives.

We are seeking an individual with a record of successful leadership at a senior and strategic level within a large complex organisation who is keen to support an internationally competitive research-based university. Professional experience of strategic planning, financial and budgetary decision-making, and a demonstrable capacity to act, and be perceived as acting, independently and in the best interests of the institution as a whole are key to success in this role. The ideal candidate will have the ability to evaluate and monitor the performance of the University in a constructively critical manner and will be a highly skilled communicator who can represent the University internally and externally, promoting its interests with key stakeholders regionally, nationally and internationally.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Governor is responsible for the leadership of Court, for its effectiveness, for its conduct and for ensuring the University is well connected with its internal and external stakeholders, including its students and staff. The Senior Governor plays a central role in setting and maintaining excellent standards of corporate governance and ensuring the Court discharges its responsibilities. Specifically, s/he will:

Governance Responsibilities

• Lead the University Court and ensure that its necessary business is carried out efficiently, effectively and in a manner appropriate for the proper conduct of public business;
• Ensure that Court acts in accordance with the instruments of governance of the University and with the University’s internal rules and regulations;
• Ensure the Court exercises efficient and effective use of the resources of the University for:
  o Furthering its charitable purposes;
  o Maintaining its long-term financial sustainability; and
  o Safeguarding its assets
• Ensure the Court sets the strategic direction of the University, through an effective planning and risk management process, and that the performance of the University is adequately assessed against the objectives approved by Court;
• Ensure that proper mechanisms exist to (i) ensure financial control and to prevent fraud; and (ii) monitor the performance of Court and the University using appropriate performance indicators and other data in a constructively critical manner, being mindful of the boundary between governance and management;
• Act fairly and impartially at all times in the interests of the University as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality, and in the interests of the University as a registered charity in line with the expectations set out by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator;
• In common with the other Scottish Ancient universities, in the absence of the Rector or with her/his agreement, preside at meetings of the Court.*

Further information on the respective roles of Rector and Senior Governor is available online:


*For the Scottish Ancient Universities, the right to preside at meetings of Court and exercise a casting vote is reserved in the first instance to the Rector under statute. The Universities (Scotland) Act 1889 (as amended by the Higher Education Governance Act 2016) states that “the Rector and in his absence, the senior lay member
(Senior Governor), shall preside at meetings of the University Court and in the absence of both of them a chairman for the time shall be elected by the meeting. The person presiding at any meeting of the University Court shall have a deliberative vote and also a casting vote in case of equality.”

**Leadership Responsibilities**

- Establish a constructive and supportive, but challenging, relationship with the Principal & Vice-Chancellor while recognising the proper separation between governance and executive management, and avoiding involvement in the day-to-day operational and executive management of the University;
- Command the respect of Court and facilitate the conditions for all members to work together effectively, encouraging them to contribute their skills and expertise as appropriate, and seeking to build consensus;
- Ensure that the Court conducts itself in accordance with accepted standards of behaviours in public life, embracing the principles of duty, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability and stewardship, openness, honesty, leadership and respect;
- Be responsible for appraisal of the performance of the Principal;
- Oversee the processes to recruit, select and induct the Principal and an effective group of governors as vacancies arise, in line with legislative requirements and recognised best practice guidelines;
- Ensure that there is effective evaluation and feedback on the performance of Court, its Committees and individual governors.

**Ambassadorial Responsibilities**

- Play a proactive role in representing the University at a national level to influence policy and decision-making that will affect the HE sector in general and the University of Aberdeen in particular e.g. Scottish Committee of University Chairs, the Committee of University Chairs and the Scottish Funding Council;
- Represent the University internally and externally with key stakeholders, including attendance at meetings, events and other occasions;
- Use personal networks and influence to advance the cause of higher education generally, and the University of Aberdeen in particular;
- Be involved in the promotion of philanthropic giving.
ELIGIBILITY & CRITERIA

ELIGIBILITY

As a member of Court, the Senior Governor is a Trustee of the University in its capacity as a charity and each candidate will, therefore, be required to confirm that s/he is not disqualified from serving as a Trustee under the Charities and Trustee Investments Act (Scotland) 2005.

The Senior Governor must not have any unspent or pending criminal convictions of direct relevance to her/his ability to fulfil the requirements of the post. It should be noted that disclosure of a conviction will only result in an application being rejected if the University considers that it cannot manage effectively the risks associated with the conviction. Furthermore, the Senior Governor must declare any current or previous involvement in activities, organisations and/or financial affairs (including personal/professional bankruptcy proceedings) which may have had, or be deemed to have the potential to have, an adverse impact upon the University’s reputation.

It is an essential requirement that the Senior Governor has the demonstrable capacity to act, and be perceived as acting, independently and in the best interests of the institution as a whole. Therefore, to ensure this level of independence, independent members of the University Court are eligible to be appointed as Senior Governor but the role may not be held simultaneously with another role on Court. Similarly, students, members of staff, the Rector and the Principal are not eligible to be Senior Governor. In addition, no former student or member of staff of the University shall be eligible to be appointed until a period of 4 years have elapsed from the date they ceased to be a student or member of staff.

The Senior Governor may hold membership of a political party or organisation, but s/he may not hold an elected political office during the term of appointment e.g. Councillor, MP, MSP. Furthermore, the Senior Governor may not hold a position with any other provider of Higher Education during the term of appointment.

The role of Senior Governor requires a significant time commitment (50 days per annum). Applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have the capacity to fulfil this commitment. In addition, applicants must disclose significant other commitments (including non-executive positions and/or personal business interests), with an indication of the time involved in each.

The majority of the time commitment expected of the Senior Governor comprises attendance at meetings at the University of Aberdeen. In particular, the Senior Governor will be expected to attend meetings of the University Court (minimum of four meetings per year), the Remuneration Committee (minimum of two meetings per year) and the Governance & Nominations Committee (minimum of three meetings per year). In addition, the Senior Governor will, in fulfilment of wider Higher Education sector responsibilities, be required to attend meetings across Scotland, in London and elsewhere as necessary. In particular, the Senior Governor will be expected to attend meetings of the Committee of University Chairs and the Committee of Scottish Chairs.
CRITERIA

Eligible candidates must demonstrate that they meet the following essential criteria to enable them to fulfil effectively the role and responsibilities required of the Senior Governor:

Leadership Skills

- A record of successful leadership at a senior and strategic level within a large and complex public, private or third sector organisation and professional experience of the legal, strategic planning, financial, budgetary and risk management issues associated with such organisations;
- Proven track record of leadership and/or effective monitoring of the delivery of large-scale organisational change, capital or IT projects;
- Demonstrable integrity and ability to command the respect and trust of others from a wide variety of backgrounds, including the establishment of a fair, open, honest and transparent leadership style;
- A network of contacts in the business and political communities of Scotland and beyond and an understanding of the environment in which the University operates.

Experience

- A proven track record of chairing effectively, and/or being an active participant in, board meetings within a large and complex organisation particularly in relation to ensuring the smooth conduct of business;
- Professional experience of strategic planning, financial and budgetary decision-making;
- Proven track record of an ability to exercise independent judgement;
- Professional experience of successfully leading, motivating and managing senior members of staff in a cross-section of professional disciplines;
- Demonstrable commitment to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion;

Knowledge

- Extensive knowledge and demonstrable understanding of corporate governance issues and a commitment to upholding the highest standards in public life;
- Demonstrable ability to identify, understand and focus on key strategic and financial issues;
- Knowledge of the European and international environment, particularly as the context for higher education.

Personal Attributes

- Demonstrable ability to command the trust and respect of members of the University Court, Senate, students and staff;
- Demonstrable commitment to furthering the values of higher education in general and the University’s vision, mission, values and strategic ambitions in particular;
- Demonstrable ability to establish a challenging but constructive and effective working relationship with the Principal, all members of Court and the University’s Senior Management Team;
- Proven track record of being able to act independently and impartially, irrespective of personal and/or professional interests and background, in both character and judgement;
- Demonstrable ability to influence, persuade and establish good relationships with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders nationally and regionally;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with a demonstrable ability to encourage the open discussion of divergent points of views and the building of consensus amongst a range of constituent groups;
• An excellent facilitator, who exercises diplomacy, sensitivity and has the ability to influence outcomes and resolve conflict.

In addition, the following criteria are considered to be desirable, but not essential:

• Experience in the higher education or charitable sectors; and
• Knowledge of fundraising and development.
TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

The period of office for appointment will be three years, extendable for a further and final period of three years by agreement of the University Court.

The time commitment required is 50 days per annum.

Remuneration for the position is offered and will be paid as an honorarium of £20,000 per annum (or the office holder may choose to decline or donate the remuneration). Reasonable expenses will be paid. The place of work for undertaking duties as a Senior Governor is considered to be the University of Aberdeen.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The University of Aberdeen is committed to promoting equality, creating a culture of inclusivity and celebrating the diversity of its staff and student communities and the University Court believes that its own membership should represent the diverse nature of the University community and has articulated this in its Statement of Intent on Diversity, available online at:

Court Statement of Intent on Diversity Feb 2021.pdf (abdn.ac.uk)

The Court would particularly welcome applications from candidates who could bring a lived experience of the equality groups, including intersectional identities. The Court is seeking to address under-representation in relation to racial diversity in particular.

Reasonable adjustments for disability will be implemented for those who require them. Travel expenses incurred by each candidate for attendance at interview or to attend the ‘Open Meetings’ will be reimbursed subject to being consistent with the University’s policy on expenses and will normally be limited to £500 per candidate.

The University’s commitment to gender equality has been recognised through the achievement of an Athena SWAN Bronze award at an institutional level and across all its subject areas. The University is also a Stonewall Diversity Champion to further LGBT+ equality. The University is signed up to Advance HE’s Race Equality Charter, affirming the University’s commitment to the charter’s aim of improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education.
HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the University of Aberdeen on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code WVBZ

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter.

The closing date for applications is **Noon on 2 April 2021**.

The appointment process, which conforms to the requirements of the Higher Education (Governance) Scotland Act 2016, comprises 3 stages:

1. Application
2. Interview
3. Election

We anticipate that shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend for interview in the **week commencing 19 April 2021**

In accordance with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, the final stage of the appointment process following interview will be an election by students, staff and members of the University Court.

Candidates standing for election will be invited to attend an Open Meeting to address students, staff and members of Court, which is expected to take place on **Tuesday 4 May 2021**. The election will take place from **Wednesday 5 May to Friday 7 May 2021**.

The candidate who receives the most votes in the ‘first past the post’ election will be declared the winner and will be appointed as Senior Governor.