

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

University Court

Further Information: Proposed Changes to Resolution on Reform of Academic Structures

Additional rationale and information is provided below to assist interested parties in understanding the Court's decision to approve the proposed creation of a four-faculty structure and aid in their consideration of the draft resolution.

The approval of the Court was made subject to consultation with Senate, consideration of any pertinent feedback on, and therefore completion of, the approval process for enacting the Resolution.

Final consideration, and potential approval, of the faculty resolution shall be made by the Court at its meeting on 24 June 2026 and shall be subject to review of Senate recommendation and any representations from General Council or any other body or person having an interest, and based upon all available evidence.

Background and Context

At its meeting on 29 April 2026, the University Court agreed to formally consult on proposed changes to a University Resolution. If approved at Court's June meeting, the revised Resolution would establish four faculties, with final titles informed by a staff engagement process:

- Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences.
- Faculty of Science and Engineering.
- Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences.

The UK Higher Education sector is facing sustained, significant financial pressures. Specifically for Scottish Universities, a combination of funding constraints, rising costs, and changing student recruitment patterns represent the key issues. Over half of Scotland's universities are now operating in deficit. The key contributory factors can be summarised as: declining real-terms public funding; reliance on international students as a source of cross-subsidy; rising operating costs; and changing student choice. At the same time, there is increasingly fierce competition between universities in areas including student recruitment and research funding.

Over the past six months, the University of Aberdeen has been refining a programme of work known as Adapting.for.Continued.Success.(ACS), combining work to secure future financial sustainability and return to breakeven budgets by the end of the 2027/28 academic year through growth and savings with projects to improve operations and increase agility.

Academic Structure

The current flat structure of 12 Schools has been in place since 2017. Anticipated benefits of moving to a four-faculty model include:

- Greater representation of academic voice at institutional leadership level through Executive Deans, to support decision-making and ensure the consistent and effective implementation of University-wide policies and initiatives.
- Empowerment and accountability removing blockages through streamlined governance.
- Balance and parity.
- Improved information flows.
- Enhanced opportunities for collaboration in education and research, enabling greater interdisciplinary activity.

The proposal was informed by extensive analysis, including external benchmarking against peer group universities, with the most common approaches identified and adapted to reflect the University's internal environment. It was also informed by input and feedback from engagement activities and workshops with key stakeholder groups.

Each faculty will be led by an Executive Dean and a Faculty Executive Group, providing academic leadership, high-quality finance, people and resource management, and clear strategic direction to their faculty. They will oversee the pursuit of sustained excellence in education, research and innovation, and they will be responsible for delivering financial sustainability over the long term. Faculty leadership will be expected to: oversee development and delivery of programme portfolios that meet the needs of students and employers; pursue high-quality research that delivers real-world impact; actively manage their financial position on an ongoing basis; effectively manage resources (including people and space); drive digital transformation across all aspects of activity.

Resolution

The Court agreed to formally consult, as required by statute, on changes to Resolution No 287 of 2017 [Reform of Academic Structure] which will, if approved by the Court in June enact changes to the Academic Structures of the University of Aberdeen.

The draft Resolution is available here: [Draft Resolution Academic Structure April 2026](#)