THE FOLLOWING PAPERS HAVE BEEN REMOVED ON THE GROUNDS OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

Item 1.1  GGI Effectiveness Review: Commentary from the Executive (CT16-17:33)
Item 2.1  Strategy for Transnational Education (CT16-17:35)
Item 2.2  Partnership in Qatar (CT16-17:36)
Item 2.3  Partnership Activity in Rwanda/East Africa (CT16-17:37)
Item 2.4  Korea Campus Update (CT16-17:38)
Item 8   Future Strategic Direction of the Business School (CT16-17:44)
Item 10  Performance Monitoring Update: Quarter 1, 2016/17 (CT16-17:46)
Item 14.5 Report on Development Trust Activity (CT16-17:49.5)

THE FOLLOWING PAPERS HAVE BEEN REDACTED ON THE GROUNDS OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

Item 3   Update on Development Trust Campaign Priorities (CT16-17:39)
Item 12  Operating Board Report (CT16-17:47)
Item 13.1 Governance and Nominations Committee (CT16-17:48.1)
Item 13.3 Audit Committee (CT16-17:48.3)
Item 13.4 University Committee on Teaching and Learning (CT16-17:48.4)
Item 14.4 Senate Report (CT16-17:49.4)
There will be a meeting of the UNIVERSITY COURT on Tuesday 28 March 2017 at 9am in the Linklater Rooms, Elphinstone Hall.

Mr B Purdon
Secretary’s Office
Tel: (01224) 273949
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BUSINESS

DECLARATION OF INTEREST:
Any member or individual in attendance (including officers) who has a clear interest in a matter on the agenda must declare that interest at the meeting.

Note: The papers within each section of the agenda are colour-coded as follows:
For Discussion: white; Not for Discussion: yellow

BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION

1 9.00am GOVERNANCE

1.1 Presentation by Good Governance Institute: Report on Externally Facilitated Effectiveness Review of Court CT16-17:33 (Separately enclosed)
1.2 Report from Governance and Nominations Committee: Transition to New Composition of Court and Implications for Committees CT16-17:34

2 9.45am TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION – In Strictest Confidence

2.1 Strategy for Transnational Education CT16-17:35
2.2 Partnership in Qatar CT16-17:36
2.3 Partnership Activity in Rwanda/East Africa CT16-17:37
2.4 Korea Campus Update CT16-17:38

3 10.15am UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT TRUST CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES CT16-17:39

3.1 Coffee

4 11.00am MINUTES CT16-17-40

Note: The Court Action Log is also enclosed with the Minutes

5 11.05am HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SAFETY UPDATE CT16-17:41

6 11.10am STANDING REPORTS

6.1 Report from the Rector
6.2 Report from the Principal CT16-17:42
6.3 Report from the President of the Students’ Association CT16-17:43

7 11.30am CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR THE UNIVERSITY

8 12.00pm FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE BUSINESS SCHOOL CT16-17:44
9 12.30pm  REMUNERATION COMMITTEE: SENIOR STAFF PAY POLICY  CT16-17:45
10 12.40pm  PERFORMANCE MONITORING UPDATE: QUARTER 1, 2016/17  CT16-17:46
11 12.50pm  NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS MEETING

BUSINESS NOT PROPOSED FOR DISCUSSION

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THEY CAN RAISE THESE ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND TO DO SO BY ADVISING THE CLERK ONE CLEAR WORKING DAY IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

12 OPERATING BOARD REPORT  CT16-17:47
13 COMPOSITE REPORT FROM COURT COMMITTEES AND JOINT COMMITTEES OF COURT AND SENATE  CT16-17:48
14 ROUTINE BUSINESS NOT PROPOSED FOR DISCUSSION  CT16-17:49
15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 27 June 2017 9am-1pm followed by lunch.
Court Effectiveness Review
University of Aberdeen

Final Report
Strictly Confidential

Good Governance Institute (GGI)

March 2017
This document has been prepared by GGI Development and Research LLP. This report was commissioned by Aberdeen University. The matters raised in this report are limited to those that came to our attention during this assignment and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the opportunities or weaknesses that may exist, nor of all the improvements that may be required. GGI Development and Research LLP has taken every care to ensure that the information provided in this report is as accurate as possible, based on the information provided and documentation reviewed. However, no complete guarantee or warranty can be given with regard to the advice and information contained herein. This work does not provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

This report is prepared solely for the use of Aberdeen University. Details may be made available to specified external agencies, including regulators and external auditors, but otherwise the report should not be quoted or referred to in whole or in part without prior consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared and is not intended for any other purpose.
Executive Summary

This report sets out themes and findings arising out of our independent review of the Court of the University of Aberdeen. The University requested the review not only to focus on current governance, but to be forward-looking, providing a robust critique of the options available for the development of Court. The review is set in the context of a period of considerable change and uncertainty within the higher education sector, not least related to the sustainability of funding, increasing competition and concerns over Brexit.

This context requires a fit-for-purpose Court which meets the test of being business-like and responsive to key stakeholders, both internal and external, whilst preserving the long-term traditions and values of the institution which make the University unique. Court will play a critical role in the future sustainability and success of the institution as a whole and in particular it will need to be equipped to be serious about strategy and prepared to make tough choices as a strong collective governing body.

We recognise many areas of current strength in the University and the appointment of new Court members, including a new Senior Governor, have added capacity to the governing body and make this an ideal time to also take stock of the effectiveness of Court.

Our analysis, based on interviews, document reviews, observations and benchmarking makes a number of recommendations which are aimed at strengthening core accountabilities, skills, structures, decision-making processes, visibility and relationships, to ensure the University develops further its good governance practices. We are confident that the University is fully compliant with the Scottish Code for Good Higher Education Governance and the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016*.

The main analysis of the University’s governance is set out in sections 7-14.

The report includes a set of primary recommendations together with a number of supporting recommendations which taken as a whole are designed to help the University meet current and future governance requirements and challenges. The primary recommendations are detailed below:

R1 Adoption of a clear and unambiguous definition of the way governance of the University works, based on best practice;
R2 Adoption of a clear succession and skills planning approach to improve the diversity and expertise engaged in the governance of the University;
R3 The cycle of Court business to be developed more directly with members, and to be framed more explicitly around strategic themes, planned collectively by chairs of committees on a quarterly basis;
R4 Devise an annual governance development programme for Court and, over time, for the University more generally;
R5 Establishment of a small number of Strategic Advisory Groups, which would focus on high-priority and complex areas of change;
R6 Production of a performance impact assessment of Court in the form of an annual self-assessment, with the University’s Annual Report being presented and promoted more publicly at an Annual General Meeting;
R7 Adoption of a Maturity Matrix approach to the continuing development of the governance of the University.

* subject to Privy Council approval of proposed changes to the Court’s composition
1. Overview

1.1 In August 2016 the University of Aberdeen (AU) invited the Good Governance Institute (GGI) to submit a proposal, to undertake a review of Court effectiveness, during November 2016 to March 2017.

1.2 This review was carried out in order to ensure that the University’s governance arrangements fully support the institution’s strategy and position as one of the highest ranked universities in the UK and globally.

2. Terms of Reference

2.1 The Terms of Reference for this review had a specific focus with regard to considering:

- The effectiveness of Court in meeting its responsibilities for strategy and monitoring institutional performance;
- The distinction between governance and management in the operation of the Court, including the need for constructive challenge by the governing body to be understood and accepted by both members and the executive;
- The engagement of Court and its members with the wider University community of staff and students.

2.2 The review was carried out by GGI in accordance with the Scottish and wider Higher Education operating environment. Models of sector best practice by way of benchmarking were drawn upon as part of our research.

3. The University

3.1 With a rich and historic heritage dating back to 1495, the University of Aberdeen is the third oldest institution in Scotland and the fifth oldest in the UK, consistently ranked in the top 1% of world institutions. The University has a recognised international outlook with a student body (15,500) comprising 120 nationalities. The University employs 3,300 staff and has an annual income of £237m.

3.2 The institution is organised under three Colleges (Arts and Social Sciences; Life Sciences; Medicine and Physical Sciences) and a Business School. Over 76% of the University’s research output is regarded as world leading or internationally excellent, being ranked 6th in the UK for commercialising research. The Principal & Vice-Chancellor is a leading national figure, chairing the Universities UK Group on Efficiency and the Higher Education Review for Wales.
4. The Court

4.1 As the University’s governing body, the Court, is ultimately responsible for overseeing the affairs of the University acting as a ‘body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal’. In addition to Senate, the University has twelve main committees, including Audit, Governance and Nominations, Research Policy, Quality Assurance, Student Affairs and General Council Business.

4.2 Following proposed changes currently before the Privy Council, Court will consist of the Rector (who has exercised the right to preside at Court meetings); Senior Governor; the Principal & Vice-Chancellor; two staff assessors (elected by the staff of the University); two Trade Union Assessors; four Senate Assessors (elected by the Senatus Academicus); the President of the Students’ Association; a further student representative nominated by the Students’ Association; Independent Court Members not exceeding eight (appointed by University Court); four General Assembly Assessors (two men, two women elected by the General Council). Twenty-five members in total.

4.3 In common with the other ‘Scottish Ancients’, the Rector has a statutory right to “preside” at Court meetings and to exercise a casting vote. The wider role of the “Chairperson” as described in the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance extends beyond the conduct of Court meetings to include the leadership of the governing body and its effectiveness. At Aberdeen the role of “Chairperson” as described in the Code (and distinct from the role of “Presiding” at meetings) is undertaken by the Senior Governor.

4.4 The statement of Primary Responsibilities sets out the main functions of Court, namely:

*To approve the mission and strategic vision of the University, including institutional and longer-term academic and business plans, and key performance indicators, and to ensure that they meet the interests of stakeholders, including students, staff, alumni, local and national communities and funding bodies.*

4.5 The primary Committees of Court are: Audit Committee; Governance & Nominations Committee; Remuneration Committee; Operating Board (see Court Committee structure at Annex II).

5. Scope, Methodology and Process

5.1 GGI commenced work on site at the University in early November 2016, meeting with key individuals, including the Principal & Vice-Chancellor and the Secretary to the University (the review sponsor); observing a meeting of Court, and carrying out an initial review of the relevant documentation.

5.2 Semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were held either in person or via telephone with all Members of Court except for the newly-appointed Senior Governor.

5.3 In parallel with the interview process, observations were carried out in respect of the Audit Committee, Operating Board, Governance & Nominations Committee, Student Experience Committee, Senate and the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (Annex III details all meetings observed).

5.4 A comprehensive documentation review was also performed as part of the review (see Annex IV).
6. **Best Practice Analysis**

6.1 As part of a best practice analysis, GGI has distilled 10 principles which we believe relate most directly to the University. These are drawn from a mixture of the specific research underpinning this report, the accumulated experience of GGI, and other sources and reference points identified to us by those engaged in the review, both inside and outside of the University.

6.2 Governing bodies in Higher Education institutions work most effectively when there is a governance framework which:

- is driven by a clearly-stated commitment to a progressive, long-term approach to the development of governance which is shared at the top of the institution;
- is as clear and simple as possible and visible and respected in the institution;
- provides clarity of authority at all levels of the organisation to deliver decisions at the pace needed to meet strategic intent;
- reflects the right level of nuance and effective checks and balances appropriate to that specific institution;
- ensures the governing body and the institution as a whole are connected effectively to stakeholders inside and outside the institution;
- promotes consistent standards of behaviour and practice which support governance across the whole organisation;
- includes a set of publicly-reported processes which review the impact and performance of the governing body, and of the institution as a whole;
- is supported by the devotion of sufficient collective time by the Chair of the Board, the Chief Executive and the Board Secretary to address both immediate and longer-term governance issues;
- is enabled by a senior Executive with the necessary level of practical authority and leverage to safeguard and develop the core spine of governance in the institution;
- is accompanied by the planned development of Board Members as active agents shaping the institution both inside and outside.

This framework has been used to guide this review.
7. Governance & Leadership

7.1 The University has an ambitious forward strategy in fulfilling its mission as both a major player in the local Scottish economy and internationally. Central to this is the requirement to have clarity of strategic decision-making, supported by effective assurance frameworks at all levels of the institution, supported by professional and business-like behaviour.

7.2 Our reflection, from all aspects of the review, is that there would be real value in promoting the importance of a modern approach to governance, the style and culture with which it is executed, and the individual and collective contributions on which it depends across the University.

7.3 There are many ways in which this single, core spine of governance could be set out and brought to life. This matters as it will enable each component element to be sighted on roles and responsibilities, and also the expectations of contribution and behaviour which apply to everyone involved in the governance processes of the University. This is important given the current complexity of the governance arrangements and the number of different individuals who contribute to it at all levels of the organisation. We envisage this extending beyond just Court and its sub-committees to embrace the supporting structures of the University, including Senate and its sub-committees, if Senate were to agree. This dynamic approach could significantly enhance the openness and transparency of the overall governance of the University, at a time when strategic and academic issues are increasing in their complexity and consequence.

7.4 The core spine of governance would set out what modern governance means institution-wide, including articulating the different roles of Court, Senate and the Executive and raising the profile of Court amongst core stakeholders. There is an argument that all essential information exists on the University website in respect of Court, but it is not always easy to understand, user-friendly or illustrated by how decisions are, or have been, made. In the spirit of openness and transparency, we would recommend a dynamic governance map on the University website designed to bring University governance to life and connect to the public, to the students and to other stakeholders, as well as to Court and Court members.

7.5 We believe, given the nature of the challenges faced by the University at this time, such an approach would provide a useful opportunity to set out a fleet of foot approach to governance based on supportive challenge and questioning at all levels of the organisation. In particular, it would allow a clear statement about the function of Court and its relationship to the other parts of the University governance structures at a time of significant cultural change in the sector, and set out how the changing context is being reflected in the way in which the University works. As suggested throughout the report, some changes to the way business is approached by Court itself would also be necessary to meet modern standards of business conduct in future. Court is encouraged to set the benchmark for the University as a whole in this regard.

7.6 The setting out of standards of conduct, contribution and commitment to collective decision-making without default to representational, sectional or vested interests will be timely given the changing composition of Court.

**We recommend the adoption of a clear and unambiguous definition of the way governance of the University works, based on best practice.**

7.7 It is important that this is not imposed or simply imported from elsewhere, but is generated and owned by the institution itself and translated into an approach which works specifically in the University.

**We recommend the further development of the University’s digital governance map, with high visibility on the University website.**

7.8 This governance map, to be further developed by the University, would be used to show clearly how the University governance framework operates, with connections to the terms of reference and accountabilities for all elements of the formal governance structure. This is not a dull bureaucratic exercise, but one which will help establish the right governance climate for the University’s future success. It could be used to explain how and where decisions are made.
8. **Court Constitution**

8.1 There is no definitive best practice around the size of University governing bodies which delivers maximum effectiveness. However, a Court of 28 members is above the average for the sector, as is the planned reduction to 25 which is currently before the Privy Council. The average amongst UK Universities is 20 and the trend is for smaller membership, with the current smallest being 12. These figures are also reflective of European benchmarks from our own recent research. The existing and proposed membership of Court can be found at Annex I.

8.2 A review of Court size is beyond the scope of this review, and was not laid out in the original terms of reference. However, throughout our discussions with Court members the size of Court was an emerging theme and has therefore formed some of our findings from this review.

8.3 In accordance with the provisions of the Scottish HE Governance Act (2016), Court has undertaken a review of its size and composition and the proposed changes now agreed (subject to Privy Council approval), sees a modest decrease in size so that it still includes four Senate members and four General Assembly Assessors. This reduction in the size and shape of the governing body, prompted by legislative changes, appears to have established a set of principles about the desired balance to be struck between independent and other members.

8.4 It is perhaps revealing that the issue of the size of Court, however, still remains an active concern for some members, and an irritating distraction from more serious matters for others. And we cannot proceed without observing that there remains an underlying divergence of view amongst Court members, some of whom favour a yet smaller Court to improve the effectiveness of debate and decision-making. We accept that reducing the size of Court further would need to be sympathetic to retaining a proper constitutional balance and secure sufficient capacity with regard to membership of Court committees. We believe that setting an objective to reduce the size of Court over time (say in the next three to five years) to the average size for the sector (18-20 members) would, in our view, help to improve the overall governance processes, and provide greater objectivity and transparency in accordance with what would be expected of a dynamic, international higher education institution.

8.5 Both the new Higher Education Governance Act and the necessity to approach the Privy Council for a second time make this route forward a challenge, but we suggest it is one worth taking, given the likely increase in grip and focus the change would make possible. We are not advocating any such change to these extensively-discussed changes to Court composition at this point, but we suggest the issue of size remains under review. We did not have the benefit of the new Senior Governor’s views on this issue. Our focus in this review is, however, more on the way business is conducted within this given structure.

**We recommend a commitment to reduce the size of Court further within the next five years.**

8.6 The extended and time-consuming process which was used to engage with the future composition of Court is illustrative of both the strengths and weaknesses of the way Court business is currently executed. Significant opportunities are allowed for engagement by members on certain specific issues both in Court and in its committees. This is to be applauded. However, there is a tendency for the University to look to make decisions on a consensual basis, without a clear tradition of resolving difference quickly and effectively through standard Board practice, such as voting. We believe Court would benefit from finding a means for turning discussion into decision-making in a more business-like manner, encouraging greater discipline in the conduct of business and helping to clarify what decisions have been made.

**We recommend a commitment to greater use of voting processes to support effective decision-making.**
8.7 There appears to be a good skill mix amongst Court members and we recognise the depth of experience of many members. Through the Governance & Nominations Committee, the skills mix on Court should be periodically reviewed to ensure that it supports the strategic needs of the institution moving forward. A number of members suggested that better use could be made of their skills by allowing greater opportunities for more open engagement with issues earlier in their gestation. The desire by the Executive to provide solutions to strategic issues at a highly developed level runs the risk of losing the opportunity for “critical friend” engagement by members of Court and can lead to a sense of frustration amongst members and even to concerns about openness. We suggest the Executive need to reflect on whether they involve members early enough in the consideration of strategic issues.

8.8 We would further propose that there is scope, as Court develops, to consider seeking new members to strengthen and deepen the expertise on Court. In particular, members with expertise in a global environment, in large companies and in an externally-credible academic environment would achieve this. Improving the skills register and its use in the assessment of skills and contributions would be of related value in securing new members and making best use of current members’ skills.

8.9 There are currently eight women who sit on Court, including the Rector. As part of a wider approach to succession planning, we would recommend that the Governance and Nominations Committee considers a more proactive approach to diversity and gender, and also builds on the good work already achieved with regard to the on-going development needs of current and new members to maximise their added value.

We recommend adoption of a clear succession and skills planning approach to improve the diversity and expertise engaged in the governance of the University.
9. Court Committees

9.1 Currently, there are four main Court Committees: Audit; Governance and Nominations; Remuneration and Operating Board. This latter Board has a further five sub-committees reporting into it: Health & Safety Committee; Strategic Business Ventures Group; Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee; Capital Programme Management Committee and the Advisory Group on Investment.

9.2 The remit of the Operating Board is wide and it must necessarily have a keen focus on financial and sustainability matters. However, as a Committee of Court it needs to be essentially strategic in outlook. We would recommend, therefore, that careful consideration be given to those matters of business (e.g. Accidents & Incidents; Online Education Update etc.) which might be more the preserve of the Executive Team, rather than the Operating Board - the Committee’s very title suggesting a concentration on operational matters. In doing so, we recognise the importance placed on health and safety as a defining element in the governance of the University, but believe that this point has now been effectively made, and also that there have been previous decisions by Court to move away from the ‘policy and resources’ title, which is more the norm for the sector.

9.3 Court members place a great deal of weight on the scrutiny function of the Operating Board, which was introduced in part to reduce the frequency of Court meetings. From our observations, we would conclude that on balance this presents a problem to the overall governance of the University, with too much reliance being placed on the work of the Board, resulting in too little space for detailed engagement with important strategic matters by Court as a whole. The perception that extensive work has already been undertaken in the Operating Board undoubtedly reduces the level of questioning by members in Court meetings, especially by those Court members who are not also members of the Operating Board.

9.4 We would suggest that by adding a further formal Court meeting into the annual cycle, there would be a clearer delineation of what constitutes scrutiny from strategic, thereby re-balancing current arrangements. This would reflect better the pace of business and reduce the scope for potential disconnection of Court members from the business conducted in the Operating Board.

9.5 We would propose that this additional meeting would provide more space for in-depth discussion and would also allow Court to develop a collective approach to both benchmarking and performance. This would allow Court to increase its value in supporting and challenging the Executive, currently struggling with complex policy and strategic issues.

We recommend the title and remit of the Operating Board is changed to reflect a clearer strategic focus on policy and resources, and an additional Court meeting is added into the annual cycle.
10. **Court Business**

10.1 Court and its committees are supported to a high professional level by a long-standing governance team, and we commend the thoroughness of the papers which are produced in support of Court business. The governance pages on the University website are similarly of a high standard when measured against the sector, and usefully promote the visibility of Court and its operations, notwithstanding the comments made above.

10.2 We would recommend, however, that Court agenda would benefit from a greater degree of focus on a smaller number of strategic themes, designed to enhance decision-making and the collective assessment of risk and opportunity, impact and performance. This would require an overhaul of the agenda-setting process for Court and its sub-committees.

10.3 We would further propose that reports and briefing papers could be enhanced by having more finely-tuned executive summaries written to support Court as the ultimate strategic decision-making body. In this way, reports that have been considered at committee level will not simply be re-presented to Court in their original form, but should be re-drafted in abbreviated executive form for Court consideration, highlighting the strategic relevance of the matters under discussion. Many independent members emphasised that they wished to see Court operating in a more strategic manner in accordance with the principles of modern governance.

10.4 There is a case for papers not simply to be shorter but also to include a small number of questions which would help frame discussion, and support Court members towards shared understanding and collective decision-making in meetings.

**We recommend that Court papers are framed better to support focused discussion and clear decision-making.**

10.5 We are not sure that the annual business cycle is fully understood or shared between members, nor the degree to which it is shaped and owned by them. This cycle of what to expect when appears remote and bureaucratic to many, with slow lead-times for issues to find their way to Court through the processes of Executive and Court sub-Committees. Some of this processing is inevitable and an important part of good governance, but time in Court needs to be used to maximum effect and be felt to be so by its members. There may be value in the University Secretary and the governance support team exploring how other Universities strike a more inclusive balance to both the annual cycle of business and agenda-setting for individual meetings.

10.6 Presently, most time of members is committed to formal business meetings, and we have noted the commitment of those members who operate internationally and who participate in Court meetings via Skype. To utilise the skills and experience of members further, we would suggest that the University would benefit from greater emphasis being placed on a clearly articulated ambassadorial role (especially for independent members), connecting the University to key stakeholders to enhance visibility and impact locally, regionally and nationally. This should not be at the expense of the core governance responsibilities.

10.7 The role of presiding over such a large meeting as Court is difficult and the current Rector’s studious commitment to allowing contribution in meetings is to be applauded. But, this comes at a cost of lengthy meetings bringing with it, on occasions, a lack of clarity on the strategic decisions that need to be taken. This is an area that can be addressed as part of a review of Court agenda-setting and meetings management. We understand that the secretariat do offer opportunities for the agenda to be discussed in advance of every Court meeting. However, there may be value in improved administrative support being provided to the Rector by the governance support team for the duration of her tenure presiding at Court meetings, to enhance the ability to plan and prepare for the business of Court effectively. There would also be value in the Senior Governor, the Rector in her role, the other Committee Chairs and the Principal having a quarterly session to plan business across the landscape of governance, and to reduce duplication, overlap and inefficiency.
10.8 It is important that all Court members are able to take stock of strategy and policy throughout the year and not feel that they are merely seeing fragments of a whole, or having a concentrated focus once a year in a strategy day. Court papers could help by positioning each theme more clearly in the overall University strategy, and also set out the provenance of the paper, any issues of substance already discussed and resolved in committees, and map out the route taken to Court. This may also help to highlight whether duplication of consideration in different committees is in fact a good use of time, or necessary, and would reveal any overlaps in roles and purpose between committees. Oversight of this process could form part of the proposed quarterly meeting of Committee Chairs with the Rector, the Senior Governor and the Principal.

**We recommend that the cycle of Court business is developed more directly with members, framed more explicitly around strategic themes, planned collectively by chairs of committees on a quarterly basis.**

10.9 There is a short additional meeting following the formal Court meeting involving some members of Court, but not others. In the same way any independent member meeting can be seen as divisive by some, the value of such a meeting needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure it is of current, rather than historical value. We suggest that the additional meeting is unhelpful and should be discontinued. More positively, the Principal is to be commended for the ease of access he provides to all Court members, and the assiduous way he meets a number before and after Court meetings. It was clear to us that this was appreciated and allowed issues to be aired appropriately.

**We recommend the additional meeting following formal Court meeting be reviewed to ensure it is of current, rather than historical value and suggest that this meeting is unhelpful and should be discontinued.**

10.10 One minor issue relates to whether the main committee rooms are in their design and lay-out conducive to conducting business. It appeared difficult for different committees to overcome the rather old-fashioned and formal atmosphere created by the settings. The meeting environment should not be under-estimated as a potential barrier to contribution by members. It is suggested that the main committee rooms could be modernised and made more flexible to accommodate different sizes of committee and less formal chairing styles.
11. Standards and Culture

11.1 To deliver the University's strategy in a sustainable way, Court, Senate and the Executive will need to work constructively together, each respecting the demarcation lines between governance and management. We have assessed a range of cultural issues and core values which underpin effective governance - openness and transparency; joint and collegiate working; management of conflict of interest.

11.2 To capture a shared set of standards and expectations around behaviours and attitudes, we would advocate that consideration be given to the adoption of a single University Code of Conduct, which would apply to anyone in the University who has a formal governance role, since effective governance does not stop at the Court Room. This would build on the current Code of Conduct for Court members and complement the earlier recommendation on the spine of governance.

11.3 We would propose that there are a number of issues to consider, based on our own experience in this area and on benchmarking undertaken in the last year by GGI:

- the content of the Code needs to be generated within the University rather than being imported from outside. The actual process of development is important in identifying and opening up any issues of concern which the Code can then help address;
- the language and style of the Code needs to be unequivocal and designed to have impact;
- the Code needs to be accompanied by commitment to a programme of work to support the Code as a living element of Court business. Ideally this should be externally facilitated;
- the handling of breaches of the Code need to be agreed before its adoption;
- the Code should be part of the formal assessment of performance for members of Court and for Court itself;
- Court as a whole, alongside other internal stakeholders, should be encouraged to be actively involved, but the Governance and Nominations Committee should act as the host committee;
- the Charity Commissioners’ relevant Trustee Code of Conduct should be referenced in the University’s own;
- the Code should also provide a suitable vehicle for widening the conversation to include Senate and external stakeholders.

We recommend the adoption of a Code of Conduct, capturing a shared set of standards and expectations around behaviours and attitudes which could also apply across the University.

11.4 We would wish to comment also on some aspects of the underlying culture in which business is conducted. It is important that the Executive is always open to questioning and genuinely welcoming of contribution by members of Court from all backgrounds, accepting of course that these need to be constructively pursued in the interests of the institution as a whole, rather than being driven by sectional or vested interests. A lot of effort is expended by the Executive in preparing for Court and its committees, which is excellent in demonstrating the seriousness with which the governing body is regarded. But equally this must not become an unnecessary and hindering burden which the Executive places on itself, which in turn prevents open engagement and translates into a perceived overly-controlled approach which could potentially undermine trust in the Executive by Court.

11.5 We are not suggesting that there is anything other than confidence in the Executive, but this may be the right time for the Executive also to consider an externally-facilitated session to consider their approach and relationship to Court. As this falls beyond the scope of the review this is not made as a formal recommendation.
11.6 Best practice clearly shows that improvements in governance can flow from reducing bureaucracy. The University has, in our experience, a high level of bureaucracy built into its culture. This is associated with a number of comments which described the underlying culture as being risk-averse, for which we saw evidence during the review process. This is made as an observation rather than as a criticism. Given the rapidly changing operating environment, we would propose that the Court’s risk appetite needs to be more clearly articulated and linked to strategic objectives in a way that is understood by all Court members working closely with the Executive.

We recommend an annual statement of risk appetite is developed as part of the strategy day programme and used to guide the work of Court and the Executive.

11.7 We would suggest that Court would also benefit from adoption of greater digital governance. The theme of digital innovation should apply to Court as much as the rest of the University, especially where it can deliver opportunities for better remote participation and transparency.

11.8 A digital governance approach could initially prioritise digital engagement with members (we note the Court intranet in this regard) and with stakeholders, to increase the effective use of members’ time and to extend connectivity. We suggest this should include increased use of social media between meetings, improved access to Court papers and the use of pre-recorded contributions in advance of meetings, with the accent at all times being placed on what is of strategic importance for Court members to be considering. This would increase the amount of time available to focus on the implications of issues in Court time, rather than on collective listening.

11.9 We sense that members are much more likely to schedule the time necessary to view and engage with such material if it is shared in advance in a varied form, rather than merely being presented as a significant demand for listening and reading alone.

We recommend the adoption of a digital governance approach to the support provided to Court.
12. Governance Development

12.1 Induction for new Court members is an important aspect of broader governing body effectiveness and development. Section 7.5 of the CUC Code of Higher Education Governance states that “the Chair and Secretary will want to ensure all members receive an appropriate induction to their role and the institution as necessary”. Similarly, Section 12 of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance states that “The chair shall ensure that new members receive a full induction on joining the governing body”.

12.2 Best practice drawn from across higher education and larger charities suggests an effective induction process should ensure that Court members:

- understand the parameters of their role and function as Trustees and the important interface between governance and management;
- confidently able to contribute to decision-making, playing a full part in discussions at an early stage, applying their skills and experience most effectively;
- are equipped to provide informed and constructive challenge to the Executive.

There were a range of views expressed about the quality and relevance of the current induction process against these criteria. Some comments were made about the induction being largely administrative and lacking a full enough connection to other members rather than just the governance support team. One suggestion was for greater input from existing members in both the design and running of the induction process for new members.

We recommend that the processes for induction and on-going development of Court members should be reviewed and strengthened.

12.3 One significant theme to future-proof the governance arrangements would be a more explicit development programme aimed at encouraging exchange and understanding between members. The main aim of the events would be both to grow the capacity and confidence of individual members and to increase collective working and understanding, both in Court and with others. The programme would specifically seek to engender a greater sense of shared intent, understanding and trust in Court. Consideration should also be given to extend this purpose beyond Court boundaries as a broader collective stakeholder enterprise for the institution as a whole, linked to strengthening the core spine of governance.

12.4 The suggested programme would not need to be time-consuming. It could help develop increased trust and collective purpose by providing a different environment from the necessary formality of Court meetings, but it would need to be approached without any sense of defensiveness on the part of Court members and the Executive for it to work well.

12.5 The programme could be built around a series of themes agreed as part of the annual planning of business. Normally, this could form part of the established strategy day process, but we would recommend that such a programme should be initiated sooner rather than later. The programme would need to be seen as being connected also to suggestions about changes to Court business, not least the frequency and content of meetings. We would additionally propose that it should include a specific commitment to financial training for all Court members to enable greater confidence about engagement at full Court meetings on financial matters.

12.6 It is important that development is not seen as of secondary importance to the business of Court. On the contrary such a programme should allow members to explore where they can make the most effective contribution but also allow the Executive to open out issues more in a supportive environment, different from the formality of Court.

12.7 An effective approach could be for these events to be scheduled to precede Court meetings on the prior afternoon and evening. This would mean holding around four events a year. The proposed scheduling would make best use of the time of members who travel, and would support the necessary distinction between the deliberative and decision-making aspects of what Court needs to do.

1) Committee of University Chairs, The Higher Education Code of Governance, Committee of University Chairs, 2014
12.8 Alternatively, Court may wish to run some of the events between Court meetings to provide a better rhythm of activity across the year. This is likely to involve greater commitment of time and expense to achieve. We feel that the content should be decided as an annual programme, but also that some element of flexibility over content should be kept open to ensure relevance to on-going issues. The overall agenda then might cover:

- issues of substance requiring space and time to reflect;
- generic development issues relating to the way Court works;
- specific governance themes including risk and opportunity, impact and performance.

More specifically the content could include:

- the direction of the University and the way it works;
- what the University does and why;
- what good decisions look like: approaches to risk; opportunity; impact and performance;
- the wider (global) HE operating context: marketisation; internationalisation; long-term sustainability;
- the code of conduct;
- closer working with Senate in delivering high-quality teaching, learning and research;
- building greater engagement with Colleges with regard to strategic priorities;
- empowerment of the student voice.

12.9 Using an external facilitator could help free ex-officio and appointed members, in particular, to be able to participate fully and openly. There may be value in holding some events off-campus. We suggest some of the events are opened up to, or link with, development activities of Senate, especially on issues of mutual interest and core governance themes, including academic governance. Over time, consideration could also be given to extending the events to include members of strategic advisory groups and others with an ambassadorial interest in the University.

We recommend an annual governance development programme for Court and over time for the University more generally.

12.10 The governance programme should ideally form part of a transparent cycle of skills development and succession planning for Court, its Committees and its office bearers. We suggest that the opportunity should be taken to initiate succession planning at the earliest opportunity, to ensure continuity and consistent oversight in the longer-term for this development programme.

12.11 Expectations of performance of chairs of all committees should also be more clearly established and skills assessed as part of the annual programme, which should be overseen by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

We recommend a combined skills development and succession planning approach for Court and its Committees.
13. Visibility and Engagement

13.1 Best practice is clear that an effective governing body should not only embody good governance, but it should also take the lead in promoting and animating what good governance looks like more widely into the organisation. We feel from our work that greater priority should be placed on Court member engagement in the life of University. To achieve this successfully will require more than the release of members from current time commitments. Structured engagement should routinely become a more prominent part of the work of all Court members, reflecting their obligation to be proactive in understanding and learning about the institution for themselves, rather than being recipients of information. This process of systematic and planned engagement will be especially important given the imminent loss of the members from Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils.

We recommend that all members of Court are supported in engaging actively in the life of the University.

13.2 We believe a model of strategic advisory groups would offer a simple but effective means of securing more systematic access to best practice into the overall governance of the University. These short-life Groups would bring together specialist expertise from inside and outside the University, including members of Court acting in an advisory role, and be responsible to a lead member of the University’s Executive team.

13.3 The proposal is that each Group would:

- provide a consistent framework promoting purposeful engagement as a key strategic element in the overall governance of the University;
- provide a vehicle which connected local, regional and national engagement into Court business via its members;
- cut through current obstacles in practice and approach to partnership mentioned by external stakeholders;
- encourage co-ordinated ambassadorial activity by a larger body of leaders, alumni and friends of the University;
- place openness and transparency on a more formal footing without adding to bureaucracy.

13.4 We understand that working groups may already exist covering a number of these themes. However, these appear to be ad hoc and therefore not sufficiently visible to all Court members, or clearly positioned within the current governance structure of Court. We recommend four initial groups, linked to strategic priorities:

- People and culture
- Digital learning
- Internationalisation and sustainability
- Impact and performance

It may well be that the priority areas chosen are different following discussion, or change over time, but we believe these reflect the right choice of high-impact issues in support of the University strategy. The University may wish to pilot one or two such groups and assess their value in practice before committing to them in full.

13.5 The aim is for the Groups to be more nimble and lighter of touch than a formal Court committee, allowing greater flexibility in the way they work and avoiding any unnecessary bureaucracy or ritual. However, care still needs to be taken to ensure that core governance standards, such as those relating to conflict of interest, apply as much to these Groups as to formal committees of Court.

13.6 Care would also need to be taken to avoid duplication of discussion between the strategic advisory groups and full Court. Clearly, a balance has to be achieved to ensure that these new groups add value rather than become a burden or duplicate work unnecessarily. A light-touch strategic approach is what should be aimed for. However, we do not feel it is helpful to be too prescriptive from the outset about frequency of meetings or other detail, as these groups need to be effective and adaptable.
13.7 It would make sense for each of the proposed Groups to share a similar diagnostic approach to their initial work, involving a stock-take of the implications of the strategy for each sector, but equally encouraging an overt opening up of the University to the strategic agendas of others. It is important this is a clear two-way process. This diagnostic first step is important as it will determine the frequency, composition and style of business which will work best for each group, under the guidance of their independent chairs drawn from Court.

13.8 Court would also need to establish the level and form of feedback which would work best for each group over time. We would suggest that reporting should be on an exception basis only. In the first year, however, we would propose that the chairs of each strategic advisory group meet quarterly with the Rector, Senior Governor and the Principal, and that over the first two years, the work of the strategic advisory groups form part of the impact and performance assessment of Court.

We recommend setting-up of a small number of strategic advisory groups, which would focus on high-priority and complex areas of change.
14. Impact and Performance

14.1 For Court to be optimally effective it must regularly reflect on its own performance and the added value which it collectively offers to the University. The existing review arrangements that are in place are not substantially different from many older Universities.

14.2 We would recommend the introduction of a more systematic (and two-way) annual review process, incorporating a cycle of priority-setting for Court and agreement of the expected contributions of members, supported by a self-assessment, or similar reflective tool. There might be value in identifying a lead member for the development of Court, from induction through to impact assessment. This is a matter which could be considered formally at an appropriate committee or the Senior Governor might wish to consider whether this is a role he himself leads or whether this is something one or more of the members fulfil.

14.3 We noted significant variability in contribution by members. The combination of the code of conduct and the development programme would go a long way potentially to ensure members were supported to contribute fully and held to account for doing so.

14.4 There are also some wider and longer-term issues which we believe would help strengthen the sustainability of the organisation. These relate to measures of impact for Court itself as well as for the University. It was clear from the interviews especially that there was not a sufficiently explicit or robust means of assessing the continuing value and impact of Court, nor with this assessment being shared with others.

14.5 We therefore suggest commitment to the following over the next three years:

- agreement of impact standards and ‘Measures of Success’ for Court at the start of each year. This could also form part of the governance development programme;
- development of personal statements of contribution and impact for all Court members to connect directly to the Code of Conduct and to personal development objectives;
- sharing impact and performance assessments between members to create a greater cohesion between them around Court priorities;
- development of annual reports for each committee, for Court and for the University in a form that is public-facing, is published on the University website and is integrated into an Annual General Meeting.

**We recommend a performance impact assessment of Court in the form of an annual self-assessment and that the University’s Annual Report is presented and promoted more publicly at an Annual General Meeting.**

14.6 Another recommendation would potentially provide an effective means of bringing all of the governance elements into a continuing improvement process. Through the adoption of a Maturity Matrix model (which allows large organisations to commit to a progressive, objective assessment of development and performance against benchmarked standards of what constitutes different levels of good governance), we believe the University would be a leader of governance innovation in the sector. This would be an innovative commitment of potentially long-term value in allowing the Court to self-assess its progress over time towards a modern standard of governance, in tune with the demands of its operating environment.

14.7 GGI has developed a range of maturity matrices, used as developmental and benchmarking tools in simulating Board and organisational improvement. The maturity matrix included here comes from work over a number of years in the NHS. There is no equivalent for higher education but we believe this could work well at Aberdeen University.
# Good Governance Institute

The GGI NHS Board maturity matrix is included below:

## PROGRESS LEVELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY ELEMENTS</th>
<th>PURPOSE AND VISION</th>
<th>STRATEGY AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (BAF)</th>
<th>LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY</th>
<th>MONEY/VFM</th>
<th>QUALITY, RISK AND AGILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## BASIC LEVEL

### KEY ELEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURPOSE AND VISION</th>
<th>Principle accepted</th>
<th>Agreement of commitment and direction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STRATEGY AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (BAF)</td>
<td>Strategy owned and agreed by board, after canvassing views and input from commissioners, partners and other stakeholders.</td>
<td>BAF used as key instrument to grasp strategic focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY</td>
<td>Clarity of roles of all board members with specific job descriptions agreed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONEY/VFM</td>
<td>Budget, cost pressures &amp; efficiency targets are clearly identified to board.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUALITY, RISK AND AGILITY</td>
<td>Known risks identified and continuity plans in place. Board understands risk at a comprehensive strategic instrument.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## EARLY PROGRESS IN DEVELOPMENT

### KEY ELEMENTS

| PURPOSE AND VISION | Purpose & vision agreed, and affirmed in public and internal / partnership documents. Board has an agreed set of values / principles. |
| STRATEGY AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (BAF) | Progress against delivery made during year. Board has protected long-term priorities from short-term pressures. |
| LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY | Board development programme is based on prior systematic review. Clinical leadership accepts accountability for delivery against strategic objectives. Assessment & PDPs in place for board members. |
| QUALITY, RISK AND AGILITY | All in-year plans are costed and trajectory of spend / savings established to achieve break even / target. Quality implications robustly tested. |

## FIRM PROGRESS IN DEVELOPMENT

### KEY ELEMENTS

| PURPOSE AND VISION | National targets and local priorities agreed with stakeholders. Variance from HWB & commissioners plans / priorities recognised and explained. |
| STRATEGY AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (BAF) | Board has a robust inclusive mechanism for adding and removing services and / or changing care settings that matches agreed purpose, values and priorities. |
| LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY | Board development programme is based on prior systematic review. Clinical leadership accepts accountability for delivery against strategic objectives. Assessment & PDPs in place for board members. |
| QUALITY, RISK AND AGILITY | Risk appetite for key issues such as safe staffing levels known and built into plans/BAF. |

## RESULTS BEING ACHIEVED

### KEY ELEMENTS

| PURPOSE AND VISION | Evidence that sustained progress towards the vision is being made. Purpose and vision are systematically revisited as board membership changes or at least annually. |
| STRATEGY AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (BAF) | Board continually testing how changing environment affects delivery of strategy. First goals being met. |
| LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY | Board is confident it is visible. Leading rather than following local development agenda. |
| QUALITY, RISK AND AGILITY | Board is demonstrably reinvesting whole budget. Rather than being limited by ‘affordability’ at margins. |

## MATURITY

### KEY ELEMENTS

| PURPOSE AND VISION | Partner organisations and internal stakeholders understand and support the purpose and vision of the organisation. Strategic decisions do not change fundamentals. |
| STRATEGY AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (BAF) | Evidence that strategic aims are being adhered to, meeting agreed milestones on trajectory. |
| LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY | Organisation is identified as well led throughout organisation and as health & wellbeing system leader in local economy. |
| QUALITY, RISK AND AGILITY | Board is able to measure and demonstrate risk appreciation by avoiding or agile response to predictable incidents. |

## EXEMPLAR

### KEY ELEMENTS

| PURPOSE AND VISION | Success has allowed trust / board to redefine / extend its role. Ongoing influence of other organisations to meet own and wider stakeholders purpose. |
| STRATEGY AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (BAF) | Trust/board is able to demonstrate consistent achievement of strategic goals over the last 3 years. |
| LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY | Board considered a national leader, providing buddy ing support and example to provider chains & other organisations. |
| QUALITY, RISK AND AGILITY | Board has successful, demonstrable risk mitigation track record. Systems respond well to unknowns as they occur. |

### Notes

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### Version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOOD GOVERNANCE MATURITY MATRIX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>NHS BOARD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERSION 1.0 DECEMBER 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*WWW.GOOD-GOVERNANCE.ORG.UK*
## Measurement and Integrated Reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Progress Levels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Basic Level</td>
<td>Principle accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Basic Level</td>
<td>Agreement of commitment and direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early Progress in Development</td>
<td>Board has agreed public reporting for social, economic and environmental impact / opportunities (integrated reporting).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Firm Progress in Development</td>
<td>Health improvement / harm reduction targets agreed. Systematic outcome-related reporting to board and stakeholders. Board confident it understands how it deploys its capitals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Results Being Achieved</td>
<td>Annual review of board demonstrates candid self awareness and progress against agreed action plans / deliverables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Comprehensive assurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Assurance and Stewardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Progress Levels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Basic Level</td>
<td>Integrated audit committee in place, with annual cycle of business. Board assures itself that Assurance Framework is balanced &amp; can reflect changing priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early Progress in Development</td>
<td>Independent assurance systematically sought through internal and clinical audit. All regulatory compliances, tests and actions met or explained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Firm Progress in Development</td>
<td>Board annually delegates / confirms tolerance levels for assurance to sub-committees. Board can demonstrate robust scrutiny.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Results Being Achieved</td>
<td>Organisation able to invest significant resources derived from own savings / service change to community wellbeing, research, innovation &amp; staff development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Board confident it has evidence based, intelligent analysis &amp; assurance of all systems and drivers across the health economy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Proximity and Reputation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Progress Levels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Basic Level</td>
<td>Standards of Conduct for board explicit and accepted. Plans in place to manage conflicts of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early Progress in Development</td>
<td>Board has third party evidence of its reputation and standing. Risk appetite thinking includes reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Firm Progress in Development</td>
<td>Probity expected of all partners, suppliers and providers and this is written into contracts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Results Being Achieved</td>
<td>Reputational risk considered in scenario and “what if?” exercises. Reputational risk appetite agreed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Organisation seeks and acquires good governance recognition by independent authority.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Proximity and Reputation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Progress Levels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Basic Level</td>
<td>Decision-making includes appropriate consultation and option/impact appraisal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early Progress in Development</td>
<td>Information processing and analysis focussed on evidence. Board and committee agendas reflect materiality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Firm Progress in Development</td>
<td>Board consistently takes decisions based on materiality and evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Results Being Achieved</td>
<td>Evidence that board and staff confident that the board takes decisions in a robust, transparent manner, assurances available to stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Audit committee has reviewed key decisions of board and delegated committees for robustness and alignment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Stakeholder Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Progress Levels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Basic Level</td>
<td>Engagement policy and strategy in place based on stakeholder mapping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early Progress in Development</td>
<td>Service user, staff, public and partner engagement recognised as resource to focus, design and deliver service improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Firm Progress in Development</td>
<td>Membership targets met and board of governors / users panel in place with own development plans. Stakeholders confirm organisation effectively engages with them and this is reflected in strategies and plans. Governors’ contribution valued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Results Being Achieved</td>
<td>Governance between organisations issues regularly tested with partners. Partners, service users and the local public trust organisation. Seen as employer of choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Organisation recognised as a national leader in effective engagement with stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Board Supports and Committee Structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Progress Levels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Basic Level</td>
<td>Audit committee role developed to take on independent scrutiny function. Committee structure confirmed by last annual board review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early Progress in Development</td>
<td>Board Sec or other holds compliance and tracking role for all assurance issues of the board. SID appointed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Firm Progress in Development</td>
<td>Workload and agendas for committees planned and task groups have time-limited existence. Audit committee meeting at least ‘firm progress’ levels of audit committee matrix. Internal &amp; external auditors &amp; advisors aligned to agenda &amp; role. Annual cycle of board business reviewed at year-end, planned activities completed and developed roles refreshed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Results Being Achieved</td>
<td>Overall time investment in board and committees reduced through organisation effectiveness. Board’s systems adopted by others as examples of good governance practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Appraisal Process of Directors and Other Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Progress Levels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Basic Level</td>
<td>Clarity of role for all board members understood and explicit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early Progress in Development</td>
<td>Board induction &amp; development process in place and working. Annual board review conducted and actioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Firm Progress in Development</td>
<td>Third party views included in annual board review process. Chair reviews board contribution of all executives. Annual review and director appraisal has informed current board development programme which is clearly actioned. Systematic feedback sought on added value of board. Exit interviews always offered. Board is recognised as adding value by CEO and stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Results Being Achieved</td>
<td>Board recognised as public appointment of choice nationally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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WWW.GOOD-GOVERNANCE.ORG.UK
14.8 The matrix describes the 12 key elements against which all Boards should be reviewed, based on extensive research in public, private and third sector organisations internationally.

These elements are:

- purpose and vision
- strategy and Board Assurance Framework (BAF)
- leadership and capacity, money/value for money (VFM)
- quality, risk and agility
- measurement and integrated reporting
- assurance and stewardship
- probity and reputation
- decision-making and decision-taking
- stakeholder engagement
- Board supports and committee structures
- appraisal process of directors, and other feedback

14.9 The x-axis outlines the graduations of Board ‘maturity’ that range from a basic level of maturity up to exemplar. Used as a simple self-assessment tool, the maturity matrix allows organisations to assess their own performance against this range of indicators at any given time, by scoring themselves against the key elements of the matrix, as well as evaluating progress made against these at a later review date. It is not expected that the organisation will be at the same stake of all elements of Board maturity.

14.10 The matrix is particularly useful in identifying particular areas of improvement against the organisation’s priorities, and creating developmental plans in order to progress towards the aimed target scores. The matrix can also be used as a forward-looking developmental tool against which organisations can map out the progress they want to achieve in levels of maturity against each key indicator within a given time period. This fits the University well and could be used to great effect not just for Court but potentially for Senate and for the Executive as well.

We recommend a Maturity Matrix approach to the continuing development of the governance of the University.
15. **Summary of Recommendations**

We suggest the following primary and supporting recommendations should be regarded as package of actions to future-proof the governance of the University over the next five years:

**Primary recommendations**

R1 Adoption of a clear and unambiguous definition of the way governance of the University works, based on best practice;  
R2 Adoption of a clear succession and skills planning approach to improve the diversity and expertise engaged in the governance of the University;  
R3 The cycle of Court business to be developed more directly with members, and to be framed more explicitly around strategic themes, planned collectively by chairs of committees on a quarterly basis;  
R4 Devise an annual governance development programme for Court and, over time, for the University more generally;  
R5 Establishment of a small number of Strategic Advisory Groups, which would focus on high-priority and complex areas of change;  
R6 Production of a performance impact assessment of Court in the form of an annual self-assessment, with the University’s Annual Report being presented and promoted more publicly at an Annual General Meeting;  
R7 Adoption of a Maturity Matrix approach to the continuing development of the governance of the University.

**Supporting recommendations:**

R8 Further development of a digital governance map, with high visibility on the University website;  
R9 A commitment to reduce the size of Court to no more than 18 Members within the next five years;  
R10 A commitment to greater use of voting processes to support effective decision making;  
R11 Consideration to be given to changing the title and remit of the Operating Board to reflect a clearer strategic focus on policy and resources and an additional Court meeting is added into the annual cycle;  
R12 Court papers to be framed better to support focused discussion and clear decision-making;  
R13 Production of an annual statement of risk appetite as part of the strategy day programme and to be used to guide the work of Court and the Executive;  
R14 Adoption of a digital governance approach to Court support;  
R15 A review to be undertaken of the processes for the selection, appointment, election, induction, development and deployment in relation to membership of Court and its committees;  
R16 Consideration to be given to discontinuing the additional meeting following formal Court meetings;  
R17 Adoption of a combined skills development and succession planning approach for Court and its Committees;  
R18 All members of Court to be supported in engaging actively in the life of the University.

**Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank everyone who contributed in confidence to the review process so openly and positively, including the Principal, all Court members, the University Secretary, and Senior Policy Adviser and Clerk to Court.
Annex I

**Current membership of Court (as at March 2017)**

The Rector (Chair)
The Principal & Vice-Chancellor
Senior Governor and Chancellor’s Assessor
Rector’s Assessor
Aberdeen City Council Assessor
Aberdeenshire Council Assessor
Four General Council Assessors
Six Senate Assessors
Students’ Association President
Eight Co-opted Members
Three Vice- Principals

**Membership of Court following proposed changes (subject to Privy Council approval)**

The Rector
The Principal & Vice-Chancellor
The Senior Governor
Two Staff Assessors
A Trade Union Assessor
Four Senate Assessors
The President of the Students’ Association A Student Representative
Independent Court Members (not exceeding eight)
Four General Assembly Assessors
Annex II

Court Committee Structure

SENATE

- Honorary Degrees Committee
- Senate Business Committee

- University Committee on Teaching and Learning
  - Quality Assurance Committee
  - Undergraduate Committee
  - Postgraduate Committee

- Student Experience Committee

- Research Policy Committee

COURT

- Audit Committee
- Governance and Nominations Committee
- Remuneration Committee

- Operating Board
  - Health & Safety Committee
  - Strategic Business Ventures Group
  - Partnership Negotiating & Consultative Committee
  - Capital Programme Management Committee
  - Advisory Group on Investment
Annex III

Court and committee meetings observed as part of this review

Court
Audit Committee
Operating Board
Governance & Nominations Committee
Student Experience Committee
Senate
University Committee on Teaching and Learning

Annex IV

Documentation reviewed

University Court Papers (8 December 2015)
University Court Papers (28 June 2016)
University Court Papers (4 October 2016)
University Court Papers (6 December 2016)
University Court Minutes (30 September 2015)
University Court Minutes (8 December 2015)
University Court Minutes (22 March 2016)
University Court Minutes (28 June 2016)
University Court Minutes (4 October 2016)
Operating Board Papers (15 November 2016)
Operating Board Papers (10 January 2017)
Operating Board Papers (1 February 2017)
Operating Board Minutes (18 October 2016)
Operating Board Minutes (15 November 2016)
Operating Board Minutes (10 January 2017)
Governance and Nominations Committee Papers (1 February 2017)
Governance and Nominations Committee Minutes (12 September 2016)
Governance and Nominations Committee Minutes (16 December 2016)
Audit Committee Papers (3 November 2016)
Audit Committee Papers (19 January 2017)
Audit Committee Minutes (29 September 2016)
Audit Committee Minutes (3 November 2016)
Remuneration Committee Minutes (2 March 2015)
Remuneration Committee Minutes (31 May 2016)
Remuneration Committee Minutes (1 June 2015)
Partnership, Negotiating and Consultative Committee Minutes (11 September 2014)
Health and Safety Committee Minutes (10 November 2016)
University Committee on Teaching and Learning Papers (7 December 2016)
University Committee on Teaching and Learning High Level Plans towards 2020
University Court Statement of Primary Responsibilities
University Court Commentary on 2015/16 Accounts
University Court Action Log (Academic Year 2014/15)
University Court Action Log (Academic Year 2015/16)
University Court Governor Appraisal Process
Summary Report of Governor Appraisal Questionnaire
The Capital Programme Management Committee – Remit and Composition
Advisory Group on Investment – Remit of the Group
Annual Health and Safety Report (2015/16)
Guidelines for Court Members
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

TRANSITION TO NEW COMPOSITION OF COURT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMITTEES

Note by Clerk: This paper has been prepared in accordance with the decision of Court that it should receive at this meeting a report from the Governance and Nominations Committee on the transition to a new composition of Court and implications for committees. It reflects the Committee’s discussion of these issues on 1 February 2017, which was before the report of the External Effectiveness Review had been concluded. It does not, therefore, take into account any recommendations that may be included in the Effectiveness Review and should be considered in that context.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Court in December 2016 approved proposals for a revised composition of Court and agreed that these be taken forward for discussion with the Privy Council. The Court also agreed that the Governance and Nominations Committee should give consideration to the issues of transition from the current composition to the proposed new composition as soon as practicable, with a report to the next meeting of Court. The Court also noted that the Governance and Nominations Committee would be invited to consider in more detail the implications of the new composition of Court for the future operation of the committee structure. This paper, therefore, reports to Court on the Committee’s consideration of these issues and sets out its recommendations on how to proceed.

1.2 The paper is divided into two parts but which are linked. The first part discusses the transitional issues of moving to the new composition of Court. The second considers the implications of the new composition of Court for the Court’s formal committee structure. The paper also provides an update on the publication by the Scottish Government in late December 2016 of regulations for the commencement of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act.

1.3 Part 1 of the paper discusses the Committee’s consideration of two potential approaches to transition from the current to the new composition of Court. The first option was for there to be a ‘Day Zero’ when the current composition of Court would cease and the new composition and membership would commence immediately. The second option was that there be a phased transition where current categories of Court member end and new categories commence at different times under a timetable that the Court could determine.

1.4 Recommendation on Approach to Transition: The Committee agreed to recommend to Court that the second option which allowed for a phased transition (where that was necessary) be taken forward. The Committee noted that this did not mean there needed to be a lengthy period of transition and that the University should develop the internal appointment processes required with a view to potentially commencing new categories of membership from the 1 October 2017 onwards. This depends, however, on when approval of the new Ordinance and composition is received by the Privy Council.

1.5 The paper also reports on the Committee’s consideration of a number of the more detailed transitional issues. These included:

- The future development of an election process for the future appointment of the Senior Governor;
- The development of election and nomination procedures for the new categories of elected staff members and trade union nominated members;
- The transition from the current six senate assessors to four assessors;
- The transition of current independent members to the new composition, the potential vacancies for new independent members within that new composition and the implications for current Local Council and General Council Assessors.
- Diversity: The objective of the new composition of Court having a 50:50 gender balance and better reflecting the diversity of the wider community.
1.6 **Recommendations:** The Committee specifically recommended that:

1. Noting that under the proposals agreed by Court, there would cease to be positions for elected General Council Assessors, the Committee recommended that the four current General Council Assessors be appointed to positions in the new composition within the twelve positions for independent members with their respective period of office being equivalent to what their remaining current period of office as an General Council Assessor would have been.

2. Having considered the issues of transitioning from six to four Senate Assessors, there should be new elections to appoint the four Senate Assessors and that the necessary process should be undertaken with a view to a potential commencement of this part of the new composition of Court on 1 October 2017. The Senate should also be invited to consider how its procedures could better achieve gender balance in the election of Senate Assessors.

3. That consideration should also be given as to how to encourage and achieve gender balance in the positions nominated by the Students’ Association and Trade Unions.

4. That there would be forthcoming vacancies in the independent membership and that this would be an opportunity to conduct a review of the skills mix on Court. The Committee agreed that it should consider this further in more detail at its next meeting with a view to commencing recruitment processes thereafter. This should include drawing upon the experience of the recent Senior Governor appointment process and the potential use of recruitment consultants.

1.7 The Court is advised that engagement with the Privy Council and Scottish Government on the proposed draft Ordinance has commenced. The University has emphasised that although there is a four year transition period under the Act’s commencement regulations, the Court wishes to progress towards its new composition and implementing the requirements of the Act as soon as practicable. The University understands, however, that the timeframe of Privy Council/Scottish Government may be slower than would be preferred. The University has also following the publication of commencement regulations sought to engage with the Privy Council/Scottish Government on potential transitional provisions which would not require a 'day zero' commencement of the Ordinance (or specifying a date for commencement following approval by the Privy Council) and which would allow greater flexibility in effecting the transition. Depending on the feedback received this may require amendments to the transitional provisions in the current draft Ordinance.

1.8 Part 2 of the paper reports on the Committee’s consideration of the implications of the new composition of Court for key committees. It discusses:

- The implications of retaining a relatively large Court for the remit and composition of the Operating Board and recommends that Court consider a reduction in the size of the Operating Board and amendments to its remit.

- That the Committee invited the Remuneration Committee to consider potential amendments to its remit and composition to take account of the changes in the composition of Court but also, with regard to the Remuneration Committee, issues arising from a review of compliance with the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance. **Note:** A report of the Remuneration Committee’s subsequent consideration of its remit and composition is enclosed as part of a separate item on today’s agenda.

- Recommended amendments to the composition of the Governance and Nominations Committee. The paper also reports on the Committee’s consideration of whether it continued to be appropriate to combine the functions of governance and nominations/appointments in one Committee or whether these should be undertaken by separate committees of Court.

- A change to the composition of the Student Experience Committee related to the position of Rector’s Assessor.

1.9 **Recommended Action:** The Court is invited to:

1) Approve the Committee’s recommendation for a phased transition to the new composition of Court and that the University should develop the internal appointment processes required
with a view to potentially commencing new categories of membership from the 1 October 2017 onwards, subject to approval being received by the Privy Council.

2) Approve the Committee’s recommendation that the four current General Council Assessors be appointed to positions in the new composition within the twelve positions for independent members with their respective period of office being equivalent to what their remaining period of office as a General Council Assessor would have been.

3) Agree that there should be new elections to appoint the four Senate Assessors and that the necessary process should be undertaken with a view to a potential commencement of this part of the new composition of Court on 1 October 2017. Agree that the Senate should also be invited to consider how its procedures could better achieve gender balance in the Senate Assessors.

4) Agree that consideration should also be given as to how to encourage and achieve gender balance in the positions nominated by the Students’ Association and Trade Unions.

5) Note that the Committee will consider the skills mix of Court and forthcoming vacancies for independent members with a view to commencing recruitment processes thereafter.

6) Approve the recommended changes to the composition and remit of the Operating Board, to the composition of the Governance and Nominations Committee and the Student Experience Committee.

7) Note that the Committee had invited the Remuneration Committee to consider potential amendments to its remit and composition.

1.10 Further information is available from Mrs Caroline Inglis, University Secretary or Mr Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Court, 01224 273949, bpurdon@abdn.ac.uk.
PART 1: TRANSITION TO NEW COMPOSITION OF COURT

2 COMMENCEMENT OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE ACT AND COMMENCEMENT OF THE DRAFT ORDINANCE

2.1 In late December 2016, the Scottish Government passed the commencement and transitory regulations to bring the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act into force. While these specified that some sections of the Act would come into force as of 30 December 2016, they also set out transitional arrangements for the provisions of the Act as they relate to the composition of governing bodies.

2.2 The current wording of the draft Ordinance (Appendix 1) states that it will commence with effect from six months from the date it is approved by Privy Council. This was based on legal advice framed before the Scottish Government regulations for the commencement of the Act were available. The regulations mean that in terms of the composition of governing bodies the requirements of the Act will not apply until the earlier of (i) 30th December 2020; or (ii) when the proposed draft Ordinance comes into effect.

2.3 In light of the regulations being published, discussions have taken place with University’s legal advisers on the two approaches to transition set out in this paper and as to how the constitutional changes are best effected. Engagement with the Privy Council Office and the Scottish Government on the proposed draft Ordinance and how it might provide for the potential transitional arrangements as set out in this paper has commenced. Depending on the approach preferred by Court and feedback received from Privy Council/Scottish Government, this may require amendment of the Ordinance to include the legal basis for transitional arrangements.

3 POTENTIAL APPROACHES TO TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 The Committee considered two potential approaches to transition:

- Option 1: adopting a ‘Day Zero’ where the current composition of Court ceases, the new composition comes into force and the membership reflects immediately that new composition and means of appointment. As is explained below, the University cannot predict when Privy Council would approve the proposed changes but the wording of the current draft Ordinance means there would be a period of six months to put in place the transitional arrangements and appointment processes.
- Option 2: an incremental approach where provision is made to allow the Court to move to the new composition in a phased way.

Option 1: ‘Day Zero’

3.2 ‘Day Zero’ would be a date where the current composition of Court ceases and the new composition comes into force. At that point all members’ current memberships and terms of appointment would end (unless they clearly continue within the new composition eg ex officio members such as the Rector, Principal) and the new composition would commence with the new categories of member introduced and the appropriate method/basis of appointment having been followed.

3.3 “Day Zero” would be whenever the draft Ordinance amending the composition of Court commences. Currently the draft Ordinance states it will commence with effect from six months from the date it is approved by Privy Council. This is likely to be, at the earliest, six months from April ie October 2017 (although engagement with the Scottish Government suggests that the process will extend beyond April). At that commencement date the membership of Court will need to have transitioned to be consistent with the new Ordinance. As is set out in more detail later in this paper, the Committee agreed this could result in a significant degree of change in the membership of Court having to take place at or near the same time and that this disruption in the continuity of experience on Court would not be desirable for the effective governance of the University.
Option 2: Phased Transition

3.4 The alternative approach is a phased transition where current categories of Court member end and new categories commence at different times under a timetable that the Court can determine. In this approach different transitional arrangements could be made for the conclusion of existing categories of membership and commencement of new categories of membership. This would avoid the need for an immediate, significant change in the membership of Court ‘overnight’ and for new categories of membership and related appointment processes to be incorporated. It was, agreed, therefore that the transitional arrangements recommended to Court should be ones that allowed for a phased transition where that was necessary. The Committee noted that this did not mean there needed to be a lengthy period of transition and that the University should develop the internal appointment processes required with a view to potentially commencing new categories membership from the 1 October 2017 onwards.

4 TRANSITIONAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 This section sets out in more detail the transitional issues that require consideration in moving to a new composition of Court. The current periods of office of members of Court is attached at Appendix 2. This table summarises the continuing or new categories of membership in the proposed composition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position in New Composition</th>
<th>Transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rector</td>
<td>Immediate transition – no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Immediate transition – no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Governor</td>
<td>Current Senior Governor continues in office until 31 December 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 elected members of staff (one academic and one non-academic)</td>
<td>New members: To be elected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Trade Union nominated members (one academic staff member and one non-academic staff member)</td>
<td>New members: To be nominated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Senate Assessors</td>
<td>1 elected by Business School 3 elected by the Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President of the Students’ Association</td>
<td>Immediate transition – no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further student representative nominated by the Students’ Association</td>
<td>Immediate transition with nomination of Students’ Association required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 independent members appointed by the Court at least four of whom shall be members of the General Council</td>
<td>7 current independent members could transition across immediately. 5 vacancies for independent members. However, the periods of office of 3 of those 7 members conclude between July and October 2017, with 1 member not eligible for reappointment, 1 having intimated his intention to retire from Court, and the third eligible for reappointment. Potentially, therefore, there may be 7 or 8 vacancies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rector

4.2 The Rector would transition immediately to the new composition as the position and method of appointment is unchanged. Note, however, that the current Rector’s period of office is to 31 December 2017 and an election is due to take place as required in the course of 2017.

Principal

4.3 The Principal is a member of Court ex officio and would transition immediately to the new composition.

Senior Governor

4.4 The regulations published by the Scottish Government confirm that by 2020 the University’s Senior Governor will require to have been appointed following an election as required by the Act. However, it should be noted that any vacancy in that position arising after 30 June 2017 would need to be taken forward under the procedures required by the Act.

Elected Members of Staff

4.5 The Court has agreed that the two elected members of staff required by the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act will be one academic member of staff and one non-academic member of staff. The following issues will need to be addressed:

1. Processes and procedures for election of the two respective staff members will be required to be introduced and elections held prior to the commencement date of the new Ordinance.
2. Online system of elections developed;
3. Period of Office: A three year period of office is proposed, with a limit of three periods of three years whether served continuously or not, and with a restriction preventing returning to serve on Court in another position after that maximum period for a further period of three years.
4. Measures to ensure we encourage gender balance and diversity in the nomination and election process.

Trade Union Nominated Members

4.6 The Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act requires that there be two members one nominated “by a trade union from among the academic staff of the University who are members of a branch of a trade union that has a connection with the institution” and one nominated “by a trade union from among the support staff of the University who are members of a branch of a trade union that has a connection with the institution.” The Act also specifies that the Court sets the rules for the nomination process for these positions but obliges it to “consult the representatives of anyone—

(a) with a right of nomination under the proposed rules, and
(b) affected by the proposed rules or (as the case may be) modification.”

4.7 The Committee agreed that discussions with Trade Unions should include measures to ensure we encourage gender balance and diversity in the nomination process across both positions. Consultation with Trade Unions on the process for nominations has commenced.

Senate Assessors

4.8 The proposed composition reduces the number of Senate Assessors from six assessors (two from each College) to four (One Assessor from the Business School and one each from the three Colleges). The Committee considered the following:

1. The issue of how to move from six to four Senate Assessors and formalise/legitimise the new position of Business School Senate Assessor. One option was that new elections to the positions are held (noting that this could result in four new members of Court) either before October 2017 or at another transitional date. An alternative option considered was that the current Assessors serve out their existing periods of office, with elections to the new positions held thereafter.
2. The implications for gender balance of any transition and continuity of experience on Court.

   As is discussed at section 6, the option of existing Senate Assessors serving out their current periods of office, would delay the achievement of both the move to four Senate Assessors and potential gender balance. The Committee, therefore, agreed to recommend the approach of holding new elections to appoint to the four Senate Assessors with a view to their being in place to commence office from 1 October 2017. It also agreed that the Senate should consider how its procedures could better achieve gender balance in the Senate Assessors.

President of the Students' Association

4.9 The President is a member of Court ex officio and would transition immediately to the new composition.

Further Student Representative Nominated by the Students' Association

4.10 The transition could be immediate with nomination from the Students’ Association.

Independent Members

4.11 There are twelve positions for independent members in the new composition (at least four of whom need to be members of the General Council ie graduates).

4.12 There are currently eight “co-opted” members, with one being a non-academic member of staff a position that will be replaced instead by the new category of elected staff members. The existing seven ‘independent’ members could transition across immediately to the new composition as ‘independent members' retaining their existing periods of office. It should be noted, however, that the periods of office of three of those members will conclude between July and October, with one member being ineligible to continue, one having intimated his intention to retire from Court and the third member eligible for reappointment.

4.13 There could, therefore, be between five and eight independent positions on Court to appoint to. The Committee, therefore, considered:

1. The transition of current members and a proposal that they retain their current period of office (subject to any reappointments required).
2. Succession planning, noting the potential for a minimum of five and maximum of eight vacancies and the need to ensure the independent majority on Court is maintained, while also achieving the gender balance, diversity and skills mix required by Court. This is discussed further at sections 5 and 6 but the Court is invited to note that the Committee will consider at its next meeting in May the skills mix of Court and forthcoming vacancies for independent members with a view to commencing recruitment processes.

5 TRANSITIONAL ISSUES FOR EXISTING MEMBERS

5.1 This section discusses those categories of member that under the new composition will cease to be members.

Chancellor’s Assessor

5.2 The proposed new Ordinance does not retain the existing position for an Assessor nominated by the Chancellor\(^1\). Current practice has been that the Chancellor’s Assessor position is the ‘seat’ on Court reserved for whomever is appointed to the role of Senior Governor. The role of Senior Governor is currently one that Court appoints to rather than being a specific position or ‘seat’ on Court. In future, the Court will have a place specifically designated for the Senior Governor. Legal

\(^1\) Note: Consequential amendments made by the Higher Education Governance Act to the older Universities legislation remove reference to the 'Chancellor's Assessor'. However, the position is specified with the current Ordinance for the composition of Court and will, as a result, remain a position within the composition of Court until the new Ordinance commences.
advice to the University has confirmed that transitional arrangements and drafting of the Ordinance can ensure that there is no unintended impact upon the continuity of membership of Court of our new Senior Governor.

Assessor nominated by the Rector

5.3 The proposed composition does not retain a position for an assessor nominated by the Rector. The incumbent will, therefore, cease to be a member of Court at the date of commencement of the new Ordinance.

Vice-Principal Members

5.4 The proposed composition does not retain the three Vice-Principal member positions. The current three Vice-Principals on Court will cease to be members as at the date of commencement of the new Ordinance. This does not impact upon their position as Vice-Principals of the University.

Co-opted Member of Non-Academic Staff

5.5 Currently Court can choose to appoint a member of staff to one of the eight “co-opted” positions. The Court has in recent years opted to appoint a member of non-academic staff to one of these positions. The new composition includes an elected member of non-academic staff as well as the two trade union nominated members. As a result, the new composition does not retain the option of Court appointing a member of staff. The period of office of the current non-member of staff appointed by Court concludes on 31 July 2017.

Assessor nominated by the Aberdeen City Council and Assessor nominated by the Aberdeenshire Council

5.6 The proposed composition does not retain the two positions for Assessors nominated by the City Council and Aberdeenshire Council. The incumbents will, therefore, cease to be members of Court at the date of commencement of the new Ordinance. The Court has, however, made a commitment to routinely seek nominations from the two local authority Councils for all independent member vacancies and this will be included in future recruitment processes for independent members.

Four Assessors elected by the General Council

5.7 The proposed composition does not retain the four positions for Assessors elected by the General Council. The incumbents will, therefore, cease to be members of Court at the date of commencement of the new Ordinance. The Committee noted that the current General Council Assessors were not members of staff or students. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the four current General Council Assessors be appointed to positions in the new composition within the twelve positions for independent members with their respective period of office being equivalent to their remaining period of office as a General Council Assessor.

6 GENDER BALANCE

6.1 The Committee noted that the achievement of gender balance in the new composition and the timeframe by which it is achieved depended on the approach to transition taken and a number of decisions on the detail of those transitional arrangements. While in its new composition the Court will control the appointment of a much larger proportion of its membership than at present (12 independent members in a Court of 25), achieving gender balance overall depends on the outcome of elected/nominated processes and ex officio positions ie Rector, Principal, Senior Governor, two elected staff, two trade union nominated members, four Senate Assessors and two student members.

6.2 The ‘Day Zero’ approach could deliver a gender balanced Court immediately, at least in terms of the independent membership. That assumes that with the exception of Rector, Senior Governor and Principal, the appointments of all other members of Court end and new appointments are sought for all positions in the new composition. As is noted elsewhere in this paper, that might, however, carry the risk of a greater disruption and change in the membership and experience of Court at one time.
6.3 The Committee, therefore, considered the implications of a phased approach for gender balance. It was noted that there were a number of ways the phased approach could be implemented for particular categories of Court member. Using the following working assumption, however, that five of the current seven independent members with periods of office beyond 2017 transition across immediately, that the current four General Council Assessors serve out their remaining periods of office (2 of which are to 2020) but as independent members appointed by Court, then gender balance in the twelve independent members could be achieved immediately, provided the remaining three positions appointed were one male and two female.

6.4 Of the other thirteen positions two are male (Senior Governor, Principal) and one female (Rector). The categories of two elected staff members, of two trade union members are new categories and so could be incorporated immediately or at a time deemed appropriate. The two student member categories, while not completely new positions, could be gender balanced if an appropriate protocol was agreed with AUSA. The Committee noted that a limiting factor might be the transition process for Senate Assessors. If the existing six Senate Assessors were to serve out their remaining periods of office, it would be 1 October 2018 at the earliest before there might be gender balance in those four positions. This is one of the reasons the Committee recommends there be new elections to the four new positions for Senate Assessors, with a view to a potential commencement of this part of the new composition of Court on 1 October 2017. The Senate should also be invited to consider how its procedures could better achieve gender balance in the Senate Assessors.

PART 2: IMPLICATIONS OF NEW COMPOSITION FOR COMMITTEES

7 OPERATING BOARD

7.1 The debate on reform of the composition of Court highlighted that retaining a relatively large governing body meant it would be ever more important that there continues to be a smaller sub-committee of Court which can exercise, effectively, the in depth monitoring of the delivery of the strategy agreed by Court. In addition, it is necessary that the composition of the Operating Board is reviewed to take account both of the new composition of Court and as matter of good practice since it is now eight years since the Operating Board was established.

7.2 The Committee, therefore, considered potential amendments to the remit and composition of the Board which are illustrated in Appendix 3. The Committee agreed that the Court (and the Operating Board if considered appropriate by Court) should consider the following key proposed changes:

- Reduction in the size of the Board from 11 members to 9, achieved by:
  (i) Reducing the number of Senate Assessors from 3 to 2;
  (ii) Reducing the number of executive members from 3 to 2;

- Amendments to the remit of the Board to clarify its role with regard to monitoring performance, development and delivery of University strategy

8 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

8.1 The Committee had previously noted that its composition included one Senate Assessor position and agreed that given the further constituencies of staff that would in the future be included within the composition of Court, it would be appropriate for the composition of the Committee to be updated to reflect that and for the position currently reserved to a Senate Assessor to be for a “Non-Executive Member of Staff on Court”.

8.2 The Committee agreed that its composition should include the Senior Independent Member.

8.3 A remit and composition illustrating these two proposed changes is attached as Appendix 4.

8.4 The Committee also considered whether the combination of the functions of the Committee as one that recommends appointments to Court and advises Court on the governance for
procedures that include matters such as appointments remained appropriate. It noted that practice across the sector varied, with many universities having just a ‘nominations committee.’ In Scotland, six universities have Governance & Nominations Committees and nine have a Nominations Committee, while in the Wesley Group of which the University is a member, two have Governance & Nominations Committees and four have Nominations Committees (and one of these includes within its remit responsibility for advising on matters of governance).

8.5 The Committee noted that it was not uncommon, therefore, for there to be a committee such as the Governance & Nominations Committee, and at Aberdeen part of the reason for the Committee was to ensure that issues of governance were given a very high profile but without necessitating another committee of Court. There was also a clear separation of powers between the Convener of the Committee and the role of Senior Governor which was, in part, intended to help ensure there is was a governance check around the process of appointments. The Committee agreed that it considered the current approach remained appropriate for Aberdeen.

9 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

9.1 The Committee discussed a number of potential changes to the remit and composition of the Remuneration Committee related to the introduction of remuneration for the position of Senior Governor and the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance. The Committee agreed that the Remuneration Committee should consider the following potential changes:

- that the composition should include the position of Senior Governor but specify that the Convener was another independent member of Court;
- that as the Senior Independent Member would lead the appraisal process of the Senior Governor, he or she should be either a member of the Remuneration Committee or invited to report to the Remuneration Committee;
- that consideration should be given as to whether the Remuneration Committee’s remit should be extended to include reviewing the performance of the Senior Governor given the context of this being a remunerated role;

9.2 A report of the Remuneration Committee’s subsequent consideration of its remit and composition is enclosed as part of a separate item on today’s agenda.

10 STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

10.1 The Committee noted that the Student Experience Committee’s composition includes the Rector’s Assessor ex officio a position on Court that would be removed under the proposed new composition of Court. The composition also includes an independent member of Court as Convener (and the Rector ex officio). As the overall membership of the Student Experience Committee is relatively large at 20 members, the Committee recommends that a requirement for two members of Court within the composition is sufficient and that the position of Rector’s Assessor as an ex officio member is removed in line with the changes to Court. The proposed change is set out at Appendix 5

10.2 The Committee discussed further the relatively large size of the Student Experience Committee but agreed not to recommend any further changes at this time.

11 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no immediate resource implications arising from this paper, although the introduction of new election processes for members of Court will incur some expenditure, in addition to staff time.

12 RISK MANAGEMENT

12.1 The effective introduction of a new composition of Court mitigates the risk of non-compliance with the new governance legislation which forms part of the ‘Governance and Core Business Risk’ profile within the University’s corporate risk register.

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2 Wesley Group comprises: Lancaster, Loughborough, Dundee, University of East Anglia, Leicester and Kent (in addition to Aberdeen).
13 **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

13.1 An equality impact assessment has not been carried out at this stage. Consideration will be given to whether any of the new appointment and election procedures require an assessment to be undertaken as part of their development.

13.2 The Court is reminded that one of the principles that it agreed should underpin the development of its new composition was to reflect the diversity of the University community of students and staff it governs, and to target a 50:50 gender balance and a greater ethnic and geographical diversity than at present. This has influenced the Committee’s recommendations in this paper.

14 **SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

14.1 No issues have been noted which require further consideration.

15 **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

15.1 The Court is invited to:

1) Approve the Committee’s recommendation for a phased transition to the new composition of Court and that the University should develop the internal appointment processes required with a view to potentially commencing new categories of membership from the 1 October 2017 onwards, subject to approval being received by the Privy Council.

2) Approve the Committee’s recommendation that the four current General Council Assessors be appointed to positions in the new composition within the twelve positions for independent members with their respective period of office being equivalent to what their remaining period of office as a General Council Assessor would have been.

3) Agree that there should be new elections to appoint the four Senate Assessors and that the necessary process should be undertaken with a view to a potential commencement of this part of the new composition of Court on 1 October 2017. Agree that the Senate should also be invited to consider how its procedures could better achieve gender balance in the Senate Assessors.

4) Agree that consideration should also be given as to how to encourage and achieve gender balance in the positions nominated by the Students’ Association and Trade Unions.

5) Note that the Committee will consider the skills mix of Court and forthcoming vacancies for independent members with a view to commencing recruitment processes thereafter.

6) Approve the recommended changes to the composition and remit of the Operating Board, to the composition of the Governance and Nominations Committee and the Student Experience Committee.

7) Note that the Committee had invited the Remuneration Committee to consider potential amendments to its remit and composition.

16 **FURTHER INFORMATION**

16.1 Further information is available from Mrs Caroline Inglis, University Secretary or Mr Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Court, 01224 273949, b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk.

7 March 2017, (Open)
Appendix 1

PROPOSED REVISED ORDINANCE AS AGREED BY COURT IN DECEMBER 2016

Amendments/additions to current composition in red and underlined

ORDINANCE of the UNIVERSITY COURT of the UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
No < > [COMPOSITION OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT]
At ABERDEEN the < > day of < >
Two Thousand and Sixteen.

WHEREAS the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, section 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part I, paragraph 1, empowers the University Court to amend the composition, powers and functions of the University Court

AND WHEREAS, the University Court deems it expedient to amend the composition of the University Court as constituted by Section 2 of and Part III of Schedule 1 to the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 as amended by the University Court Ordinance No 133:

THEREFORE the University Court, in exercise of its powers under Section 3 of, and paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 2 to, the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 and of all other powers enabling it in that behalf, hereby statutes and ordains:

1. Part III of Schedule 1 to the said Act of 1966 shall be amended so that the composition of the Court shall be as follows:

   (a) The Rector;
   (b) The Principal;
   (c) The Senior Governor appointed in accordance with section 8 of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016;
   (d) Two persons appointed by being elected by the staff of the University from among their own number in accordance with sections 10-12 of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016;
   (e) A person appointed by being nominated by a trade union from among the academic staff of the University who are members of a branch of a trade union that has a connection with the institution, in accordance with sections 10-12 of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016;
   (f) A person appointed by being nominated by a trade union from among the support staff of the University who are members of a branch of a trade union that has a connection with the institution, in accordance with sections 10-12 of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016;
   (g) Four Assessors elected by the Senatus Academicus from among those of its members holding appointments in the University of Aberdeen;
   (h) The President of the Students’ Association;
   (j) A further student representative nominated by the Students’ Association from among the students of the institution;
   (k) Such persons, not exceeding twelve in number as may be appointed by the University Court, who will not be members of staff of the University of Aberdeen or a matriculated student, and at least four of which shall be members of the General Council of the University.

2. On the date on which this Ordinance comes into force, University Court Ordinance No.133 (Composition of the University Court) is revoked.

3. This Ordinance will come into force six months following the date on which it is approved by Her Majesty in Council.
APPENDIX 2

COURT MEMBERSHIP AND PERIODS OF OFFICE 2017/18

Composition: 28 Members under Ordinance

Rector
Ms Maggie Chapman (01.01.15 to 31.12.17)

Principal ex officio
Professor Sir Ian Diamond (w.e.f. 01.04.10)

Senior Governor and Chancellor’s Assessor
Mr Martin Gilbert (01.01.17 to 31.12.19)

Rector’s Assessor
Mr Doug Haywood (30.06.15 to 31.12.17)

Vice-Principals (ex officio) (3)
Professor Jeremy Kilburn (Senior Vice Principal)
Professor P Hannaford (Vice-Principal (Head of College of Life Sciences and Medicine))
Professor Peter McGeorge (Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching))

Assessor: Aberdeenshire Council
Councillor Ronald McKail (w.e.f. 17.05.12)

Assessor: Aberdeen City Council
Councillor Jenny Laing (w.e.f. 01.07.14)

General Council Assessors (4)
Mr Iain Percival (01.10.16-30.09.20)
Mr Colin Duncan (02.05.12 to 30.09.14 and 01.10.14 to 30.09.18)
Mrs Jennifer Shirreffs (01.10.12 to 30.09.16 and 01.10.16 to 30.09.20)
Professor Nuala Booth (01.10.14 to 30.09.18)

Senate Assessors (6)
Professor A Akisanya (02.11.15 to 30.09.19)
Professor Corri Black (01.10.13 to 30.09.17)
Professor Christopher Brittman (01.10.12 to 30.09.13 and 01.10.13 to 30.09.17)
Professor Mirela Delibegovic (01.10.16 to 30.09.20)
Professor N E Hutchison (01.10.11 to 30.09.15 and 27.11.15 to 30.09.19)
Dr Nir Oren (26.01.15 to 30.09.18)

President of Students’ Association
Mr Chubbe Anucha (01.07/17 to 30.06.17)

Co-opted Members (8)
Mr David MacFarlane 01.08.12 to 31.07.15 and 01.08.15 to 21.08.18)
Mr James Hall (29.09.10 to 29.09.13 and 30.09.13 to 30.09.16 and 01.10.16 to 30.09.19)
Mrs Kathryn McPhail (01.08.10 to 31.07.13 and 01.08.13 to 31.07.16 and 01.08.16 to 31.07.19)

Ms Anne Minto (01.08.15 to 31.07.18)

Mr Ken Murray (01.11.11 to 30.10.14 and 01.11.14 to 31.10.17)

Mr Brian Pack (01.07.08 to 30.06.11 and 01.07.11 to 30.06.14 and 01.07.14 to 31.07.17)

Mr Brian Paterson (01.08.11 to 31.7.14 and 01.08.14 to 31.07.17)

Mr David Steyn (01.08.11 to 31.07.14 and 01.08.14 to 31.07.17)
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

OPERATING BOARD
(Committee of Court)
(Proposed Revisions – January 2017)

1. COMMITTEE TITLE

OPERATING BOARD

2. DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT

September 2008

3. CONVENER AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AREA

Convener: Court Member
Clerk: University Secretary's Office

4. PURPOSE

To oversee the strategy setting process for the University, integrating academic, financial, estate and human resource planning and policy making, and advising Court and Senate on long-term strategic objectives, and to monitor the operational performance of the University and advise Senate and Court on performance matters as required.

5. REMIT: (To be reviewed annually at first meeting of committee cycle)

Responsible for:

Strategic Objectives
- agreeing the process for strategy setting within the University
- monitoring the strategy setting process, contributing to strategy development and ensuring that Court is properly involved in both strategy development and approval
- monitoring the implementation of strategies agreed by Court, including reviewing all Business Plans associated with strategic projects
- monitoring the University’s Health and Safety performance
- monitoring the effectiveness of the University’s risk management processes and reviewing the risk register biannually

Resource Planning
- making recommendations to Court on the University’s Annual Budgets and Financial Forecasts
- making recommendations to the Court regarding the University’s Capital Plan and its implementation
- monitoring the University’s financial performance and approving additional expenditure on approved projects within a tolerance threshold of up to the lesser of 10% or £1m
- monitoring performance of the implementation of University’s capital projects and receiving reports from the Capital Programme Monitoring Committee
- overseeing cash management, borrowing policies and compliance with banking covenants and ensuring compliance with the Financial Memorandum
- overseeing the management and performance of the University’s investments
- monitoring the performance of the University’s spin-out/joint venture companies
- overseeing the creation, dissolution or sale of University subsidiary companies

Policy Making
• approving University staffing and development policies and staff terms and conditions of employment
• approving the strategy for the setting of University tuition fees

**Operational Performance**
• monitoring the University’s performance across financial and HR performance, student recruitment and admissions, and all other matters necessary for strategy delivery
• overseeing institutional equality and diversity issues

6. **COMPOSITION AND QUORUM:**

**Convener:** Court Member

**Independent Members:**

Four independent members of the Court (including the Convener), appointed by Court on the recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Committee (independent being defined as external to, and not employed or remunerated by, the University).

- The Convener of the Board to be an independent member of Court and appointed by Court on the recommendation of the Governance Committee but not being the Vice-Chair/Senior Governor of Court (or Chair, should the position of the Rector as Chair be changed).

**Two to Three Senate Assessors** to Court, one from each College, to be agreed by the Senate Assessors on Court

**Ex officio:**

- The Principal, and one other member of the Senior Management Team
- Senior Vice-Principal and the University Secretary

**In attendance:**

- University Secretary, Senior Vice-Principal (if not otherwise members).

Other Senior Administrative Officers to be in attendance as required.

**Quorum:** 50% of formal membership (including Convener)

**ACCOUNT TO BE TAKEN OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP**

7. **MEMBERSHIP** (This is the current membership and does not take account of proposed changes above)

**Convener:** Mr B Pack (Court Member)

**Court Members:** Professor Nuala Booth
- Mr J Hall
- Ms A Minto

**Co-opted:** Mr D MacFarlane

**3 Senate Assessors:** Professor C Black and Professor M Delibegovic (Role Share)
- Professor N Hutchison
- Dr N Oren

**Ex officio:**

- Professor I Diamond
- Professor J Kilburn
- Mrs C Inglis
- Mr C Anucha

**Clerk:** Mrs R MacLure
8. **Reporting Line/Parent Committee and Interface with Other Committees**

Formal reporting line: Court

**Parent committee:**
- Health and Safety Committee
- Strategic Business Ventures Group
- Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee
- Capital Programme Monitoring Committee
- Investment Committee
- Digital Strategy Committee

Interface with other committees: Audit Committee

9. **Frequency and Timing of Meetings**

Seven meetings per session  *(with a further meeting in April if required)*

Meetings between 10-4 in accordance with University Policy.

10. **Publication of Papers**

Cognisance will be taken of the University’s Publication Scheme and Agenda papers will be made available on web pages/staffNet where possible.
APPENDIX 4

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

(Committee of Court)

1. COMMITTEE TITLE

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

2. DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT

December 2007

3. CONVENER AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AREA

Convener: Independent Court Member
Clerk: Secretary's Office

4. PURPOSE

TO BE THE LEAD COMMITTEE OF COURT IN MATTERS OF GOVERNANCE AND THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF COURT MEMBERS

5. REMIT: (To be reviewed annually at first meeting of committee cycle)

Responsible for:

- To advise Court on matters of governance and conduct reviews of the University's governance on its behalf
- To ensure the University has met the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance
- To recommend to Court the process to be undertaken in the appointment or re-appointment of a Principal
- To make recommendations to Court on the appointment of independent members of Court, and Court representatives on Court and joint Court/Senate Committees
- To consider nominations and make recommendations to the Court for the position of Senior Governor
- To monitor Court members’ compliance with the Code of Conduct for Members of Court, including upholding the seven principles advocated by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life; and to undertake those duties ascribed to it by Resolution No 282 of 2015 (Procedure for Removal of members of the University Court).
- To monitor the operation of the University's Code of Practice on Conflicts of Interest and to make reports and recommendations to the University Court
- To review annual declarations of interest and to take further action where required.
- To consider and, if appropriate, approve requests for the holding of shares, executive directorships, or other directorships
- To give advice regarding any matter of University governance or potential area of conflict of interest referred to it (e.g. international collaboration, ethical or reputational issues)
- To consider all prospective donations of £1M or more, and any other prospective donations with the potential to give rise to significant ethical or public interest and to advise Court as appropriate. To ensure the University has appropriate policies and guidance in place relating to the same.
- To consider and recommend to Court nominations for the award of University Benefactor.
6. **COMPOSITION AND QUORUM:**

Convener: Court Member

Composition: Four Independent Members: one of whom to be Convener (the Convener should not also serve as the Senior Governor of Court or Convener of the Operating Board); The Senior Independent Member should also normally be a member of the Committee.

Principal

A Senate Assesor

A non-executive staff member of Court

The President of the Students’ Association

In addition the Committee will have the power to co-opt additional members subject to the approval of Court.

In attendance: University Secretary

Quorum: 50% of formal membership (including Convener)

**ACCOUNT TO BE TAKEN OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN MEMBERSHIP**

7. **MEMBERSHIP**

Convener: Mr J Hall

Membership: Mr Martin Gilbert

Principal

Mr B Pack

Professor A Akisanya

Mrs Jenny Shirreffs

Mr C Anucha

In attendance: Mrs C Inglis

Clerk: Mr B Purdon

8. **REPORTING LINE/PARENT COMMITTEE AND INTERFACE WITH OTHER COMMITTEES**

Formal reporting line: Court

Interface with other committees: Audit Committee (on Corporate Governance) and the University Development Trust (donations ethics and governance).

9. **FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS**

Three meetings per session

Meetings between 10-4 in accordance with University Policy.

10. **PUBLICATION OF PAPERS**

Cognisance will be taken of the University’s Publication Scheme and Agenda papers will be made available on web pages/staffNet where possible.

11. **DATE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVED/RECORDED BY UMG**

Not Applicable
1. **Committee Title**

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

2. **Date of Establishment**

Established 30 June 2015, replacing Student Affairs Committee

3. **Convener & Administrative Support Area**

Convener: Lay Court Member
Clerk: Student Life

4. **Purpose**

To focus on the achievement of the University’s overall strategic objectives relating to the non-academic co-curricular and other aspects of the student experience. The academic aspects being dealt with through the University Committee on Teaching & Learning.

5. **Remit** *(To be reviewed annually at first meeting of committee cycle)*

Responsible for:

- To develop and approve policy and strategy regarding all areas relevant to any activities or facilities associated with the non-academic co-curricular aspects of the student experience (other than those under the specific remit of other University committees).
- To consider and provide advice to UCTL on aspects of the student experience which fall within both non-academic and academic areas
- To consider reports from the Students Association on its activities
- To consider reports from the Sports Advisory Body
- To consider reports relevant to the student experience from Academic Affairs, Student Life and any other bodies as appropriate.
- To ensure compliance with the Code of Practice laid down by the University in accordance with the provisions of the 1994 Education Act
- To advise the UCTL, Senate and Court on such matters as may be remitted to it by those bodies

6. **Composition and Quorum:**

Convener: Lay Member of Court

Composition:

- Rector
- **Rector’s Assessor**
- Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching)
- University Secretary
- Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Business)
- Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Science, Engineering and Healthcare)
- Dean of Postgraduate Taught Studies (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Business)
- Dean of Postgraduate Taught Studies (Science, Engineering and Healthcare)
- Dean of the Graduate School
- Director of Academic Affairs
- Director of Student Life
- Equality and Diversity Adviser
- University Librarian (or nominee)
- Head of Student Support
- University Chaplain
- President of the Students’ Association and student sabbatical officers

In attendance:

- Directorate of Student Life’s Heads of Section where required
- Directorate of Academic Affairs’ Heads of Section where required
- Director of Estates (or nominee)
Director of Alumni Relations (or nominee)  
Chief Executive Officer, Students’ Association

Quorum: 50% of formal membership (including Ex Officis).

7. MEMBERSHIP

Mrs J Shirreffs (Convener)  
Ms M Chapman, Rector  
Mr D Haywood, Rector’s Assessor  
Professor Peter McGeorge, VP Learning & Teaching  
Mrs C Inglis, University Secretary

Mr C Anuba, AUSA President  
Mr L Macleod, Communities Officer  
Mr L Fuller, Education and Employability Officer  
Ms A McClellan, Sports Officer  
Ms J Killin, Welfare Officer

Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Business)  
Prof Alison Jenkinson, Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Science, Engineering and Healthcare)  
Prof Christopher Kee, Dean of Postgraduate Studies (Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Business)  
Dean of Postgraduate Studies (Science, Engineering and Healthcare)  
Prof Judith Masthoff, Dean of the Graduate School

Mr L Forsyth, Director of Student Life  
Dr G Mackintosh, Director of Academic Affairs  
Ms A Shipley, Head of Student Support  
Rev M Anderson/Rev D Hutchison, University Chaplains  
Ms J Chalmers, Equality & Diversity Adviser  
Ms D Bruxvoort, University Librarian

In attendance: Mr A Wight, Deputy Director, Estates  
Ms Margaret Paterson, Chief Executive Officer, AUSA  
Ms K Allan, Alumni Relations Manager, Alumni Relations

Clerk: Ms C Cameron, Project and Strategy Officer, Directorate of Student Life

8. REPORTING LINE/PARENT COMMITTEE AND INTERFACE WITH OTHER COMMITTEES

Formal reporting line: Court, Senate  
Interface with other committees: UCTL, UMG

9. FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS

3 meetings per session.  
Meetings between 10-4 in accordance with University Policy.

10. PUBLICATION OF PAPERS

Cognisance will be taken of the University’s Publication Scheme and Agenda papers will be made available on web pages/StaffNet where possible.

11. DATE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVED/RECORDED BY COURT: 30 June 2015
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT TRUST CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

1. CONTEXT

1.1 The attached paper and appendix 1 provide an overview of the key concepts and themes which will be central to the University fundraising Campaign. Further information about the development of the Campaign will be provided in a presentation by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor at the Court meeting of 28 March 2017. As Court members are aware, Court will be presented with a more developed plan in June 2017 to enable approval of the campaign priorities.

1.2 Further information is available from Mrs Liz Bowie, Director of Development and Alumni Relations at e.bowie@abdn.ac.uk or on extension 2281.
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

Minutes of meeting held on 6 December 2016

Present: Ms M Chapman (in the Chair), Principal, Sir Moir Lockhead, Professor A Akisanya, Mr C Anucha, Professor C Black, Professor N Booth, Mr C Duncan, Professor M Delibegovic, Mr J Hall, Professor P Hannaford, Professor N Hutchison, Professor J Kilburn, Cllr J Laing, Mr D MacFarlane, Professor P McGeorge, Cllr R McKail, Mrs K McPhail (for minutes 54 to 110), Ms A Minto (for minutes 54 to 110), Mr K Murray, Dr N Oren, Mr B Paterson, Mr I Percival, Mrs J Shirreffs and Mr D Steyn (for minutes 54 to 110).

In attendance: Mr D Beattie, Mr M Butler (Good Governance Institute), Mr A Donaldson, Mrs D Dyker, Mr L Forsyth, Dr S Hill (for minutes 108 to 110), Mrs C Inglis, Mr N Qamar (for minutes 58 to 63, Professor I Stansfield (for minutes 68 to 73), Dr H Sveinsdottir (for minutes 119 to 121, Very Rev Professor I Torrance, Professor R Wells (for minutes 108 to 110) and Mr B Purdon (Clerk).

Apologies for absence were received from, Professor C Brittain, Mr D Haywood, Ms J Killin and Mr B Pack.

SENIOR GOVERNOR AND CHANCELLOR’S ASSESSOR

54 The Court noted that it was Sir Moir Lockhead’s last meeting as Senior Governor and as Chancellor’s Assessor to Court. The Court recorded its considerable thanks and appreciation to Sir Moir for his excellent leadership and service to the Court and the University over the past 14 years.

MINUTES

55 The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2016 were approved.

56 The Court noted the updated Action Log (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). The Court also received a summary of the main discussion points from the Court Strategy Day (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). It was agreed this should be amended to clarify that the reference to the UN Millennium Goals should instead refer to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and that these were an institution wide opportunity rather than one focused solely on the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

57 Mr B Paterson declared an interest as an Officer of the University of Aberdeen Branch of Unite the Union.

HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SAFETY

REPORTS ON ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

58 The Court received and considered a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which provided details of three serious incidents. The Court also received a summary of the Operating Board’s consideration of the report. The Court noted that the incidents were as follows:

- A member of staff was driving out of the Zoology building car park and was involved in a near miss with a cyclist.
- A postgraduate student was taken to hospital as a result of formaldehyde solution being splashed in his eye.
- A student fell from the roof of a Students’ Association minibus and suffered head injuries.
59 The Court noted the report on the subsequent investigations into the circumstances of each incident and any actions that had been identified as ‘lessons learnt’. In discussion, it was suggested that consideration should be given by the University as to whether the cost of providing prescription safety glasses should be met through a centralised budget rather than at School level. The Court also noted that a further report regarding the incident involving the Students’ Association minibus had been provided in the report from the President of the Students’ Association.

60 The Court also received an oral report on a more recent incident where a member of the University’s cleaning staff had slipped and broken her arm in the Suttie Centre building. It was noted that the investigation into the circumstances of the incident were ongoing.

61 The Court further noted an initiative that the University was taking forward to improve cycle safety awareness amongst the student community with a particular focus on overseas students.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Policy

62 The Court received a report on the University’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Policy (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). The Strategy described the University’s commitment to tackling mental health concerns while the Policy provided information regarding the responsibilities of the University community in combatting mental ill health and creating an inclusive culture in which all staff and students could thrive. The Court also noted that an action plan had been developed to implement the Strategy.

63 In discussion, the Court welcomed the Strategy and noted that the linkage between it and the work being undertaken by the Students’ Association to support mental health.

Standing Reports

Report from the Rector

64 The Rector congratulated all those involved in making the recent Graduation ceremonies joyous and successful occasions. The Rector noted that, as reported in the Students’ Association President’s report, the Association was now, following a period of vacancies, fully staffed.

65 The Rector reported that she had participated in an event organised by the Development Trust regarding the development of the next fundraising campaign and noted that this had been very productive.

66 The Rector reported that as part of the lobby of the meeting held by the University and College Union (UCU) she had been asked to receive a petition to Court with approximately 2,000 signatures regarding the staff restructuring in the School of Medicine, Medial Sciences and Nutrition. The Rector invited the Principal to report further on the position within the School as part of his report (see minutes 68 to 73).

Report from the Senior Governor

67 The Senior Governor introduced his report to Court (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). In addition, the Senior Governor expressed his thanks to members of Court for their good wishes and for the support they and officers in the University had given to him during his appointment as Senior Governor.

Report from the Principal

68 The Principal introduced his written report (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) on recent developments within the University. The Principal noted that further to the update provided within his report, an MP and an MSP had written to him regarding the restructuring
within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition and had requested that the letters be brought to the attention of Court. The Principal noted that the two letters, together with the University’s response to the MP and MSP, had been provided to the Court.

Professor Stansfield, Professor Hannaford and Mrs Dyker reported to Court in detail regarding an extensive and thorough process that had been undertaken within the School over the preceding months to address a £4m deficit in the School. This had included a comprehensive review of the School’s ability to address the deficit through a greater focus on areas of strength and income generation potential and by increased efficiency savings. This had resulted in a requirement for staff savings, in areas identified for disinvestment, of £1.5m. Following the conclusion of a voluntary severance scheme, regrettably it had been necessary to take forward a process for potential compulsory redundancies in areas identified for disinvestment. This had resulted in 23 members of staff being identified as being at risk of redundancy. Following further work by the School, however, alternative employment for all staff had been found, with four members of staff presently considering offers of alternative roles with protected terms and conditions. It was clarified in discussion, that for three of these staff the positions offered were funding limited contracts for a minimum of two years.

The Court discussed in detail how the process of consultation on compulsory redundancy had been conducted including how the criteria for those staff identified at risk of redundancy had been developed. A number of issues concerning the application of the process and concerns that had been raised by members of staff with some members of Court were discussed. The Court also discussed information that had been provided to some members of Court by the UCU. Professor Stansfield and Mrs Dyker responded to clarify issues raised including where the information included a number of misstatements of fact. The Court was assured that the process had been consistent with the University’s equality and diversity procedures.

The Court discussed the reputational risks arising from the process and how these had been mitigated through communication with staff, students and other stakeholders. The Court was advised of the steps taken by both the School’s management team and University Senior Management, including the Principal, to communicate and engage with staff regarding the reasons why the restructuring was being undertaken and to provide transparency around the process. In further discussion, it was suggested that it was important that the process was concluded as promptly as possible without prejudice to the process being procedurally sound.

The Court noted that while many of the issues around the process that had been raised were operational matters, as a matter of good practice the University would review how the process had operated and whether there were any aspects that might be improved upon. It was further agreed that the University would make public where it identified changes to practice or procedure resulting from that review.

The Court also noted that the issues highlighted both the importance of ensuring that it and the University were considering the future financial sustainability of the institution and the steps necessary to increase income growth and avoid the very difficult issues that could arise from restructuring exercises.

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION

The President of the Students’ Association introduced his written report (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) on the recent activities of the Aberdeen University Students’ Association (AUSA).

The Court discussed the report’s update on the usage of the Nightline service over the past three months and noted the valuable support this provided to students. It was agreed that the Court would welcome further reports on the usage of Nightline which included data from the preceding quarter to enable consideration of any trends.
GOVERNANCE

REVISED COMPOSITION OF COURT: DRAFT ORDINANCE AND FUTURE TRANSITIONAL ISSUES

76 The Court received a paper which reported on the statutory consultation process that had been undertaken on a draft Ordinance for the proposed new composition of Court (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

77 The Court noted that the draft Ordinance had been made publicly available for a period of 8 weeks for comment on the University's website and communicated to staff. The Senate and Business Committee of the General Council had received the proposals and been invited to consider and comment on these. The Chief Executives of Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council respectively were also advised of the proposals and provided with the opportunity to comment.

78 The Court noted a copy of a motion that the Senate had received proposing amendments to the proposals. The Court further noted that the Senate had voted to support two points in the motion: firstly that the term Dean of Court should be adopted for the Senior Governor; and, secondly, that four of the twelve seats for independent Court members should be reserved for elected General Council Assessors.

79 The Court noted that the Business Committee of the General Council had considered the proposals and draft Ordinance and had agreed to support the position agreed by Senate with regard to retaining four elected General Council Assessors. The Court also received and noted three letters of representation from two current members of the Business Committee and one former member on the same issue.

80 The Court noted that, in response to the invitation to comment on the draft Ordinance, The City Council had responded to confirm it was content with the proposals given the commitment of Court to continuing to seek nominations from the Council to vacancies for independent members.

81 The Court considered specifically the two points that the Senate had voted to support and the representations it had received from the Business Committee with regard to amending the Ordinance to retain four elected General Council Assessors on Court. In discussion, it was noted that with regard to whether the term ‘Dean of Court’ should be adopted instead for the Senior Governor, that the University organisational structure included a number of academic ‘Deans’ and that it was important to distinguish between those roles and the different role that the Senior Governor undertook. The Court, therefore, agreed to retain the title of Senior Governor and that no change to the wording of the proposed Ordinance be made in this regard.

82 In further discussion, the Court noted the representations that had been made for retaining elected General Council Assessors and which broadly reflected matters that the Court had considered in depth previously. The Court, therefore, agreed no change to the wording of the proposed Ordinance be made in this regard.

83 The Court noted the next steps that would need to be considered with regard to how the transition of the existing composition and membership of Court to the new composition was best achieved, subject to the formal engagement with Privy Council on approval of the Ordinance that would now be undertaken. The Court also noted some of the implications of the new composition for the key sub-committees of Court that would be considered further by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

84 The Court:

(i) Agreed that the University commence the process of engagement with the Privy Council towards formal approval of the draft Ordinance as set out in the paper.
(ii) Noted that the Governance and Nominations Committee would consider the process and
  timeframe to transition from the current composition to the proposed new composition as
  soon as practicable, with a report to the next meeting of Court.

(iii) Noted that the Governance and Nominations Committee and the Operating Board would
  be invited to consider in more detail the implications of the new composition of Court for
  the future operation of the committee structure.

**RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR GOVERNOR**

85 The Court received a report (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) together with an
oral update on the progress of the process for the recruitment and appointment of the next
Senior Governor.

86 The Court noted that, as agreed by Court, the University concluded a tender process for the
appointment of recruitment consultants to lead the process and had appointed Saxton
Bampfylde. Following their appointment, Saxton Bampfylde undertook consultation meetings
with members of Court and all members of the Appointment Committee to inform their search
process. Over 160 individuals were approached by the recruitment consultants during the
course of the research as both sources and candidates.

87 The Court noted that in addition to the search process taken forward by Saxton Bampfylde the
position was advertised in a national and local newspaper, on several websites including
professional female, ethnic and disability network sites. The position was also promoted on
Saxton Bampfylde and the University’s website and a communication issued to staff, students
and alumni inviting nominations.

88 The Court noted that following the close of applications, the Appointment Committee met on two
occasions to agree upon a longlist and then a shortlist of candidates for interview. The
Committee had agreed to interview three candidates but had been unable to conclude the
process by the time of the meeting of Court. The Convener of the Committee provided Court
with an oral report on the consideration of the shortlisted candidates to date and that it was
proposed to circulate the Committee’s recommendation following the conclusion of the
process.

89 The Court agreed that it should receive the Committee’s recommendation for approval by
circulation in due course.

**UPDATE ON EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW OF COURT**

90 The Court received a report (*copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes*) on the externally
facilitated effectiveness review of Court.

91 The Court noted that following approval of the terms of reference for the review, the University
took forward a tender process for the appointment of the external facilitator and had appointed
the Good Governance Institute (GGI) to lead the process. The paper summarised the
expected process that would be undertaken by the GGI, which commenced with observation
of the meeting of Court. The review would also include:

- Semi-structured interviews with all members of Court, members of Senior Management
  and other stakeholders;
- A 360° effectiveness review survey and skills audit of members of Court;
- Observation by the GGI of selected other key committees;
- A review of the Court’s key governance documentation and procedures.

92 The Court noted that following that process, GGI’s report would be presented to the meeting of
Court on 28 March 2017.
The Court received a report (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) from the Governance and Nominations Committee considering the responses to the annual Governor Appraisal Questionnaire. The paper had originally been provided to the previous meeting of Court but members had requested a further opportunity to discuss the outcome of the questionnaire.

The Court noted that the outcome of the questionnaire would be shared with the Good Governance Institute to help inform the effectiveness review of Court.

PRESENTATION ON THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Principal gave a presentation on the key current and future political and economic issues that defined the competitive context of higher education in Scotland. These included:

- ‘Brexit’: the implications and risks for the University in student recruitment, research income, and staff;
- The Enterprise and Skills Agency Review: the implications of the SFC ceasing to have a specific governing board for universities, including the potential threat to autonomy and university charitable status;
- The UK Higher Education Bill: the opening up of higher education in England to new providers and the issue of how, as a Scottish institution, the University responded to the introduction of a teaching excellence framework in England;
- Research: the opportunity presented by the UK Government’s announcement of £2 billion for research and development by 2020/21;
- The Scottish Government Spending Review: risk of a cut in funding to SFC with increasing focus on widening access which due to the way the Scottish Government defined ‘widening access’ students and the nature of poverty in the North-East of Scotland, was likely to be disadvantageous to the University.

The Court discussed the extent to which the current approach to higher education funding in Scotland enabled universities to compete with institutions in the rest of the UK and internationally. Given this context, it was imperative that the University diversified its income streams to ensure that as an institution it could continue to pursue its global ambition and define its strategic objectives. The need for the University to be proactive in demonstrating both to the Scottish Government and enterprise agencies its capacity to bridge the gap between the skills base, innovation and productivity in the economy was highlighted. The Court agreed on the necessity of the University, together with the rest of the higher education sector, lobbying quickly and effectively on the key risks posed by Brexit to ensure these had the optimum chance of a positive outcome in the negotiations between the UK and the EU.

FINANCIAL AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Court received a paper which set out the key substantive elements of the University’s Strategic Plan and its priorities for the planning period to 2020 together with financial projections linked to the actions being taken in support of these (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). The paper also set out the current and future external funding and political environment against which the University’s financial projections to 2020 were framed. The paper identified the key points regarding the University’s current financial performance and the implications of these for future financial sustainability.

The Court noted that the University’s capital plan was the subject of a separate paper but that the extent to which the University achieved its financial and income growth targets, would directly impact upon the level of investment available to fund those future capital priorities.
The Court noted that the paper illustrated both a baseline financial position, whereby all growth had been removed and projections based on the University in steady state for the next three years, and the projections for growth based on the achievement of strategic objectives. The Court noted that if budgeted growth was not achieved, or it received significant cuts in SFC funding, then the University would need to review its underlying cost base to ensure future financial sustainability.

The Court discussed the projections for income growth, in particular with regard to Online Education and international student recruitment. The Court noted that Online Education represented a key opportunity for income growth but that there would be significant competition from other universities for market share given the current challenges of UK immigration policy for traditional on campus student recruitment. The University was confident, however, that forecast levels of growth in Online Education against new programmes were achievable and that the infrastructure and staffing to support their delivery were in place. With regard to international student recruitment, the Court noted that the target projections for growth represented an increase on recently achieved growth but that the University was confident that the implementation of a series of actions under its Internationalisation Strategy over the past two years meant it was well positioned to be confident around the forecast growth.

The Court noted that final budgets, informed by the discussion at Court, would be brought to Court in June via Operating Board once SFC funding was confirmed. It was also agreed that as Operating Board had not had the opportunity to scrutinise the figures in the paper which linked to the 10 year capital investment programme, it should continue to monitor the development of the financial projections to 2020.

10 YEAR CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

The Court received a paper on the development of the 10-Year Capital Programme (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) following its initial consideration by Court in June 2016. The paper provided an update on the immediate priority projects, while also providing a wider contextual update on planned and potential developments at sites across the whole of the University Estate, including Old Aberdeen and Foresterhill. The paper also outlined the proposals for investment in the University’s digital infrastructure for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

As had been reported previously to Court in June 2016, the immediate focus of the capital programme was on flagship projects envisaged for the Old Aberdeen campus. As requested by Court, the paper included a detailed Project Brief document for both the Science Teaching Hub and the Law School Relocation projects, which Court had identified previously as the immediate priorities to be taken forward.

The paper set out the funding and cash-flow requirement for the delivery of the 10 year capital investment programme of £113.7M. Based on current assumptions linked to projected annual cash-flows, the University’s ability to deliver the programme was not contingent on increased institutional borrowing, although it was assumed that annual surplus projections would be met and that proceeds from land sales would be realised. The Court noted that to mitigate against any shortfall in cash generation, the programme would, however, only proceed incrementally, with reviews undertaken and Court approval sought at key stages, before any major capital investment commitments were made.

In discussion, it was noted that further detailed work on the staffing and specification of the Science Teaching Hub would be undertaken as part of the next steps in the project. The scope of the building had been remodelled from previous discussions at Court with a focus on teaching facilities rather than research. It was, therefore, smaller in size than earlier project plans had envisaged but Court was assured that it was sufficient in size to meet the needs of teaching. The development of new science research facilities would be considered as a separate project.
In further discussion, it was clarified that the Law School relocation remained a priority and that it was likely to be agreed as a key priority for the next fundraising campaign. The decision regarding what the University’s strategic priorities for fundraising were would be a matter for Court although there would need to be engagement with the Development Trust on these in the context of their attractiveness to donors. It was anticipated that Court would be invited by June 2017 to agree upon the strategic priorities for the next fundraising campaign.

The Court agreed to:

- Approve the Science Teaching Hub project for formal initiation, with immediate effect, while noting that the University would return to Court on completion of key stages throughout the project lifecycle, to seek approval for project continuation.

- Approve the planned capital investment in digital infrastructure, for 2016/17 and 2017/18, with immediate effect. The Court also noted that for 2018/19 onwards as with investment in the physical estate, the University would seek approvals for investment in projects or initiatives linked to digital infrastructure on an incremental basis, as these became ready to proceed.

- Endorse the longer term plans under development for future capital investment on both the King’s College and Foresterhill campuses, noting these were contingent on future funding availability. The University would return for approval to begin individual projects incrementally as and when it had greater confidence that the funding required to proceed was in place.

TRANS-NATIONAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP IN AFRICA

The Court received and considered a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which described a proposal for the establishment of a campus in Rwanda in partnership with a commercial company which presently partnered another UK University operating in Africa. The Court also received a summary of the Operating Board's consideration in November of an earlier version of the report.

The Court noted that the proposal for a campus in Rwanda had been discussed at Senate in November in the context of a wider discussion on overseas partnerships and the quality assurance aspects of working with partner organisations. The discussions at Senate and Operating Board had identified a number of questions and requests for further information that the paper sought to address. It was proposed that responses to any remaining or further issues would be considered in a progress report to Operating Board in January 2017.

Following discussion, it was agreed that development of the proposal should continue but that further due diligence work was required to be undertaken, particularly with regard to the proposed partner organisation and the financing of their investment in the campus. In addition to the further scrutiny and consideration of the project that was proposed in the paper be undertaken by Operating Board, Governance & Nominations Committee, and with regard to the academic case by Senate, it was agreed that the Court should take the final decision on the proposal. Members of Court were, therefore, invited to advise of any particular issues or information that they considered needed to be addressed in advance of that final consideration by Court.

ANNUAL REPORT, ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REPORTS

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR END 31 JULY 2016

The Court received the Annual Report and University Group Consolidated Accounts for the year to 31 July 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which had been prepared
under Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 and the revised Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP): Accounting for Further and Higher Education for the first time.

112 The Court also received a commentary from the Finance Director which summarised the main audit and accounting issues, the External Auditors’ Report (which provided an unqualified audit opinion) and Representation Letter (copies filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

113 The Court noted that the University group position was a deficit of £7.4m for the year ended 31 July 2016. The operating deficit before movements of the value of fixed assets, investment properties and pension liabilities was £4.6m. Included in this were exceptional costs relating to the voluntary severance scheme of £3.8m and the impairment of fixed assets of £3.1m. Once adjusting for exceptional items the surplus on operating activities was £0.3m.

114 The Court noted that, given the complex accounting policy changes necessitated by FRS 102, a communications plan had been put in place to disseminate the results and to explain the reasons for the deficit before exceptional items.

115 The Court approved the Annual Report and Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2016.

AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

116 The Court received the Audit Committee’s Annual Report for 2015-16 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes), which would be included in the annual financial reports to the SFC. It was noted that one change to the Report would be required prior to submission to clarify that the reference to an internal audit report rated ‘Critical risk’ did not relate to the University but to AUSA. In this regard, the Court also noted that while there had been significant progress by AUSA to address failures in its corporate and financial governance, up to three positions for external trustees on the board of AUSA had been vacant during the year (two of which remained vacant). This, therefore, remained a governance risk to be addressed.

117 The Court approved the Audit Committee’s Annual Report subject to the amendment noted above.

INTERNAL AUDITORS’ ANNUAL REPORT

118 The Court received and approved the Internal Auditor’s Report for 2015-16 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RISK

REPORT ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: QUARTER 4, 2015/16

119 The Court received a report (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which set out the progress made in quarter 4 of the academic year 2015/16 against School targets and the Key Performance Indicators underpinning the University’s Strategic Plan 2015-2020. The paper also outlined a number of additional steps added to the KPI monitoring process from 2016/17, which would include adding a number of institutional targets to the list of monitored targets to provide a better overview of institutional performance.

120 In discussion, it was suggested that Court might benefit from having more information with regard to the reasons for the Red, Amber, Green ratings of KPIs.

STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER - UPDATE

121 The Court received and considered a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) which provided an update on management of the University’s ten strategic risk areas. The Court also received a summary of the Operating Board’s consideration of the report. The Court noted the following three risks were highlighted as either having a high (over 18) net score or having increased significantly in score since the previous reporting period:
- Financial Sustainability
- Internationalisation
- Student Recruitment.

OPERATING BOARD REPORT

122 The Court received a report from the Operating Board meetings held on 18 October and 16 November 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). The principal items of the report that were noted by Court were the Board’s consideration of the following:

- An update on the Contextual Environment of Higher Education, from the Principal;
- Student Recruitment, including plans to balance the student population in future years;
- Financial planning, including:
  - The Annual report and Accounts for 2015/16
  - The Budget for 2016/17
  - Updates on the Restructuring Exercise in the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition;
  - Management Reports;
- Staffing Updates;
- Reports from the Capital Programme Management Committee;
- Updates on the Korea Campus Project.

123 The Court noted that the Board had also considered the following items which were being considered separately on the agenda:

- Health and Safety: Updates on Accidents and Incidents;
- Risk Management: Strategic Risk Register Update
- Transnational Education: Partnership Activity in Africa

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

AUDIT COMMITTEE

124 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Audit Committee at its meetings on 29 September and 3 November 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

125 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning at its meetings on 28 September 2016 and 13 October 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

PARTNERSHIP, NEGOTIATION AND CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

126 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Partnership, Negotiation and Consultative Committee at its meeting on 16 November 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

127 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Student Experience Committee at its meetings on 17 October 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).
RESEARCH POLICY COMMITTEE

128 The Court noted a report of the principal items of business considered by the Research Policy Committee at its meetings on 23 October and 14 November 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

ROUTINE BUSINESS

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

129 The Court received a paper on a proposed new Procurement Strategy for 2016-21 and a supporting Action Plan (copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes). The new Strategy had been prepared to align with new legislative requirements within the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016.

130 The Court approved the Procurement Strategy for 2016-2021.

SLAVERY & HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT

131 The Court received and approved a proposed Slavery and Human Trafficking statement, which under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 the University was required to publish disclosing information regarding its policies to prevent slavery and human trafficking both within its organisation and its supply chain (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

SENATE REPORT

132 The Court received a report of the principal items of business considered by Senatus Academicus at its meeting on 2 November 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). The report included two items for approval, being:

(i) Changes to the remits and compositions of Joint Committees of Senate and Court.
(ii) A draft Ordinance and Resolution on the composition of Senate and Election of Readers and Lecturers to Senate.

REMIT & COMPOSITION OF JOINT SENATE AND COURT COMMITTEES

133 The Court noted that in the light of recent changes to University structures, the Senate had approved revised remits and compositions for two joint Committees of Senate and Court, namely the University Committee on Teaching and Learning and the Student Experience Committee. The changes proposed largely reflect the replacement of previous College roles as ex officio members with the new Dean roles.

134 The Court approved the revised remits and compositions of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning and the Student Experience Committee.

COMPOSITION OF SENATE

135 The Court noted that the Senate had considered and approved a number of changes to its composition as detailed in the report to Court. The changes included recommendations arising from the effectiveness review of Senate. In preparing the proposals, consideration had also been given to ensuring the Senate’s composition was consistent with the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act.

136 The University Court approved the recommendations and on the recommendation of the Senate, approved a draft Ordinance, ‘Amendment to the Composition of the Senatus Academicus’ and a draft Resolution, ‘Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus’, which were required to effect these changes subject to the further consultation required by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 being undertaken.
The Court also noted that the Senate had received proposals for a revised composition of the University Court. The Senate had also received a motion proposing amendments to the proposals. Following discussion and a vote, the Senate gave its support to the proposals in the motion that the term Dean of Court should be adopted for the Senior Governor and that four of the twelve seats for independent Court members should be reserved for elected General Council Assessors. The Senate agreed to forward these to the University Court as representative of the Senate's view. The Senate's view and a copy of the motion it voted on were further reported and considered by the Court as part of a separate agenda item (Minutes 76 to 84 refer).

**SFC Outcome Agreement: Report on 2017 Process**

The Court received and noted a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) providing an update on the progress towards negotiation of the University’s 2017/18 Outcome Agreement with the SFC.

**Report from the Development Trust**

The Court received and noted a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) providing details of the Development Trust’s performance since its last report to Court on 4 October 2016.

**Annual Report on Redundancy**

The Court noted a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) providing an overview and update of the management of redundancy activities undertaken by Human Resources for the period 1 December 2015 to 30 November 2016.

**Annual Statement on Research Governance and Integrity**

The Court received a paper (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) detailing the annual statement the University is required to make to its governing body outlining various research governance related measures it has taken to ensure compliance with the standards and expectations outlined in the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

The Court noted the statement and that a further section would be added to clarify that the statement dealt with research misconduct rather than financial misconduct which were subject to separate University procedures and governance.

**Year End Management Report**

The Court noted the Management Accounts and Reports for the period to 31 October 2016 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes).

**Date of Next Meeting**

The Court noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 28 March 2017 at 9.00am.
**UNIVERSITY COURT: LOG OF FOLLOW UP ACTIONS FROM COURT MEETINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Court Date</th>
<th>Minute Ref</th>
<th>Action Arising</th>
<th>Action By:-</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>Internationalisation Update</td>
<td>Senior Vice Principal</td>
<td><strong>June 2016</strong>: Included in the agenda for the June meeting of Court but was deferred to a future meeting due to insufficient time being available. <strong>Update October 2016</strong>: Court agreed at the October 2016 meeting that it should receive a report for discussion at its next meeting in December 2016. Due to recent changes in the leadership of the School this has been deferred. <strong>Update March 2017</strong>: Complete. Included in today’s papers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>Gender Balance on sub-committees of Senate</td>
<td>University Secretary</td>
<td><strong>In progress</strong>: The issues of gender balance on Senate were considered by Senate in November and further work in consultation with the Gender Equality Steering Group is ongoing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Revised Composition of Court</td>
<td>University Secretary</td>
<td><strong>Complete</strong>: Report included in today’s papers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Recruitment and Appointment of Senior Governor</td>
<td>University Secretary</td>
<td><strong>Complete</strong>: Recommendation circulated and approved by Court on 21 December 2017.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Update on Effectiveness Review of Court

The Court noted that GGI’s report would be presented to the meeting of Court on 28 March 2017.

**University Secretary**

**In progress:** Report scheduled for March Court.

### Financial and Strategic Priorities

The Court noted that final budgets, informed by the discussion at Court, would be brought to Court in June via Operating Board once SFC funding was confirmed. It was also agreed that as Operating Board had not had the opportunity to scrutinise the figures in the paper which linked to the 10 year capital investment programme, it should continue to monitor the development of the financial projections to 2020.

**Senior Vice-Principal**

**In progress:** Report scheduled for June Court.

### 10 Year Capital Investment Programme

The decision regarding what the University’s strategic priorities for fundraising were would be a matter for Court although there would need to be engagement with the Development Trust on these in the context of their attractiveness to donors. It was anticipated that Court would be invited by June 2017 to agree upon the strategic priorities for the next fundraising campaign.

**Senior Vice-Principal**

**In progress:** Report scheduled for June Court. An update is provided as part of today’s agenda.

### Trans-National Education Partnership in Africa

Following discussion, it was agreed that development of the proposal should continue but that further due diligence work was required to be undertaken, particularly with regard to the proposed partner organisation and the financing of their investment in the campus. In addition to the further scrutiny and consideration of the project that was proposed in the paper be undertaken by Operating Board, Governance & Nominations Committee, and with regard to the academic case by Senate, it was agreed that the Court should take the final decision on the proposal. Members of Court were, therefore, invited to advise of any particular issues or information that they considered needed to be addressed in advance of that final consideration by Court.

**Vice-Principal Internationalisation**

**Complete:** Report included in today’s papers.

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**List of completed items available on Court Intranet or on request from the Clerk.**
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COURT

HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SAFETY UPDATE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The following incidents in the University have been recorded since the last report to the University Court on December 6th 2016. All of these incidents have been investigated and reported to the Operating Board and further information can be found in the report from the Operating Board on today’s agenda:

- An honorary member of staff fell and injured his back while on board a research vessel at sea.
- A cleaner fell and broke her arm while cleaning the floor at the Suttie Centre.
- The Meston building was evacuated as a result of an alarm raised following mixing of nitric acid and sodium hydroxide.
- A member of staff reported slipping on ice and hitting his head on a bollard.
- A member of cleaning staff suffered a fractured finger when using a buffing machine and her hand got caught between the machine handle and a work bench.
- A member of staff was involved in a near miss with a car on the road outside the old nursery at Powis Gate.
- A Support Technician reported a near miss while using a scaffold tower.
- A student was reported as having fallen out of a ground floor window at North Court, Hillhead Halls.
- A member of staff reported a near miss with a load being lowered from a scaffold on the side of the St Mary’s building.
- A vent operated window fell out completely from the Hillhead Central Building.

1.2 Appropriate remedial actions have taken place in response to all of these incidents.

1.3 A summary of health, wellbeing and safety activities and initiatives is as follows:

- The roll out of the online health and safety training for all University staff has progressed well. Some improvements are being made to the process after the initial roll out.
- Six Managing Safely courses have been run internally for those members of staff with line management or areas of responsibility.
- The health and wellbeing initiatives have attracted a good level of participation in the Race to the North Pole and the Health and Wellbeing Day in January. A Campus Cycling Officer has been able to review the cycling scheme, launch “Dr Bike sessions”, promote safe cycling and obtain grants for the University.
- Safety Tours are being carried out by senior management and are in the diaries for the remainder of the academic year.
- The Health and Safety Executive conducted an announced routine biosafety inspection of the Institute of Medical Sciences on 22 and 23 February 2017. The Inspector was thorough in his examination of the facilities and records of training, monitoring of standards, control of access to restricted areas and maintenance of facilities and equipment. His feedback immediately after the visit was positive. He made various observations and recommendations on best practice to improve on the management systems and these are being followed through and implemented.

2 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

2.1 There are no significant resource implications.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT

3.1 Risk STRA_2016_04 Health and Safety in the Strategic Risk Register refers.
4. **Equality Impact Assessment**

4.1 An equality impact assessment is not required.

5. **Sustainability & Social Responsibility**

5.1 There are no environmental, ethical or social implications or impacts.

6. **Recommended Action**

6.1 The University Court is invited to note the matters set out in the paper.

7. **Further Information**

7.1 Further information is available from Naveed Qamar, Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing (01224 272783, naveed.qamar@abdn.ac.uk).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board/Committee</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previously considered by</td>
<td>Operating Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further approval required</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOI Status: Open
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper is a report to Court from the Principal which is for discussion and information.

1.2 The paper reports on a number of matters which may be of interest to members but which might not otherwise feature on the agenda.

1.3 Further information is available from the Principal, ian.diamond@abdn.ac.uk.

2. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

2.1 Given the magnitude and pace of political developments around Brexit we have been holding briefing sessions to help keep our staff informed of the implications for the University and, of course, to help ensure we support our EU staff and enable all our colleagues to support and guide our many EU students. I intend to discuss with Court in greater depth today not only the latest position on Brexit for universities, but also recent developments with regard to the Enterprise and Skills Agencies Review, the UK Higher Education Bill and the Scottish Government funding announcement for the Scottish Funding Council. It may be helpful, however, to provide a brief update on some of those issues here.

2.2 In late December the Scottish Government announced funding allocations for higher education to the Scottish Funding Council. It equated to a 1.3 per cent cash cut in the revenue budget for higher education and almost no new capital resource. Universities now await the decisions of the Scottish Funding Council on how their budget will be allocated to individual institutions and this will inform our budget setting discussions with Operating Board and Court over the next quarter.

2.3 As I previously reported to Court, phase 1 of the Enterprise and Skills Agencies Review has proposed that the Boards of the Scottish Funding Council, Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and the Highlands and Islands Enterprise be merged into one ‘super board’. This has engendered a reasonable level of political attention and criticism. The review is now in phase 2 which is expected to conclude before the May local elections. The important point for universities is to ensure that the structures that emanate from the review maintain the essential features of university autonomy that are so important to our success. The response of the Cabinet Secretary, John Swinney, to questions in Holyrood on that point have been of some reassurance.

2.4 The Higher Education Bill in Westminster continues to wend its way towards the statute book. Parts are contentious and we have input into the debate in a number of ways. A key component of the Bill is the proposal for the introduction of a new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in England. This will see the UK government monitoring and assessing the quality of teaching in England’s universities. Scottish institutions have, however, had to take some decisions regarding their position on participation. It is not an easy decision because engaging with the TEF means working within a framework that is not designed for the Scottish system; while if we do not engage we will face questions as to why not. Our assessment is that we have seen nothing thus far which would continue to improve our teaching better than the Quality Enhancement Framework and the Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) process that Scotland’s universities currently use. For those reasons, the University’s position is, for now, not to participate in the TEF.

2.5 Also in the Higher Education Bill is the creation of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which will be an umbrella body for the research councils, the Research Excellence Framework (and other English research activities currently in the Higher Education Funding Council for England) and Innovate UK. I was encouraged to see in the Government’s amendments to the Bill that they had accepted the arguments that Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should have a representative on the Board of UKRI.
2.6 Despite the difficult and somewhat uncertain higher education environment, our future lies very much in our own hands and our Strategic Plan remains, in my opinion, an excellent route map for our future. If we achieve its delivery we will ensure the University continues to thrive.

3. **GLOBAL ALLIANCE WITH CURTIN UNIVERSITY**

3.1 We publicly launched our strategic alliance with Curtin University (Perth, Australia) last month and we are excited to now be working with one of the world’s leading universities on a range of partnerships with the potential to open up new international opportunities. A key part of the alliance is the Global Energy Institute which will offer Masters students the opportunity to study in two of the regional energy capitals of the world and which will undertake research which is led by the needs of industry. The alliance goes beyond the field of energy, however, and as we discussed previously at Court will see joint working in medicine and health, the creative arts, and business.

4. **POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT**

4.1 The University holds regular events to engage with our political representatives and earlier this week, the University’s medical research was highlighted to a group of MPs and MSPs at an event hosted at Foresterhill in partnership with the British Heart Foundation. Last month the University hosted a meeting of the Scottish Affairs Select Committee which was taking evidence as part of its inquiry into ‘Sustainable employment in Scotland’. While not a lobbying event, it is always useful to welcome politicians and highlight the impressive place that I believe our beautiful University campus is.

5. **OPENING OF THE ROWETT INSTITUTE OF NUTRITION AND HEALTH**

5.1 I was pleased that a number of colleagues on Court were able to join us in January for the opening of the new Rowett Institute building at Foresterhill by the Chancellor, HRH The Duchess of Rothesay. It was a successful event and an opportunity to highlight to the wider community the new building and the important contribution that the Rowett Institute has and will continue to make to the health of society.

6. **LAUNCH OF MRC CENTRE AND CENTRE FOR OIL AND GAS TECHNOLOGY**

6.1 Once again at Foresterhill in January, we held the official opening of the Aberdeen Fungal Group MRC Medical Mycology Centre, another area in which our research is truly world-leading. The work being done to improve understanding of fungal disease will save lives not only here, but especially in sub-Saharan Africa where it is a bigger killer than malaria. As well as the international partnerships and capacity building that have been such a characteristic of the Group’s activity, 2017 will also feature the opening of our University of Aberdeen laboratory at the University of Cape Town.

6.2 In February, Lord Dunlop, UK Government Minister for Scotland and Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Scottish Government Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy opened the new £180 million Oil & Gas Technology Centre. The Centre, which aims to be the ‘go to’ place for oil and gas technology in the UK and internationally, has been formed as part of the City Deal and the University is one of the key partners. Initially that partnership will see us working with the Centre on Field Life Extension and Decommissioning. We are, of course, committed to deepening that partnership and help the Centre to succeed in its aims, support the industry and in turn raise our own international reputation in this area which is so important to our region.

7. **STAFF SUCCESSES**

7.1 I was delighted that six of our staff have been named as Royal Society of Edinburgh Fellows: Phil Hannaford, Vice-Principal for Digital Strategy; David Benson, Sixth Century of Pure Mathematics; Stefan Brink, Sixth Century Professor of Scandinavian Studies; Jane Reid, Professor of Population and Evolutionary Ecology; Peter Duff, Professor of Criminal Justice; and Doerthe Tetzlaff, Professor in Hydrology and Landscape Ecology.
7.2 In total, the RSE named 59 new Fellows, so it is very pleasing indeed that 10% of them are from Aberdeen.

7.3 I think Court would also want to congratulate our new Senior Governor, Martin Gilbert, who was also named as a new Fellow of the RSE.

8. **LONG SERVICE AWARDS**

8.1 It is important that we as an institution continue to recognise in different ways the major contributions that our staff make to the University, to our students and the wider community. One innovation in recent years to help us do that has been our staff long service awards. We held our latest awards ceremony a few weeks ago and it is was a real pleasure to celebrate colleagues from the academic community and the Professional Services. A number of colleagues had given over 40 years of service and in the case of William Edwards, Technician in Life Sciences and Medicine, and Ian Morrison, Technician in Geosciences, over 50 years.

9. **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY**

9.1 For a number of years now the University has been helping to mark International Women’s Day by hosting a conference which is intended to both inspire and celebrate women and I am pleased to report that we held another successful event this month. The conference was centred around the theme *Inspiring Journeys* and included contributions from women such as Hannah Miley, Olympian and one of Scotland’s most successful international swimmers and Timi Wolo, a University of Aberdeen Alumnus, African Woman of Worth 2015 and the Role Model for the Female Child 2016. Timi’s story of how she came from the impoverished Niger Delta, overcame the death of her mother aged 12 to pursue a successful education here in Aberdeen, then a successful career in Nigeria in the helicopter industry and how along the way she has helped other young people in Nigeria to pursue education and a career, was for me the epitome of an inspiring journey, and one the University can itself take pride in having supported. Similarly, one of our own colleagues, Dr Alex Brand, spoke wonderfully at the conference dinner about her own journey and how, having raised a family, she then took an access course to study here, completed her undergraduate and postgraduate doctoral degrees, and now leads a very successful research group in the MRC Medical Mycology Centre.

10. **STUDENT SUCCESSES**

10.1 I think it is important that Court knows about examples of the kinds of achievements that our students are regularly making and which illustrate how they are making a difference in the world. One recent example is James Huxley-Beavis, a medical undergraduate, who campaigned over the Christmas period to raise funds for the homeless charity, Crisis. James slept rough in London for a month and begged for change. His commitment and determination to highlight the dangers faced by those who are homeless led to him raising £44,000 and significant media attention throughout the UK and online.

10.2 Equally impressive is the achievement of two of our PhD students in winning Royal Society of Edinburgh Enterprise Fellowship awards. Dr Rotimi Alabi was awarded a NERC Enterprise Fellowship and is currently commercialising results from his PhD studies via the startup company RAB Microfluidics. Dr Fiona Rudkin is a PhD student in the Aberdeen Fungal Group who has been awarded a Scottish Enterprise Fellowship award to commercialise outputs from her PhD studies on antibodies that could potentially diagnose or treat life-threatening fungal infections. These are highly competitive and prized awards and Dr Alabi and Dr Rudkin are to be congratulated on their success in winning them.

11. **SPORTING SUCCESS**

11.1 Congratulations are also due to Andrew Ablett, a medical student, who recently won gold in the most prestigious Brazilian Jiu Jitsu championship ever held in Scotland. Andrew took the top prize in his weight category at the Scotland National Pro Jiu Jitsu Championship in Edinburgh, in December.
11.2 Finally, I hope colleagues on Court will forgive me if I gloat a little in the fact that for the first time in five years the University Boat Club triumphed over RGU in the Universities Boat Race. The Race is generously sponsored by Aberdeen Asset Management and I’m sure our new Senior Governor will be equally delighted that we won the race.

11.3 Regardless of who wins, it is clear to me that in recent years the standard of rowing and competitiveness between the two universities has increased significantly. That can only be good for the sport and that is to the credit of the event. It also needs to be said that the event helps enormously to raise the profile of the University and our students in a positive way in the wider community.

12. RECOMMENDED ACTION

12.1 The paper is for discussion and information

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

13.1 Further information is available from the Principal ian.diamond@abdn.ac.uk. 01224 272135

[9 March 2017 [Version 1] [Open]

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper is a report to the University Court from the Student President of Aberdeen University Students’ Association which is for discussion and information.

1.2 The paper reports on a number of matters which may be of interest to members but which might not otherwise feature on the agenda.

1.3 Further information is available from the Student President, ausapresident@abdn.ac.uk.

2 ELECTIONS

2.1 AUSA have completed the Leadership Elections cycle for the intake of Sabbatical Officers to take post for the academic year 2017/18. Voter turnout for this year was shy of reaching last year’s figures. 2016/17 elections boasted 16 candidates across the five available positions compared to nine this year.

2.2 The 2016 Leadership Elections received 1769 individual voters casting a total of 7189 votes. Though there were fewer candidates running in this cycle AUSA were pleased with engagement from the student body. In total there were 1746 individual voters casting a total of 7071 votes.

2.3 For the academic year 2017/18 the new Sabbatical team shall be:

- Student President: Lawson Ogubie
- Education Officer: Donna Connelly
- Welfare Officer: Kendall Ann Smith
- Sports Officer: Emma Lister
- Communities Officer: Lewis Macleod (re-elected)

2.4 From this period onwards the incumbent officers shall proceed with a period of handover to prepare the incoming team. Soon the organisation will be preparing for the next round of Standing Committee elections for the positions which make up the body of Student Council.

3 RAG & FUNDRAISING

3.1 This year RAG embarked on the third Charity Fashion (the second RAG affiliated) in tandem with members of Women’s Lacrosse. The committee rebranded the image of the event and this year adopted the theme ‘RECKLESS’. The event was successful attracting a substantially large audience in the venue Unit 51.

3.2 On Tuesday 17th of January AUMHC initiated a 24-hour hockey match at King’s Pavilion. The event ran throughout the night with the club have pre-organised a roster of teams to rotate. The event raised £2,938.12. The match also attracted media attention; STV conducted a live interview with members of the club, including the President Rory Hardie.

3.3 Throughout Christmas period (9th December – 9th January) a medical student and RAG committee member, James Huxley-Beavis campaigned for the homeless charity Crisis. James, through his campaign ‘Homeless at Christmas’ slept rough in the streets begging for change. His commitment to the cause and determination to highlight the dangers faced by those who are homeless received media attention throughout the UK and online. James exceeded his target of £25,000, raising in excess of £44,000.

3.4 Thus far through charitable events and bucketing RAG have raised £6,267.37.
4 KING’S BALL, BLUES BALL

4.1 Each year AUSA recognises and celebrates the work, success, and achievements of students, sports clubs, and societies.

4.2 Sports Ball Award Winners:

- Allender Memorial (Club of the Year) – Equestrian Club
- Blues bowl – Kelsey Stewart
- Sandy Morrison Memorial Trophy – Alice Hogg
- Centenary Cup – Tennis (Women’s 1st)
- AJM Edwards Memorial – Erin Sculthorpe

King’s Ball Award Winners

- Society of the Year – MedSoc
- Team of the Year – Bookends
- Student Leader of the Year – Jenny Bird
- Most Dedicated Society – French Society
- Big Heart – Granite City TV
- Best Event – Lawyers Without Borders

5 AUSA UNION BUILDING

5.1 AUSA is continuing to develop the space in the Union Building to become a more functional home for some of our student groups. The organisation is nearing completion of the phased move of groups from the Johnston Building. The Gaudie and Granite City TV are now completely housed in the Union Building on the ground floor next to the AUSA Student Advice Centre. On the first floor Bookends have now occupied a back section of the societies’ space with the Corner and Swapshop. The relocation of Bookends (an extension of RAG) has seen their income generation increase exponentially comparative to its previous occupancy in the Johnston.

5.2 At present a serious concern surrounds the space available for AUSA to continue to providing accommodation and activities space for the growing number of societies. There are 155 registered societies within AUSA and with the eminent closure of Johnston it is feared that without ample accommodation there could be a critically negative impact to an aspect of the students’ experience. The organisation is going through a period of drastic change and redevelopment and for the growth of AUSA it is imperative that where and when possible the needs of the membership continue to be met.

6 STAVANGER EXECUTIVE VISIT

6.1 The Student President, Vice-President Teaching & Learning, Vice-President Learning Environment, and the Organisational Consultant of Stavanger University visited the University of Aberdeen on the 18th and 19th of January.

6.2 The visitors received a presentation on the history of AUSA and its importance within the context of the University. There was discussion over the variances between our democratic structures and how our respective institutions influence University and Government decisions.

6.3 Over the course of the visit, the Norwegian guests were given informal sessions focusing particularly on housing and welfare. During this time officers elaborated on current campaigns and services provided for students.

7 TRUSTEE BOARD

7.1 We have received interest in the two vacant Student Trustee positions. In addition, a potential external Trustee has expressed strong interest and has now been appointed to the role following approval from Student Council. The appointment, Andrew Williamson, brings with him a wealth of experience in the charitable sector and particularly in Governance.
7.2 A strategic plan has been developed and now finalized. This has been approved by the Trustee Board allowing AUSA to progress with strategic aims and objectives for the coming years. AUSA should now be able to move forward in the next academic session with more robust planning in place.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

No request for resource is made in this paper.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

Not applicable to this report.

10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable to this report.

11 SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Not applicable.

12 RECOMMENDED ACTION

The paper is for discussion and information

13 FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Chubbe Anucha 01224 274250

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UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COURT
REMUNERATION COMMITTEE: SENIOR STAFF PAY POLICY

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 The Remuneration Committee has adopted a prudent approach to the review of senior staff pay in recent years.

1.2 This paper outlines a proposal in section 5.4 to create a fund of £100k to recognise, reward and incentivise senior members of staff ie for 254 members of professorial staff and senior professional staff. The process will be to take forward a strategy focused on addressing gender differentials and providing an opportunity for evidence based exceptional contribution to be recognised.

1.3 Given the recent introduction of the opportunity to remunerate the Senior Governor, the Remuneration Committee considered whether it was appropriate for the Senior Governor to continue as Chair of the Remuneration Committee. The Committee approved the recommendation that the Committee be chaired by an independent member of Court and not the Senior Governor.

1.4 The remit has also been updated to reflect the position agreed by Court in October 2016 that the Remuneration Committee will review annually the remuneration of the Senior Governor.

1.5 A review by the Internal Auditors recommended that the quorum of the Committee be amended to ensure that an appropriate number of independent members were required to be present. This has been addressed in the proposed changes to the remit and composition.

1.6 The University Court is invited to approve the proposed Senior Staff Pay Policy 2017 and the revised remit and composition of the Committee.

1.7 Further information can be obtained from Mrs Debbie Dyker, Director of Human Resources, d.j.dyker@abdn.ac.uk

2 **BACKGROUND**

2.1 In 2013 the Remuneration Committee adopted an approach where a fund was created to recognise reward and incentivise senior staff. The Senior Staff Pay Policy was advertised and applications were invited applications from professorial/Grade 9 members of staff. In 2015 the criteria applied were specifically related to controlling gender pay differentials and to retention cases.

3 **STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

3.1 The University’s Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020 sets out the strategic goal within the People Strategy to “attract and retain ambitious staff and students to our international institution”. A Pay Policy for Senior Staff that recognises and rewards contribution and incentivises future excellence will support the University in achieving its strategic ambitions. In addition, a second goal is our commitment to “foster a positive culture wherein our people are engaged, committed to our future, and champions of equality and diversity”. A pay policy that supports consideration of gender pay differentials is important to our equality agenda.
4 OTHER CONTEXT

4.1 It is important to note that from 2016/17 and beyond there are several significant and challenging pay bill additions which HEIs will have to fund. These are likely to have an impact on the national pay negotiations. The Apprenticeship Levy which will be introduced from 1 April 2017, is a 0.5% pay bill levy paid by all employers with pay bills of more than £3m with the ability to recover this cost totally dependent on increasing employment of apprentices (approximate cost £0.6m from 2017). An immigration skills charge levy of £1,000 per annum per non-EU migrant recruited may be required from 1 April 2017. It is anticipated that there will be a reduction in this fee for charitable organisations (fee of £364) and also exemptions where individuals are qualified to PhD level. This reduction in fee and PhD exemption will assist in reducing the potential cost associated with this new skills charge.

4.2 The 2017-2018 JNCHES pay negotiations have recently commenced. The University had budgeted for a 1% increase to staff salaries at this stage.

4.3 The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) had a major review two years ago which saw a change to employee and employer contributions and a move to a hybrid scheme of defined benefit and defined contribution. A revaluation of USS is about to commence and discussions are now ongoing with the Employers Pension Forum (EPF), UCEA, USS and Trade Unions with regard to potential impact of a revised valuation. An increase to employee (currently 8%) and/or employer (currently 18%) contribution may be an outcome of the negotiations.

4.4 The setting of Senior Staff Pay Policy for 2017 will require account to be taken of the current financial climate.

5 PROPOSED PAY POLICY

5.1 Within the University’s grading structure staff, in grades 1 – 8, have a contractual entitlement to receive an automatic annual increment at the level of 3.0% until they reach the maximum point of their salary scale. At present this applies to approximately 40% of such staff, with the remaining 60% either at the maximum point or on discretionary contribution points beyond the scale maximum. The approximate cost of these annual uplifts is £1.1m, which equates to 0.8% of the total pay bill for these staff. Members of Senior Staff (Grade 9) are not paid on an incremental scale and therefore have no entitlement to receive annual incremental progression.

5.2 A 1% increase for all members of staff across the University (including those at Grade 9 level) would equate to £1.1m.

5.3 In considering the Senior Staff Pay Policy for 2017, the Remuneration Committee agreed that the following principles should be taken into account when considering nominations and/or applications for salary uplifts for individuals at Grade 9 level:

- Gender pay considerations
- Exceptional performance/circumstances

5.4 It is proposed that a fund of up to £100k be set aside to recognise, reward and incentivise senior members of staff in respect of the Senior Staff 2017. The process this year will be to take forward a strategy focused on addressing gender differentials and providing an opportunity for evidence based exceptional contribution to be recognised. Currently there is 254 professorial and senior professional staff (grade 9) that will be eligible for consideration under the policy.

6 CONVENORSHIP

6.1 Court agreed in October 2016 that consideration would need to be given to whether it remained appropriate for the Senior Governor to chair the Remuneration Committee given the move to introduce remuneration for the role of Senior Governor (as required by the HE Governance Act). Following consultation with the Senior Governor and the Governance and Nominations Committee, it was agreed that the Convenorship should be passed from the Senior Governor to another independent member. It was noted that such an approach would also be consistent with the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance. Following consultation with the
Governance and Nominations Committee, it was proposed that Mr David Steyn, as the most experienced independent member of the Remuneration Committee, should be offered the convenor’s role.

7  **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The resource implications are a budget of £100k to fund the policy.

8.  **RISK MANAGEMENT**

8.1 No areas of significant risk have been identified in relation to this proposal. However, a failure to appropriately recognise and reward senior members of staff could impact upon the retention of key individuals.

9.  **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However as with previous years, the Remuneration Committee will continue to work to reduce any gender gap in Senior Staff Pay.

10.  **SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

10.1 There are no environmental, ethical or social implications arising from this paper.

11.  **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

11.1 The University Court is invited approve the proposed Senior Staff Pay Policy 2017 and specifically the proposal in section 5.4 above to create a fund of £100k to support awards for Senior Staff. The University Court is also invited to approve the revised remit and composition of the Remuneration Committee.

12.  **FURTHER INFORMATION**

12.1 Further information can be obtained from Mrs Debbie Dyker, Director of Human Resources, [d.j.dyker@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:d.j.dyker@abdn.ac.uk)

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UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

1 Committee Title
Remuneration Committee

2 Date of Establishment
Reviewed as part of Committees Review 2014.

3 Convener and Administrative Support Area
Convener: Independent member of Court (The Convener not to be the Senior Governor)
Clerk: Director of Human Resources

4 Purpose
To advise the University Court on matters relating to the pay and conditions of senior staff.

A Committee required for regulatory purposes, eg Scottish Code, Financial Memorandum.

5 Remit: (To be reviewed annually at first meeting of committee cycle)

- To seek comparative information on salaries and other emoluments and conditions of service in the university sector;
- To determine and review the salaries, terms and conditions (and where appropriate, severance payments) of the Senior Governor, Principal, Vice-Principals, Heads of College, the University Secretary, Professorial and Grade 9 officers and such other staff as the University Court may from time to time determine;
- To ensure that the performance of the Principal as head of the institution is assessed on an annual basis.
- To oversee severance arrangements for senior staff and ensure that account is taken of the SFC Guidance on Severance Arrangements in respect of Senior Staff. Where consideration of severance arrangements is delegated, to ensure that the boundaries of delegated authority is clear, and to receive formal reports of any severance arrangements.

6. Composition and Quorum:

Convener: An independent member of Court (The Convener not to be the Senior Governor)

Membership: 4 Independent members of University Court (including the Senior Governor)
1 Non-executive staff member of Court
President of the Students’ Association

In attendance: Principal*
University Secretary*

Clerk: Director of HR *

*who shall withdraw when the Committee considers his/her own salary, terms and conditions, or severance pay.

Quorum: Three members at least two of whom shall be independent members.

Account to be taken of Equality and Diversity in Membership

7 Membership

Convener: Mr D Steyn
Independent Members: Mr B Pack, Mrs K McPhail, Mr C Duncan, and Mr M Gilbert
Non-Executive Staff Member of Court: Mr B Paterson
President of the Students’ Association: Mr C Anucha

8. **Reporting Line/Parent Committee and Interface with Other Committees**

   Formal reporting line: University Court
   Interface with other committees: n/a

9. **Frequency and Timing of Meetings**

   The Committee will meet at least once per year, with further meetings scheduled as appropriate.
   Meetings between 10am – 4pm in accordance with University Policy.

10. **Publication of Papers**

    Not applicable.
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

REPORT FROM THE OPERATING BOARD

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This report summarises items considered at the meetings of the Operating Board held on 10 January, 1 February and 7 March 2017, including:

- Health, Wellbeing and Safety:
  - Updates on supporting activities and policies
  - Accidents and incidents;
- Student Recruitment:
  - Student Admissions Updates
  - Online Education
  - A Report on Tariff and Retention;
- Financial Planning, including:
  - Budget Planning Assumptions 2017/18 to 2019/20
  - Universities’ Accounts Comparison Year Ended 31 July 2016
  - The Cash Management Annual Update
  - Advisory Group on Investment Report
  - Strategic Business Ventures Group Report
  - Management Reporting
  - Restructuring Exercise Update;
- Reports from the Capital Programme Management Committee;
- Staffing Updates.

1.2 Transnational Education activities were an area of special focus, with a special meeting convened on 10 January to consider the University’s partnership activities in Africa with [mask]. Reports on the following items were presented to the Board, and papers on these matters are included elsewhere on today’s agenda, along with a summary of the Board’s discussion of these:

- Transnational Education Strategy
- Partnership Activity in Africa
- Partnership Activity in Qatar
- Korea Campus Update

1.3 All of the papers referred to in the report are available on request from the Clerk to the Operating Board.

1.4 Court is invited to note the items discussed by the Operating Board at its recent meetings.

1.5 Court is invited to approve four Health and Safety policies, which were also received and approved at Partnership, Negotiating and Consultative Committee (PNCC) on 1 March, as follows:

- Fire Safety Policy
- Use of Drones Policy
- Control and Management of Contractors
- Overseas Travel Policy and Guidance

All of the above are available at [www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet/).

1.6 Further information is available from Ms Ruth MacLure, Clerk to the Operating Board (telephone 01224 273239; email r.m.maclure@abdn.ac.uk).
For Approval

HEALTH AND SAFETY

2 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

2.1 At its March meeting, the Board received a paper (OB16:71) which introduced three policies for approval, as follows: Fire Policy, Use of Drones Policy and Guidance, and Control and Management of Contractors (OB16:72, 73 and 74).

2.2 The Operating Board approved the Fire Safety Policy, which was a routine update to a previously-approved policy.

2.3 The Board noted that the Use of Drones Policy had been drawn up with assistance from the School of Geosciences. It was agreed to amend the wording of Section 8 of the policy to broaden the description “landowners” to include leaseholders and other occupiers. Subject to this amendment, the Board approved the Policy.

2.4 Noting that ethical, insurance and employment considerations were included within the Procurement Policy and Procedures, the Operating Board approved the Control and Management of Contractors Policy.

2.5 The Board noted that current University policies were available within the Policy Zone of the website.

2.6 Court is invited to approve the above policies which are available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet/.

3 SAFETY AND SECURITY OF STAFF OVERSEAS

3.1 Also in March, the Board received a paper on the Safety and Security of Staff Overseas and accompanying Overseas Travel Policy and Guidance (OB16:56).

3.2 The Board noted that in light of plans for further operations overseas and an increasingly challenging security and political environment in some countries, current systems were under review to ensure that they were sufficiently robust in all aspects of travel risk management, and for the University to discharge its duty of care.

3.3 The Board noted a requirement that staff register their travel plans with their School / Section, as well as through the University’s insurance office and agreed that this process should be streamlined, if possible. The Board also agreed the need to supplement the Policy with location-specific information, to refer to the need to ensure that an appropriate visa was in place before travel and to provide advice on how to respond to a request for a bribe, for example at borders.

3.4 Subject to the above amendments, the Operating Board approved the paper and accompanying policy.

3.5 Court is invited to approve the Overseas Travel Policy and Guidance, which is available at: www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet/.

For Information

4. UPDATES ON HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTIVITIES

4.1 In February, the Board noted a report of the success of a recent Health and Wellbeing Day for staff, which had been followed by a similar event for students. In March, it received a full Health, Wellbeing and Safety Update (OB16:55). The Board noted that the roll out of the online health and safety training was progressing well, and had received positive feedback from users.
Initiatives to promote Health and Wellbeing continued to attract a good level of participation. Safety Tours by senior management were scheduled for the remainder of the academic year.

4.2 The Board noted that the Health and Safety Executive had carried out a routine biosafety inspection of the Institute of Medical Sciences on 22 and 23 February 2017 and positive feedback had been received from the inspector. The inspection report recommended improvements to Biological Safety Standards through the appointment of a Biological Safety Officer (from within the current staff) and a formalisation of monitoring procedures.

5. ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

5.1 In February and March the Board received Updates on Accidents and Incidents (OB16:42 and OB16:57).

5.2 In February, the Board noted that four incidents had occurred since the November meeting, as follows:
   • An honorary member of staff had fallen and injured his back while on board a vessel at sea
   • A cleaner had fallen and broken her arm while cleaning the floor at the Suttie Centre
   • Meston Building had been evacuated as a result of an alarm raised following the mixing of nitric acid and sodium hydroxide
   • A member of staff had reported slipping on ice and collapsing, hitting his head on a bollard.

5.3 In respect of the reported incident in Meston Building, members of the Board sought reassurance as to the level of supervision and training in place in chemical laboratories. While acknowledging the need for individuals to take responsibility for their own Health and Safety, it was agreed to review procedures in this area.

5.4 In March, the Board noted one reportable injury and five “near miss” incidents, as follows:
   • A member of cleaning staff suffered a fractured finger when using a buffing machine
   • A member of staff was involved in a near miss with a car on the road outside the old nursery at Powis Gate
   • A Support Technician reported a near miss while using a scaffold tower
   • A student was reported as having fallen out of a ground floor window at North Court, Hillhead Halls
   • A member of staff reported a near miss with a load being lowered from a scaffold on the side of St Mary’s building
   • A vent operated window fell out at the Hillhead Central Building.

5.5 The Board noted that, following review of the circumstances of each incident, the Director of Health, Wellbeing and Safety was satisfied that appropriate actions had been taken at the time and subsequently.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

6. UPDATES ON STUDENT ADMISSIONS

6.1 The Board received Student Admissions Updates at its February and March meetings (OB16:43 and OB16:58).

6.2 At the February meeting, the Convener provided feedback on the presentation of statistics on student recruitment, requesting a different approach. It was agreed that future reports should make clear the delineation between short term tactics and long term strategy. A preference was expressed for reports against budget targets, by School, rather than providing comparative data from the previous year. The Director of Student Life was requested to find a way to distil key top level statistics and their financial implications.

6.3 In March, the Board noted that the focus of the paper was on September 2017 entrants and the short-term actions being taken to increase the number of applications; and convert applicants into registered students. Schools’ strategic planning targets were included in the analysis.
These were under review in light of actual applications. Budget assumptions were also being finalised.

6.4 The Board noted key points as follows:

− **Home fees, non-controlled undergraduate**: A reduced intake target of 1,633 had been approved by the University Management Group. There was a reduction in applications, linked to the fall in Scottish 18 year olds and a drop in applications from the EU.
− **RUK fees, non-controlled undergraduate**: The University was experiencing reduced numbers compared to the previous year, and meeting targets was reported to be challenging. Extensive conversion activity was reported, including accommodation and travel bursaries.
− **International fees undergraduate**: The University was slightly ahead in relation to the number of firm acceptances.
− **Postgraduate taught Online learning programmes** were listed separately. Home fees (Scottish and EU) applications were down. The University was promoting new postgraduate funding schemes to UK applicants and its own final year undergraduates.
− **Postgraduate research**: It was very early in the cycle for 2017/18 PGR, but at this stage applications were reported to be up in both home and international categories.

6.5 The Board noted that, in relation to International entrants from key priority regions, the University had carried out an analysis of historical application patterns and conversion trends in order to predict whether recruitment was at the required level at this point of the cycle. Use of this data suggested that the University was currently on course to achieve its target.

6.6 The Board agreed that the revised approach to the presentation of statistics was considerably more enlightening than before and this was appreciated.

6.7 The Board discussed current issues in the Higher Education sector, including the sustainability of offering a four-year degree and the need to revisit a proposal to make unconditional offers to RUK applicants at an early stage of the recruitment cycle. The Principal reported that the University was already considering its response to these issues, which were the subject of debate among comparator institutions.

7. **ONLINE EDUCATION**

7.1 In February, the Board received an Online Education Update and Proposed Fee Structure for online programmes (OB16:44).

7.2 The Board noted that the University was aiming to make a step-change in its online provision, with a user-friendly, flexible and modular approach. The Board noted the University’s targets for Online Education Programmes commencing in 2017, in the form of a table showing Schools, programmes, launch dates and target student numbers for the first three years. The Board noted the intention to structure online provision on a modular basis, to allow materials to be shared by different courses, for maximum flexibility.

7.3 In discussion, members of the Board reported difficulty in assessing whether the proposed fees were reasonable in the absence of an analysis of competitors’ fees or a business plan showing Return On Investment. It was agreed to provide this information to a future meeting of the Board, in order to enable members to reach an informed decision on the proposed fee structure.

8. **TARIFF AND RETENTION**

8.1 In March, the Board received a paper on Tariff Points: Intake and Retention Analysis (OB16:59), which had been prepared in response to a question at the November meeting, when the Board had asked if there was a relationship between tariff and retention, specifically in respect to Scottish and RUK students.

8.2 The Board noted that the paper explored these issues and described the University’s approach in respect of areas identified as being of concern. The Board agreed that the University was to be congratulated on the improved retention rates reported within the paper.
FINANCIAL PLANNING

9. BUDGET PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS 2017/18 TO 2019/20

9.1 In February, the Board received and approved a paper on Budget Planning Assumptions 2017/18 to 2019/20 (OB16:49). The paper outlined the underlying planning assumptions for use in preparing financial budgets for the years 2017/18 to 2019/20. The Scottish Government draft budget for 2017/18 for the HE sector assumed a cut of 1.3%, and the budget assumption for SFC funding was consistent with this.

9.2 The Board noted the intention to present budgets to Operating Board for approval in May, for recommendation to Court in June.

10. UNIVERSITIES’ ACCOUNTS COMPARISON YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2016

10.1 At the March meeting, the Board received a paper on Universities’ Accounts Comparisons, Year Ended 31 July 2016 (OB16:64).

10.2 The paper presented a summary outturn of the annual Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2016, comparing the University’s performance within the Scottish sector and against its benchmark group in the United Kingdom. The Director of Finance reported that he was now able to provide information on Dundee and Heriot Watt Universities, and intended to update the paper prior to its presentation to Court. As part of this update, it was agreed to review how best to include data on the University of Edinburgh, which was a significant outlier. An updated paper has been enclosed for consideration by Court as a separate item on today’s agenda.

10.3 Following discussion of the issues raised by the paper, the Board agreed the need to ensure that the important messages contained within were communicated to the wider University community and noted that the Principal was planning a presentation at School-level.

11. REGULAR REPORTS TO THE OPERATING BOARD

11.1 The Board received and noted the following regular reports:
   – Cash Management Annual Update (OB16:51)
   – Advisory Group on Investment Report (OB16:69)
   – Strategic Business Ventures Group Report (OB16:70)

12. MANAGEMENT REPORTING

12.1 The Board received the Monthly Management Reports (MMRs) for December 2016 and January 2017 (OB16:50 and OB16:67).

12.2 In respect of the January MMRs, the Board noted that the University was forecasting that it would exceed its revised budget position for the year by £728k, following actions to mitigate shortfalls on fees and School-specific targets.

13. RESTRUCTURING EXERCISE

13.1 In February, the Board received an update on the Restructuring Exercise within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition (OB16:53) and that the outcome of the Exercise would be fully communicated following completion of the review of lessons learned.

14. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

14.1 The Board received and considered reports from the Capital Programme Management Committee (CPMC) (OB16:48 and OB16:68).

14.2 The Board noted next steps on the proposed Science Teaching Hub and Law School Relocation projects, progress in respect of current institutional capital projects still classified as live, and the ongoing disposal of the Rowett Estate.
14.3 The Board noted that the current depression in the Aberdeen housing market required the University to take a medium to long-term view in its approach to the disposal of Rowett South. Consideration was being given to a range of alternative disposal models and a mix of mainstream housing and affordable housing.

14.4 The Board noted the University’s ambition to pedestrianise large parts of the University campus, with limited vehicular access for residents and car park access only.

PEOPLE

15. STAFFING UPDATES

15.1 The Board received and noted Staffing Updates at the February and March meetings (OB16:54 and OB16:75).

15.2 The reports covered the following areas:

- Equality and Diversity
- Athena Swan
- Staff Development activities
- Technical Staff Review
- National Pay Negotiations 2017/18
- Review of honorary appointments
- Review of promotions procedures
- Lifetime ISA and pension saving
- Health, Wellbeing and Employee Engagement
- Staff Development activities
- Trade Union Act 2016.

16. RECOMMENDED ACTION

16.1 Court is invited to note the items discussed by the Operating Board at its recent meetings.

16.2 Court is invited to approve four Health and Safety policies, which were also received and approved at Partnership, Negotiating and Consultative Committee (PNCC) on 1 March, as follows:

- Fire Safety Policy
- Use of Drones Policy
- Control and Management of Contractors
- Overseas Travel Policy and Guidance

All of the above are available at www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet/.

17. FURTHER INFORMATION

17.1 Further information is available from Ms Ruth MacLure, Clerk to the Operating Board (telephone 01224 273239; email r.m.maclure@abdn.ac.uk)

14 March 2017 Version 1 (Open)
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

REPORTS FROM COURT COMMITTEES AND JOINT COURT-SENATE COMMITTEES

SUMMARY

This paper brings together reports to Court from sub-committees that have met recently. The unconfirmed minutes of all meetings are available at www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet.

This report will be treated as routine business and is not proposed for discussion unless members request otherwise and notify the Clerk one clear day in advance of the meeting.

For Approval

The following Committee reports are included for approval:

13.1 Governance and Nominations Committee

13.2 Partnership, Negotiating & Consultative Committee

For Information

The following Committee reports are included for information:

13.3 Audit Committee

13.4 University Committee on Teaching and Learning

13.5 Student Experience Committee

13.6 Research Policy Committee

Further Information

Further information is available from Mr Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Court, Tel.: 01224 273949 or b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk
1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper reports on issues from the most recent meetings of the Governance and Nominations Committee held on 16 December 2016 and 1 February 2017. The minutes of the meetings are available online at: www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet. The paper includes the following items for approval:

(1) A recommendation to approve a nomination for the ‘Benefactor to the University’ Award; Section 2 and Appendix 1 refer. (In Confidence).
(2) A recommendation to approve a minor change to Resolution No 282 [Procedure for Removal of a Member of Court] to be consistent with new requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act. Section 3 and Appendix 2 refer.

1.2 The paper also reports, for information, on the Committee’s consideration of the following:

- A proposed donation to support a new Chair in Oncology;
- The Committee's consideration of due diligence undertaken regarding a proposal to establish a campus in Rwanda with a commercial partner;
- The Committee’s consideration of emerging ethical issues related to a proposal to establish a campus in Qatar;
- The Committee’s approval on behalf of Court of a University response to a Scottish Government consultation on the draft Gender Representation on Public Boards Bill;
- The Committee's approval of a text on the diversity of Court for inclusion in the University’s Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report. This is a statutory reporting requirement and the full report is enclosed as a separate item on today's agenda.
- An update on the progress of the Court Effectiveness Review;
- A recommendation to seek nominations from Court members for the role of Senior Independent Member;
- A report on research grants and donations to the University of over £500k received in 2016.

1.3 The Committee also considered papers on the transition to the proposed new composition of Court and implications of the new composition for the Committee structure which is enclosed as a separate item as part of today’s agenda.

1.4 Further information may be obtained from Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Governance and Nominations Committee, Tel. 01224 273949 or email: b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk.

For Approval

2 BENEFACCTOR TO THE UNIVERSITY AWARD – IN CONFIDENCE

2.1 The Committee considered by circulation a nomination for the Benefactor to the University Award – nominations enclosed at Appendix 1. The Benefactor to the University Award was established by Court to recognise and thank individuals and organisations that had made an exceptional contribution to the University whether through philanthropy or in other ways. The nomination had been endorsed by the Development Trust's Stewardship Committee prior to consideration by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

2.2 The Committee noted the significant contributions that the nomination had made to the University and that [redacted] had played a leading role as Chair of the [redacted] charity which had been a long term supporter of and a major donor to the University in support of cancer research and equipment. The support of [redacted] in financial terms had amounted to over £3M. The Committee noted that [redacted] had also in a personal capacity been a significant donor to the University and had supported the University in an ambassadorial capacity on a number of
occasions. **Recommendation:** The Committee agreed to endorse a recommendation to Court that receive the Benefactor to the University Award.

3 **AMENDMENT OF RESOLUTION 282 [PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL OF MEMBERS OF COURT]**

3.1 The Committee noted that in 2015 the Court agreed a Policy for the grounds for removal of a member of Court and a Resolution setting out the procedure to be followed when considering the removal of a Court member. The University had reviewed this for compliance with the requirements of the Higher Education (Governance) Act which specified that any such procedures should “ensure that removal can be effected only by a resolution passed by a specified majority of the members of the governing body.” While Resolution No 282 [Procedure for Removal of Members of Court] did specify that any decision must be approved by Court it did not specify the majority required.

3.2 The Committee, therefore, agreed that Resolution 282 be amended to include a requirement that approval of a recommendation to remove a member of Court would require “a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Court present and voting”. This was consistent with the requirement in Court Standing Orders for any change to Standing Orders to “require a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Court present and voting”.

3.3 **Recommendation:** The Court is invited to approve the proposed amendment of Resolution 282 as annotated in appendix 2 and that the statutory consultative process required by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 to amend a resolution be undertaken.

For Information

4 **DONATION TO THE UNIVERSITY**

4.1 The Committee received a paper detailing a proposed donation of £1 million from a local charity, Friends of ANCHOR, in support of cancer research. This was consistent with previously agreed practice that all donations of £1M or more would be automatically referred to the Committee for consideration on behalf of Court prior to their acceptance by the Development Trust and University. The proposed donation from Friends of Anchor would support the establishment of a Friends of ANCHOR named Chair in Oncology for a five year period.

4.2 The Committee noted that the potential reputational risk associated with accepting a gift from Friends of ANCHOR was very low. There was a potential financial risk associated with the University committing to the new Chair and to building a team around this position. It was noted that this risk was potentially more significant but was being mitigated against through the University Development Trust’s campaign planning process. The Committee further noted that acceptance of Friends of ANCHOR’s donation had been approved by the Development Trust’s Stewardship Committee. The Committee also noted that given the restructuring process taking place within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, staff may benefit from clarification that the donation related to an area of investment for the school.

4.3 The Committee agreed to approve acceptance of the proposed gift.

5

5.1

5.2
7 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON DRAFT GENDER REPRESENTATION ON PUBLIC BOARDS BILL

7.1 The Committee received a paper on a Scottish Government consultation on the draft Gender Representation on Public Boards Bill together with the University’s draft response. Due to the timing of the issue of the consultation and the deadline for responses, the Committee was being invited to consider and approve the proposed response on behalf of Court.

7.2 The Committee noted that the Court was included within the scope of the Bill, the proposals of which would require positive action to be taken to redress gender imbalances on public sector boards. The objective of the Bill was for a board to have 50% “of non-executive members’ who are female and 50% who are male. The Bill defined ‘non-executive members’ as being those that are appointed by the board and for universities it excluded staff, elected or externally nominated members. The requirements of the Bill would, therefore, only apply to independent members appointed by Court. The Bill required governing bodies to take ‘appropriate steps’ to encourage applications from the under-represented gender. Where there was a gender imbalance, and where there were two or more ‘equally qualified’ candidates, the governing body would be required to appoint the candidate of the under-represented gender unless there were exceptional circumstances. In discussion, it was noted that while gender balance was an important issue, there was a risk that wider issues of diversity on boards would be compromised by that focus.

7.3 The Committee approved the draft response and agreed that it could be made publicly available by the Scottish Government.

8 DIVERSITY OF COURT: REPORTING IN EQUALITY OUTCOMES AND MAINSTREAMING REPORT

8.1 The Committee received a paper which reported on the introduction of new reporting requirements for universities with regard to the diversity of their governing bodies. These requirements followed amendment by the Scottish Government of some specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The duty included the publication of a report on the progress made by the University in meeting its Equality Outcomes and how it mainstreams equality across its activities. This report was required to be published by the end of April 2017 and covered the period to 2015.

8.2 The Committee noted that the PSED had been extended recently to include additional reporting requirements in relation to the composition and profile of the University Court. The paper outlined the specific issues related to the diversity of Court that the University’s mainstreaming report would be required to include and a draft of the proposed text for inclusion in the report. The Committee approved the proposed text for inclusion in the report and noted that the full report will be submitted to Court for approval in March 2017. This is enclosed as a separate item on today’s agenda.
9 **UPDATE ON EXTERNALLY FACILITATED EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW OF COURT**

9.1 The Committee received a paper which provided an update on the progress of the externally facilitated effectiveness review of Court.

9.2 The Committee discussed the proposed use in the next phase of the review of a 360 degree effectiveness survey of members of Court. In discussion, some members of the Committee expressed reservations regarding the time commitment and process of members of Court evaluating 27 of their peers. It was agreed that the Good Governance Institute should, whether the 360 degree survey was necessary and, if so, how it would be conducted most effectively.

10 **ROLE OF SENIOR INDEPENDENT MEMBER**

10.1 The Committee agreed that nominations for the role of Senior Independent Member, previously approved by Court, should now be sought following the conclusion of the appointment process for the Senior Governor.

11 **REPORT ON RESEARCH GRANTS AND CONTRACTS AWARDS TO THE UNIVERSITY AND DONATIONS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT TRUST**

11.1 The Committee received and noted reports on research grants and contracts awards over £500k that had been either pledged to or received by the University through the Development Trust during 2016.

12 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no immediate resource implications arising from the recommendations for approval in this paper.

13 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

13.1 There are no risk issues arising from the recommendations for approval within this paper.

14 **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

14.1 An impact assessment is not required for the recommendations for approval within this paper.

15 **SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

15.1 There are no matters regarding sustainability or social responsibility arising from the recommendations for approval in this paper.

16 **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

16.1 The Court is invited to approve:

   (1) A recommendation to approve a nomination for the ‘Benefactor to the University’ Award; **Section 2 and Appendix 1 refer. (In Confidence).**

   (2) A recommendation to approve a minor change to Resolution No 282 [Procedure for Removal of a Member of Court] to be consistent with new requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act. **Section 3 and Appendix 2 refer.**

17 **FURTHER INFORMATION**

17.1 Further information is available from Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Governance and Nominations Committee, Tel. 01224 273949 or email: b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk.

[13 March 2017] [version1] [Closed – sections 5 and 6. Part Closed – Section 2 until recipients informed. Nomination Appendices at Section 2 Closed]

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Appendix 2

Note: The amendments to Resolution No 282 are highlighted in red. All other text remains as per the existing Resolution No 282.

Section 1: This section is not a substantive amendment to the existing Resolution No 282 but is required to confirm that Resolution No 282 has been revoked to allow the amendment required.

Section 6: The additional text in red is the amendment required to accord with the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act.

DRAFT RESOLUTION NO X OF 2017
[PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL OF MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY COURT]

After consultation with the Senatus Academicus, the University Court, at its meeting on X 2017, passed the following Resolution:

1 Resolution No 282 of 2015 [Procedure for Removal of Co-opted Members of the University Court] is hereby revoked and replaced with amendments to take account of the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

2 Any proposal to invoke the procedure to remove a member of Court (whether arising under the provisions of Ordinance of the University Court No 134 [Removal of Co-opted Members of Court] or from a breach of the terms of the appointment of any member of Court) shall be submitted in the first instance to the Secretary to the University, who shall consult with the Senior Governor of the Court and, if appropriate, make recommendations to the Governance and Nominations Committee.

3 The Governance and Nominations Committee shall determine prima facie whether a case for consideration of the removal of a member by the Court has been established and advise the Court accordingly.

4 In an instance where the Governance and Nominations Committee decides that prima facie a case for consideration of removal by the Court has been established, the Governance and Nominations Committee shall within seven days of the date of its decision notify in writing the member concerned of the complaint against him or her.

5 The matter shall then be considered by the Governance and Nominations Committee. The member concerned shall have the opportunity to submit a written statement to, and the right to be heard at the meeting of the Committee. Such written statement shall cover only the specific matter of the complaint against the member and shall be provided not later than ten calendar days before the meeting of the Committee. The member concerned shall not be present during the Committee’s further deliberation of its decision.

6 The Governance and Nominations Committee will report its decision to the member concerned and to the Court. A recommendation by the Committee to remove the member from office, will be subject to the approval of Court and will require a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Court present and voting. The member concerned will have the opportunity to submit a written statement to, and to be heard at, the Court meeting where the matter is considered but shall not be eligible to exercise his or her voting rights in respect of the issue and shall not be present during the Court’s further deliberation of its decision. Such written statement shall cover only the specific matter of the complaint against the member and shall be provided not later than ten calendar days before the meeting of the Court.

7 The decision of the Court shall be final.

8 The Resolution shall come into force on the day on which it is passed by the University Court.
1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This paper reports on issues arising from the most recent meeting of the Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee held on 1 March 2017. The draft minutes of the meeting are available at [www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet).

1.2 The University Court is invited to note the report from the Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee and approve the following item:

- Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy

1.3 Further information is available from the Clerk to the Committee, Catherine Cook, HR Specialist Services Partner, email: c.cook@abdn.ac.uk telephone (01224) 273413 or Mrs Debbie Dyker, Director of Human Resources, d.j.dyker@abdn.ac.uk tel 01224 273732.

**For Approval**

2. **CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV) POLICY**

2.1 The Committee received the policy which seeks to formalise the University’s policy on the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) or similar systems. The policy has been drafted to reflect best practice in this area and outlines procedures which comply with appropriate statutory guidance, most notably our institutional responsibilities under the Data Protection At (1998).

2.2 The procedures outlined in the policy have been in use by University Security staff since the policy was initially drafted in 2016. Recent advice has indicated that the policy should now be formally ratified by an appropriately authorised University committee before being made publicly available online. Court is invited to approve the policy, available for review at [www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet).

**For Information**

3. **POLICIES**

3.1 The Committee received the following policies which were also considered and approved by Operating Board and are referred to in that paper for approval by Court:

- Fire Safety Policy
- Control and Management of Contractors
- Use of Drones Policy
- Overseas Travel Policy

4. **TERMS AND CONDITIONS REVIEW**

4.1 The Committee received an update on the review of terms and conditions. The Review was undertaken following the implementation of a Collective Agreement and issues that arose thereafter concerning specific contractual clauses (travel overseas, working hours, duties and Intellectual Property Policy). Agreement has been reached on amendments to clauses other than the Intellectual Property Policy where discussions continue. It was noted that UCU would be recommending a revised Intellectual Property Policy to the next UCU general meeting. It is anticipated that the agreed amendments to all clauses will be submitted to Court in June for approval.
5. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

5.1 An update on the work of the Employee Engagement Group was presented with a draft strategy and action plan. It was noted that discussions continue. It is anticipated that a strategy and action plan will be submitted to Court in June for approval.

6. COURT COMPOSITION

6.1 The Committee noted the revised Court Composition. It was agreed that the Campus Trade Unions would inform the University of their representatives in due course.

7. EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING REPORT

7.1 The Committee considered a draft Equality Mainstreaming Report and further feedback on the report was provided. The Equality Mainstreaming Report is included in papers for Court approval.

8. TRADE UNION ACT

8.1 A paper on the implications of the Trade Union Act was noted. This included the statutory changes concerning balloting introduced with effect from 1 March 2017 (whereby a turnout of at least 50% of members eligible to vote is required for a ballot to be valid). The paper also noted future requirements that will be introduced in respect of monitoring and reporting trade union facilities time and that further discussion with the trades unions will be undertaken once further guidance is published concerning this.

9. STAFF SURVEY

9.1 It was noted that the timing of the next Staff Satisfaction Survey was under review.

10. HEATING ON CAMPUS

10.1 There was discussion around concerns about heating in some buildings and it was agreed that action should be taken to raise awareness of the fault reporting system.

11. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from this paper.

12. RISK MANAGEMENT

12.1 There are no risks arising directly from this paper.

13. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

13.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

14. SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

14.1 There are no issues relating to sustainability or social responsibility arising directly from this paper.

15. RECOMMENDED ACTION

15.1 The University Court is invited to note the report from the Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee and approve the recommendations at section 2.
16. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

16.1 Further information may be obtained from Catherine Cook, Clerk to the Partnership Negotiating and Consultative Committee, (01224) 273564 or c.cook@abdn.ac.uk or Mrs Debbie Dyker, Director of Human Resources, d.j.dyker@abdn.ac.uk, tel 01224 273732.

March 2017
FOI Status (Open)

Catherine Cook
HR Partner

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UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COURT
AUDIT COMMITTEE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper reports on business considered at the most recent meeting of the Audit Committee held on 19 January 2017. The paper is for information. The unconfirmed minutes of this meeting are available at www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet.

1.2 The Audit Committee received two Internal Audit Reports, as detailed at 2 below. Both reports were graded Low Risk overall by the Internal Auditor.

1.3 The Committee maintained an interest in actions taken following the whistleblowing case involving the Aberdeen University Students’ Association (AUSA) and noted that the University had instructed PwC to bring forward a planned follow up review, which was also to address a wider range of matters.

1.5 The Committee received an update from the University on progress in the implementation of previous Internal Audit recommendations.

1.6 The Committee, and for its part approved, the annual Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) return for 2015-16, prior to its submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on 31 January 2017.

1.7 The Committee received two reports of investigations under the Policy and Procedure on Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing), relating to the Dental School and Student Related Information and Data.

1.8 Further information may be obtained from Ms Ruth MacLure, Clerk to the Audit Committee (01224) 273239 or r.m.maclure@abdn.ac.uk.

For Information

2. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

The Audit Committee received and approved Internal Audit Reports, as follows:

2.1 Internal Audit Review of: Remuneration Committee Guidance

2.1.1 The Committee received the Internal Audit Review of Remuneration Committee Guidance from PwC, the Internal Auditor.

2.1.2 The Committee noted that the report had received an overall rating of Low Risk and contained one Low Risk recommendation concerning the need to update the quorum of the Remuneration Committee.

2.2 Internal Audit Review of: Business Continuity Planning

2.2.1 The Committee received the Internal Audit Review of Business Continuity Planning from PwC.

2.2.2 The report had received an overall rating of Low Risk and contained one Medium and one Low Risk recommendation. The Medium Risk finding was that not all Business Continuity Plans had been updated or tested in line with the University’s policy.

2.2.3 The Committee noted the auditor’s opinion that the University was ahead of its peers in the area of Business Continuity Planning.
3. **ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION**

3.1 The Committee noted that the University had continuing concerns in respect of the governance and financial management of the Aberdeen University Students’ Association (AUSA), following the whistleblowing report and review by PwC which the Committee had received in the previous financial year.

3.2 In November 2016, the Committee had requested receipt of the AUSA Accounts at its next meeting. The Committee noted that the AUSA Board of Trustees had received the Accounts as a tabled item at its meeting, with no opportunity to scrutinise or debate the content prior to approval. Further, it was noted that the Board lacked the financial expertise necessary to deliver an informed opinion on the Accounts.

3.3 The Committee received and noted the AUSA Audit Findings Report for the year ended 31 July 2016. The Committee noted that the Director of Finance had concerns in respect of AUSA’s basic financial controls, the schedule of adjustments and VAT issues highlighted in the report. He had discussed these concerns with one of AUSA’s Trustees, the partner at Henderson Loggie responsible for the Audit Findings report, and the recently-appointed AUSA Chief Executive and concluded that there was a basic capability issue within the Association. Subsequent to these discussions, an agency accountant had been appointed (for an initial period of three months) to provide assistance to AUSA, with additional support from the University’s finance team.

3.4 The Committee received a copy of a letter from the University Secretary to the AUSA Chief Executive, outlining the University’s concerns and urging AUSA to action the recommendations within the Audit Findings quickly. The University continued to withhold its disbursement grant to AUSA.

3.5 The Committee noted that it was a statutory requirement under the Education Act 1994 that the Students’ Association be the independent voice of students. However, the University was exploring alternative models, with the assistance of its legal advisers. The Committee also noted that the AUSA Board of Trustees was currently seeking to recruit further independent members to vacancies, with limited success.

3.6 In the light of the above, the Committee noted that the University had asked its Internal Auditors to bring forward the follow up of findings in the previous review of AUSA Corporate and Financial Governance, originally scheduled to take place in March 2017. The Terms of Reference for this review were to be drafted by PwC to address a wider range of matters than in the scope of the original report. The Committee noted that this would be an agenda item at its next meeting.

4. **IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVIOUS INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The Committee received a report from the University on the implementation status of previous Internal Audit recommendations. The Committee noted continuing efforts to drive forward the completion of outstanding actions and requested an update on progress at its next meeting.

5. **TRANSPARENT APPROACH TO COSTING AND FULL ECONOMIC COSTING**

5.1 The Committee received the annual Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) return for 2015-16, prior to its submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on 31 January 2017.

5.2 The Committee noted that TRAC reporting had been updated to reflect changes in the preparation of financial statements due to the implementation of Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 and that procedures had been updated to take account of recommendations within the recent internal audit report.
5.3 The Committee noted that as this was the first return based on FRS102 figures, the 2015/16 return was essentially a pilot to determine whether further changes were required. As a result, Research Councils United Kingdom (RCUK) had agreed that the TRAC cost rates calculated for 2015/16 would not be used. Instead, the 2014/15 rates would be adjusted for indexation and used for a further year.

5.4 The Committee approved the report for submission to the SFC, subject to any amendments required following its further review by the TRAC Steering Group.

6. **WHISTLEBLOWING REPORTS**

6.1 The Committee received two reports of Investigation Under the Policy and Procedure on Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing), relating to the Dental School and Student Related Information and Data.

6.2 The Committee noted that in the case of the first report, relating to allegations of inappropriate behaviour in the Dental School, the Whistleblower had declined to relinquish their anonymity in order to meet with the investigator and it was concluded that the allegations lacked credibility and were without foundation. The investigating officer recommended that no further action be taken.

6.3 The second report focused on the processes in place within the institution for managing personal information and data. Following conclusion of the investigation, the complaint made had been upheld. There was agreement across all parties interviewed (where applicable) as to the circumstances leading to the complaint and steps had already been taken to address those. The Committee noted that a report on the investigation was being finalised and was to be shared subsequently with the complainant. The report included recommendations for future data handling within the University, which would be taken forward with guidance from the University's Data Protection Officer.

6.4 The Committee requested an update on progress of criminal proceedings following the whistleblowing report received at the January 2016 meeting in respect of AUSA corporate and financial governance. It was reported that this matter was ongoing and had not yet reached a conclusion.

7. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no immediate resource implications arising from the content of this paper.

8. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

8.1 Risk Management is considered within the context of each Internal Audit Review. The Committee has a standing responsibility to monitor Risk management.

9. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9.1 Not applicable.

10. **SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

10.1 There are no environmental, ethical or social implications or impacts of this paper.

11. **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

11.1 The Court is invited to note the report of business considered at the most recent meeting of the Audit Committee held on 19 January 2017.
12. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

12.1 Further information may be obtained from Ms Ruth MacLure, Clerk to the Audit Committee (01224) 273239 or r.m.maclure@abdn.ac.uk

3 March 2017 [version 1] [Open]

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REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper provides a short update for information on the main items of business considered by the University Committee on Teaching & Learning (UCTL) at the meeting held on 8 March 2017 which may be of interest to the University Court. These focus on the introduction of a deadline for students requiring Specific Exam Arrangements and Institutionally Verifiable Co-Curricular Activities. The draft Minutes of the meeting are available at www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet.

1.2 This paper is for information. No action is required.

1.3 Further information may be obtained from Rachael Bernard, Acting Academic Registrar (01224) 273388 or r.bernard@abdn.ac.uk.

2. PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A DEADLINE FOR STUDENTS REQUIRING SPECIFIC EXAM ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 The Committee approved the introduction of a deadline for students requesting provisions in examinations, to be introduced for all diets of examinations. The Committee noted that the lack of a formal deadline has resulted in a lack of clarity for both students and staff about what arrangements may be possible, reasonable and manageable, often at very short notice, for forthcoming examination diets.

3. INSTITUTIONALLY VERIFIABLE CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

3.1 The Committee approved the proposal from the Careers Service that both the InternPlus and Leadership Academy be included within the Enhanced Transcript as University accredited activities from September 2016. The Committee further approved the inclusion of the role of Athena SWAN Self-assessment Team student member as a recognised activity from September 2016.

4. GRADUATION DATES

4.1 The Committee noted the dates and allocations of students for the June 2017 Graduation Ceremonies which had been approved by way of Convener’s action.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct resource implications associated with this paper.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 There are no risk management implications associated with this paper.
8. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

8.1 Not applicable.

9. **SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

9.1 Not applicable.

10. **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

10.1 The Court is invited to note the contents of this report.

11. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

11.1 Further information may be obtained from Professor Peter McGeorge (01224) 272248 or mcgeorge@abdn.ac.uk or Dr Rachael Bernard (01224) 273388 or r.bernard@abdn.ac.uk.

[13 March] [version 1] [Part Closed – Section 3 commercial in confidence]

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UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COURT
STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
1.1 This paper provides a short update for information on the main items of business considered by the Student Experience Committee (SEC) at its meeting on 15 February 2017. These focus on:
   i) Online Learning; and
   ii) Health, Wellbeing and Safety matters.

1.2 The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting are available at www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet.

1.3 This paper is for information. No action is required.

1.4 Further Information may be obtained from Christina Cameron, tel: (01224) 274189 or email c.cameron@abdn.ac.uk.

For Information

2. ONLINE LEARNING
2.1 The Committee received a presentation from Dr Gillian Mackintosh, Academic Registrar, on Online Learning.

2.2 Following discussion, members of the Committee agreed to provide Dr Mackintosh with information on work undertaken by other groups in relation to supporting online learners. In addition, the Committee agreed to support work with alumni to support online learners.

3. HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SAFETY
3.1 The Committee received and considered an update on the Health, Wellbeing and Safety policy.

4. DIRECTORATES OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND STUDENT LIFE, AND THE ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION
4.1 The Committee noted the regular update reports of the Directorates of Student Life and Academic Affairs, and also that of AUSA.

4.2 The Committee recognised the excellent fundraising achievements of student James Huxley-Beavis who had raised in excess of £44,000, and of the Sports Union during Movember 2016 where almost £23,000 was raised.

5. MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE REMIT AND COMPOSITION
5.1 The Committee received and approved an updated remit and composition for the Military Education Committee.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
6.1 Not applicable

7. RISK MANAGEMENT
7.1 Not applicable

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
8.1 Not applicable
9. **Sustainability & Social Responsibility**

9.1 There are no environmental, ethical or social implications or impacts of this paper.

10. **Recommended Action**

10.1 The Court is invited to note the business discussed at the February 2017 meeting of the Student Experience Committee.

11. **Further Information**

11.1 Further Information, including copies of the reports mentioned above, may be obtained from Christina Cameron tel: (01224) 274189 or email c.cameron@abdn.ac.uk.

Christina Cameron
Clerk to the Student Experience Committee
2 March 2017 (Open)

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper provides a summary of the key items considered by the University's Research Policy Committee at meetings which took place on 8 March 2017. This report is for information only.

1.2 Additional information is available from the minutes of the meetings, available online at www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet

1.3 Further information may be obtained in the first instance from Marlis Barraclough (Senior Policy Advisor; Research & Innovation), Clerk to the University Research Policy Committee, tel: (01224) 273787 or email m.barraclough@abdn.ac.uk.

2. RESEARCH APPLICATIONS AND AWARDS, RESEARCH INCOME & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

2.1 The Research Policy Committee received the research applications and awards data for the 2nd quarter of the financial year 2016/17, showing a general increase across the institution.

2.2 Across life sciences and medicine, the value of applications reduced slightly, but awards exceeded those achieved in the 2nd quarter in 2015/16, indicating higher success rates. For physical sciences and engineering, all three Schools increased the value of RCUK applications, largely due to applications to the RCUK’s Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). One of these has been unsuccessful, and we await the funding decision on a second GCRF application. The institution has received a large award relating to the TauRX project, showing as £10m under ‘Other Overseas Income’ and split mainly between the Schools of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition and Natural & Computing Sciences.

2.3 For social sciences and humanities, applications have increased, however, awards have not yet followed through at the same level. Some Schools (including Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture; Law; Business School) have increased the value of their RCUK applications.

2.4 The Committee also received the research income report and order book for the 2nd quarter of the financial year 2016/17, along with the Monthly Management Report for the end of January 2017. It projected an outturn of £61m for research grants and contracts income, slightly ahead of the budgeted £60.4m. The year to date actual for indirect cost contribution (ICC) is ahead of budget by £1,158k thanks to one-off adjustments relating to a number of completed research grants.

2.5 The institutional order book is the value of live research grants and contracts spread across financial years. At the end of the 2nd quarter of 2016/17, committed spend was £3m (or 6%) ahead of that committed at the same time 2015/16. The combined value of the order book for the next 5 years at the end of the 2nd quarter 2016/17 is 14% larger than that recorded for the same time period in 2015/16.

2.6 The Committee noted the information on knowledge exchange activities. It received an update on the CityDeal, a regional initiative with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, the Robert Gordon University, Scottish Enterprise and Opportunity North East (ONE). The City Deal provides opportunities for industrial engagement through projects that address industry needs and seeks to contribute to the economic development of the region through new job and company creation. The Committee noted that the University of Aberdeen had submitted 12 project proposals to the Oil and Gas Technology Centre (OGTC) Solution Centre under the CityDeal, and 9 had been accepted for further consideration. The University is currently in discussion.
with CityDeal partners about the setting up of Centres of Excellence, the first of which is likely to be around decommissioning and late life asset management.

2.7 The Committee received a report on the University's spin-out activity for financial years 2014-15 and 2015-16. In 2015/16 the University has overseen the successful creation of 4 spin out companies, with all companies launched with start-up capital. For 2014/15 and 2015/16, the sale of shares in companies yielded £3.13m for the University. Analysis of the Higher Education – Business Community Interaction Survey (HEBSCI) 2014/15 which publishes sectoral knowledge exchange metrics shows that Aberdeen staff related spin outs for that year (3) contributed 9% to the Scottish spin out numbers, but 51% of external investment (at £113m), and 11.6% of firms remaining active (Scottish comparators). The 2015/16 sectoral knowledge exchange metrics have not been published yet.

3. SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL: INDICATIVE FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT 2017/18

3.1 The Committee noted that the Scottish Funding Council had maintained overall funding levels for research, knowledge exchange and postgraduate students at 2016/17 levels. The institutional REG grant is slightly reduced (-2%). The 2017/18 REG is the first without transitional funding relief applied after REF2014 was announced. The transitional funding relief was applied to the formulaic element of the REG which takes into account the volume of staff returned to REF and the quality profiles their research achieved. The University's grant performance over 2012/13, 13/14 and 14/15 further contributes to the reduction. Around 30% of our REG grant depends on Aberdeen’s share of grant income within Scotland, and strong grant performance can lead to an increase in this funding element.

4. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

4.1 The Committee discussed the proposed institutional response to the funding councils’ consultation on the next Research Excellence Framework (REF) for the assessment of research in UK higher education institution. The proposals for the next REF seek to build on the first REF conducted in 2014 and to incorporate the principles identified in Lord Stern’s Independent Review of the REF. The institutional response reflects the views expressed during consultation meetings with School Directors of Research and REF Unit of Assessment leads, as well as discussions with the funding councils and other higher education institutions in the UK.

4.2 The response broadly welcomes the proposals, but seeks clarification on a number of issues where we believe that there are more practicable and efficient solutions. We argue strongly in favour of retaining the ability to present our research in a coherent way, showcasing interdisciplinary and challenge-led research where possible.

4.3 The Committee noted the possible implications of the measures proposed for the University of Aberdeen and the UK higher education sector more generally. If implemented, the measures would enable research intensive institutions to be more selective in terms of outputs and impacts, and would require teaching focused institutions to submit significantly larger numbers of outputs and impacts. This could increase the polarisation of the sector and research funding in the UK.

4.4 The institutional response to the consultation document is due to be discussed and finalised by the University Management Group on 13th March, in time for the submission deadline on 17th March 2017.

4.5 The Committee received an update on the institutional REF preparations and noted that detailed discussions with Heads of School and Directors of Research for each School are scheduled to take place later in March 2017.

5. GRADUATE SCHOOL UPDATE

5.1 The Committee noted that agreement in principle had been reached by the Graduate School Steering Group on the proposed structure and function of a University-wide Graduate School, led by the Dean of the Graduate School, Professor Judith Masthoff and supported by the Graduate School Manager, Dr Lucy Leiper. The proposal was further discussed with Heads of
School, and will be finalised following discussion by senior management. The Committee noted that the first University-wide induction events had taken place in February, with further events taking place in October. These complement School-specific training and afford new postgraduate students opportunities for networking.

5.2 The Committee also noted that the Dean and the Manager of the Graduate School were coordinating submissions to the Natural Environment Research Council and the Leverhulme Trust for doctoral cohort funding.

6. **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH RESEARCH REPORT**

6.1 The Committee received a report by the Public Engagement with Research Unit. It noted that Dr Ken Skeldon, who established and led the Unit since 2008, would be leaving the University of Aberdeen at the end of March to take on a position at the Sangster Institute in Cambridge. The Committee formally recorded its gratitude to Dr Skeldon and commended the extremely valuable contribution of the PERU team to the institutional research environment which had made the University of Aberdeen a leader on public engagement with research within the UK sector and internationally.

7 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Not applicable.

8 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

8.1 The risks associated with research are described in STRA_2016-07 which was approved by Operating Board and Court in June 2016. The introduction of the Grants Academy is listed among the mitigating actions on that risk register. The review of the Research Governance Handbook, provision of online training and Schools ethics health checks contribute to high standards of research ethics and integrity.

9. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9.1 Participation in the Grants Academy by gender will be monitored through the Research Policy Committee, along with application/awards and success rates by gender.

10. **SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

10.1 Not applicable.

11. **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

11.1 Court is invited to note the information provided.

12. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

12.1 Further information is available from Marlis Barraclough (Senior Policy Advisor; Research & Innovation), Clerk to the University Research Policy Committee, tel: (01224) 273787 or email m.barraclough@abdn.ac.uk.

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Marlis Barraclough
Clerk to the University Research Policy Committee
9 March 2017 (Open)
UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COURT
ROUTINE BUSINESS REPORT

SUMMARY

This report brings together items of business that are to be considered as routine business for approval or for information.

This report will be treated as routine business and is not proposed for discussion unless members request otherwise and notify the Clerk one clear day in advance of the meeting.

For Approval

The items which are for approval are:

14.1 Composition of Senate Ordinance and Resolution
14.2 SFC Outcome Agreement
14.3 Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report
14.4 Senate Report

For Information

The items which are for information are:

14.5 Report on Development Trust Activity
14.6 Universities’ Accounts Comparisons 2015/16
14.7 Management Report

(Separately enclosed)

Further Information

Further information is available from Mr Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Court, Tel. 01224 273949 or b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk
1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 In December 2016, the Court received recommendations arising from the effectiveness review of Senate which proposed amendments to its composition and to its electoral procedures for determining the number of Senators each School elected. The Court approved the recommendations and on the recommendation of the Senate, approved a draft Ordinance, ‘Amendment to the Composition of the Senatus Academicus’ and a draft Resolution, ‘Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus’, which were required to effect these changes subject to the further consultation required by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 being undertaken.

1.2 That process of consultation with the Business Committee of the General Council and for public display for the required statutory period has now been completed and no substantive comments on, or changes to, the draft Ordinance or draft Resolution have been received. Copies of the Ordinance and Resolution are enclosed. Further information on the detail of the proposed changes which Court received in December are available on request.

1.3 The Court is, therefore, now invited to:

(i) formally approve the Ordinance ‘Amendment to the Composition of the Senatus Academicus’ for submission to Privy Council; **Appendix 1**

(ii) approve the Resolution ‘Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus’. **Appendix 2**

1.4 Further information is available from Dr Rachael Bernard Acting Academic Registrar r.bernard@abdn.ac.uk, 01224 273388

2. **BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

2.1 A number of recommendations arose from an Effectiveness Review of Senate which were approved by Senate in February 2016. Whilst many of these recommendations have already been implemented, some remained to be addressed. These are taken forward through the proposals in this paper.

2.2 The amendments which the draft Ordinance and Resolution reflect were considered and approved by Court on the recommendation of Senate in December 2016. In summary they are as follows. The proposals follow changes to College structures and *ex officio* roles. The *ex officio* membership of Senate required to be revised to align with these new structures and the membership elected by Schools required to be reviewed to reflect the restructuring of the School structure. The draft Resolution incorporates further changes to ensure that the model used to determine the number of elected Senator seats per School is changed to be based on a combination of staff and student numbers rather than just staff. The proposals also address a recommendation of the Senate Effectiveness Review that the student membership of Senate should be reviewed to reflect changes in the student populations, such as taught postgraduate, research postgraduate and international students.

3. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no resource implications associated with this paper.
4. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

4.1 The proposed changes will ensure compliance with the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance which is a condition of grant and that recommendations to improve the effectiveness of Senate are implemented. The Senate is the University's key academic body and as such it is critical that it works as effectively as possible.

5. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The Senate Effectiveness Review recommended that Senate should have a gender balance of at least 40% of each gender. At the time of the Effectiveness Review, the gender balance of Senate taking account of both elected and *ex officio* membership (both staff and student) was 37% female. The Review in particular stated “a specific goal of achieving at least 40% of each gender by end of session 2017/18, by publishing its current composition against recognised indicators, by encouraging nominations from under-represented groups, by reviewing the extent to which Senate’s population reflects the population of the University and by reviewing eligibility criteria for membership.”

5.2 In regard to achieving gender balance as set out by the Effectiveness Review, this requires to be managed through the elected membership. The Senate is, therefore, in the process of considering options as to how this can be addressed within its procedures.

6. **SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

6.1 Not applicable

7. **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

7.1 The Court is, therefore, now invited to:

(i) formally approve the Ordinance ‘Amendment to the Composition of the Senatus Academicus’ for submission to Privy Council; **Appendix 1**.

(ii) approve the Resolution ‘Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus’. **Appendix 2**

8. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

8.1 Further information is available from Dr Rachael Bernard Acting Academic Registrar r.bernard@abdn.ac.uk, 01224 273388

[10 March 2017] [Open]

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WHEREAS the University Court of the University of Aberdeen deems it expedient to amend the composition of the Senatus Academicius of the University of Aberdeen designated in section 5 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858 and Section 7 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 as amended by University Court Ordinance No. 138 (Amendment to the Composition for the Senatus Academicus) and University Court Ordinance No 140 (Amendment to the Student Membership of the Senatus Academicus):

THEREFORE the University Court of the University of Aberdeen in exercise of its powers under section 3, and paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 2 to, the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 and of all other powers enabling it in that behalf, hereby statutes and ordains:

1. Ordinance of the University Court of the University of Aberdeen No. 138 (Amendment to the Composition of the Senatus Academicus) and No 140 (Amendment to the Student Membership of the Senatus Academicus) are hereby revoked.

2. Notwithstanding the provision of section 5 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1858 and section 7 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, the membership of the Senatus Academicus of the University of Aberdeen shall comprise:
   
   (a) *ex officio* the Principal, all Vice-Principals and Heads of College, all Heads of School, all Deans, Representatives of the Quality Assurance Committee and the University Librarian;
   
   (b) an elected number of Professors, Readers and Lecturers and research staff of equivalent status not already *ex officio* members as specified in Section 2(a) of this Ordinance and equal to not less than twice the total number of these *ex officio* members; the elected members shall continue to be so elected in the manner set forth in University Ordinance No. 111 [Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus];
   
   (c) the Student President of Aberdeen University Students’ Association, Education Officer, the School Conveners of the said Association and three postgraduate representatives, provided (i) the said Student President, Education Officer and School Conveners have been elected by a poll of all students in the University or by a poll of all students at undergraduate level who have been assigned by the Senatus Academicus to the appropriate School, respectively, and (ii) the said postgraduate representatives have been elected by a poll of all postgraduate students registered on programmes taught in Arts, Humanities & Business, and Science, Engineering & Medicine and research students) and do not hold an appointment at or above the grade of Lecturer or equivalent in the University of Aberdeen; Declaring that the said student members may be excluded from meetings of the Senatus Academicus on occasions when this is deemed appropriate by a majority of the remaining members."

3. If, at the date on which a person’s membership of the Senatus would otherwise terminate he or she is acting as an Assessor from the Senatus on the University Court of the University of Aberdeen in terms of section 2 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, his or her membership of the Senatus shall be extended to cover the remainder of his or her current term of appointment as an Assessor on the said University Court.

4. The Ordinance shall not affect the rights of those persons presently members of the Senatus Academicus by virtue of section 7 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966.
5. This Ordinance shall come into force on the date on which it is approved by Her Majesty in Council.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF these presents are sealed with the Common Seal of the University Court of the University of Aberdeen and subscribed on behalf of the said Court in terms of the Requirements of Writing (Scotland) Act 1995.
RESOLUTION NO  OF 2016

This Resolution shall come force on with immediate effect after it is passed by the University Court.

[Tenth Amendment to Schedule A to University Court Ordinance No. 111
(Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus)]

After consultation with the Senatus Academicus, the University Court of the University of Aberdeen at its meeting on <> passed the following Resolution:

1. In terms of Section 1(b)(i) and (ii) of University Court Ordinance No. 111 (Election of Readers and Lecturers to the Senatus Academicus), paragraph 1 of Schedule A (Regulations for the Conduct of Elections) to the said Ordinance, as amended by University Court Resolutions Nos. 27 of 1970, 44 of 1972, 64 of 1973, 139 of 1990, 196 of 1996, 223 of 2000, 245 of 2006, 252 of 2007 and 260 of 2008, is hereby further amended as follows:

(i) Voting shall take place in the following constituencies, which shall comprise the Professors, Readers and Lecturers, including Clinical staff and the holders of research and academic-related posts of equivalent status, who at the time of election are not members of the Senatus Academicus ex officio, in those Schools and academic Units assigned to the various Colleges by the University Court on the recommendation of the Senatus Academicus in terms of Resolution No. 213 of 2003, together with any other Professor, Reader, Lecturer or holder of a research or academic-related post of equivalent status not otherwise included in a constituency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Constituency</th>
<th>Number of Seats allotted to Constituency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) University of Aberdeen Business School</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) School of Divinity, History and Philosophy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) School of Education</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) School of Language, Literature, Visual Culture &amp; Music</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) School of Law</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) School of Social Science</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>(g) School of Biological Sciences</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) School of Medicine, Medical Sciences &amp; Nutrition</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) School of Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j) School of Engineering</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k) School of Geosciences</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(l) School of Natural &amp; Computing Sciences</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) The number of seats allotted to individual constituencies (a) to (l) above may be varied by the University Court on the recommendation of the Senatus Academicus.

2. Notwithstanding Sections 5 and 6 of Schedule A to the above Ordinance, the system of voting to be followed within each constituency shall be the Single Transferable Vote, as specified by the current rules of the Electoral Reform Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

3. Noting in this Resolution shall affect the continued membership of the Senatus Academicus for the remainder of their term of office of any person who, at the date when this Resolution comes into force, is already a member of the Senatus Academicus in terms of University Court Ordinance No. 111.

4. This Resolution shall come into force from and after the date on which it is passed by the University Court.
OUTCOME AGREEMENT WITH SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL 2017/18-2019/20

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper is to update University Court on progress towards negotiation of the University’s 2017/2018-2019/20 Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

1.2 The University is required to develop an Outcome Agreement with the SFC for the next three years (2017/18-2019/20) and to submit a final version of Agreement to the Council for their approval by 31 March 2016.

1.3 The final draft Outcome Agreement is included as Appendix A. The document includes a number of case studies (embedded in to the text) and is also accompanied by an annex of targets (see also paragraph 4.8) included as Appendix B.

1.4 Court is invited to review the draft Agreement and to approve its submission to the Scottish Funding Council.

1.5 Further information is available from Dr Hulda Sveinsdottir, Director of Planning (hulda.sveinsdottir@abdn.ac.uk, ext. 3792) or Anne Buckle, Head of Strategic Planning (a.buckle@abdn.ac.uk; ext. 3943).

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Outcome Agreements between universities and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) were introduced in 2012-13 as part of the Scottish Government’s Spending Review. They set out what an institution plans to deliver in return for their funding from SFC and are developed through a dialogue with our allocated SFC Outcome Agreement Management Team and form part of the conditions of SFC funding.

2.2 The University has submitted annual reports in the past but is moving to a three-year Outcome Agreement cycle as preferred by the SFC this year, covering the period 2017/18-2019/20.

2.3 The SFC expects institutions to deliver on the outcomes set out in the Agreements and, when considering progress, will establish evidence of under-delivery from a combination of the statistical data available, from the progress reported by institutions and from information provided by the SFC’s Outcome Agreement Manager and key stakeholders. If statistical evidence suggests under-delivery, the SFC may take action to establish an improvement plan, reduce or recover funding, or apply a penalty. The language used in SFC’s guidance document around possible reductions in funding or penalties has been strengthened from previous years, and is thought to indicate a tightening of sanctions around under-delivery against Outcome Agreements.

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 The Outcome Agreement forms part of the conditions of the University’s SFC grant funding and as such, has clear strategic importance to the University.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 The University is now moving to a three-year Outcome Agreement cycle for the first time and work has been ongoing since the SFC published its guidance document on 5 October.
4.2 The Outcome Agreement process continues to emphasise the following key areas:

- Support to students with protected characteristics (including deprivation, gender, age, ethnicity, disability and care leavers)
- High quality learning and teaching
- World-leading research
- Innovation in the economy, and
- Sustainability.

4.3 However, this year’s guidance also notes an increased emphasis on the following cross-cutting themes and priorities:

- Partnership working and collaboration
- Equality and diversity, including the new requirement for equality impact assessments to be carried out on Outcome Agreements
- The development of a process for identifying and supporting students with care experience
- Gender, including the development of action plans to tackle gender imbalances at institutional, subject and board levels
- Development of institutional British Sign Language Plans
- Increased reflection on aspirations around social and cultural impact
- Responding to skills needs
- Gaelic
- Employer engagement with the curriculum
- Monitoring of positive destinations for graduates and entry into professional occupations
- New national aspirations for widening access, with raised targets
- Incorporation of the University Innovation Fund Scheme

4.4 A number of new measures of progress have been introduced in this cycle:

- In addition to monitoring of 20-40% most deprived backgrounds, aspirations for recruitment of Scotland-domiciled UG entrants from the 20% most deprived backgrounds will also be measured
- In addition to Scotland-domiciled graduates entering positive destinations, the SFC will now monitor the number of Scotland-domiciled graduates entering professional occupations.
- Measures on charity and European Commission income have been dropped and instead universities are asked to set out aspirations to grow their total research income from all sources.
- Measures of annual capital and maintenance spend on estates and buildings as proportion of value of the estate has been dropped. Instead, institutions should reflect on how they ensure an effective and sustainable estate in their commentary on wider sustainability and the learning and research environment.

4.5 Meetings have been held with internal stakeholders to develop the narrative for the report and to identify targets for the next three years. Planning staff also met with the SFC Outcome Agreement Team on 31 October to discuss the agreement in detail, in particular key changes and additions. The Council have noted that as well as setting targets and identifying key activities in priority areas, providing examples of best practice and showcasing our successes in the Funding Council’s priority areas would be very much welcomed.

4.6 Following submission to SFC of the initial draft of the Outcome Agreement in December 2016, feedback was received indicating that the Council were generally happy with the Agreement, but giving specific areas for further focus. These items of feedback have all now been actioned and are reflected in the current draft.

4.7 A consultation process was carried out within the University as part of the development process with the campus trade unions and the Students’ Association. Feedback received from the unions and AUSA has also now been incorporated into the draft at Appendix A.

4.8 For this Outcome Agreement cycle, SFC have introduced a proforma annex to be used by institutions in developing and monitoring Outcome Agreement targets. A copy of this draft annex can be found at Appendix B.
4.9 An Equality Impact Assessment initial screening has been completed for the Outcome Agreement and is currently with HR for review.

4.10 The full timeline for the Outcome Agreement can be seen in table 1. Following submission of the finished Outcome Agreement at the end of March, we anticipate receiving funding allocation decisions in April 2017.

**Table 1: Timeline for Outcome Agreement development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Outcome Agreement 2017-2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05/10/2016</td>
<td>Guidance published by SFC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/10/2016</td>
<td>Meeting with SFC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/11/2016</td>
<td>Consultation with key stakeholders starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/11/2016</td>
<td>First draft of the Outcome Agreement submitted to UMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/12/2016</td>
<td>Report to Court on the Outcome Agreement process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/12/2016</td>
<td>First draft of Outcome Agreement discussed by SMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/12/2016</td>
<td>First draft of Outcome Agreement to be submitted to SFC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2017</td>
<td>Comments on draft Agreement received from SFC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2017</td>
<td>Consultation with stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/03/2017</td>
<td>Final Outcome Agreement submitted to UMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/03/2017</td>
<td>Final Outcome Agreement submitted to University Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/03/2017</td>
<td>Final Outcome Agreement submitted to SFC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>SFC Council makes funding allocation decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2017</td>
<td>Outcome Agreement process for 2017-18 concluded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The University receives around 35% of its core funding from the SFC. Under-delivery against key targets in our Outcome Agreements may have an impact on our funding from SFC, in terms of penalties being applied, and impact on future funding.

6. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 Under-delivery against key priorities within the framework for Outcome Agreements may lead to financial sanctions being imposed by the Scottish Funding Council and may impact on future funding, and its response to requests for an appropriate share of additional funded places or strategic funding. The recommendations contained in this paper attempt to mitigate this risk.

7. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 Full achievement of Outcome Agreement targets against national measures around widening access, admissions processes, gender balance and support of students with protected characteristics will enhance the equality and diversity of the University community.

8. **SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

8.1 Full achievement of Outcome Agreement targets against national measures around carbon footprint reduction, widening access, support of students with protected characteristics and engagement with business and industry will help improve the sustainability and social responsibility of the University.
9. **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

9.1 Court is invited to review the draft Agreement and to approve its submission to the Scottish Funding Council.

10. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

10.1 Further information is available from Dr Hulda Sveinsdottir, Director of Planning (hulda.sveinsdottir@abdn.ac.uk, ext. 3792) or Anne Buckle, Head of Strategic Planning (a.buckle@abdn.ac.uk; ext. 3943).

Anne Buckle, Head of Strategic Planning
[13 March 2017] [version 1] [Open]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board/Committee</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previously considered by</td>
<td>University Management Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further approval required</td>
<td>Court</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
University Of Aberdeen

Outcome Agreement with the
Scottish Funding Council
2017/18 – 2019/2020

Foreword

[to be completed]
Professor Sir Ian Diamond
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Statement from the Student President

[to be completed]
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Introduction

1. This is the University of Aberdeen’s three-year Outcome Agreement (OA), covering the period 2017-2020. This document addresses the requirements set out in the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidance for 2017-18 to 2019-20 (SFC/GD/22/2016) and reflect the commitments set out in the University’s Strategic Plan for 2015-2020.

2. The University of Aberdeen’s Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council sets out the University’s commitment to delivery of its strategic objectives in line with the Scottish Government priorities. The Agreement is intended to help the University demonstrate its contribution to the Scottish Government’s priorities as set out in the Scottish Economic Strategy and the annual Programme for Government in return for public investment. The process is intended to complement and support the University’s strategic ambitions.

3. The Agreement builds on commitments made in previous plans and addresses the key changes introduced by the SFC for 2017/18-2020 and has been developed through consultation with staff, students, the Students’ Association and staff unions.

4. The University introduced a new Strategic Plan for 2015-2020 which is supported by ambitious strategic and operational plans by all academic Schools. The ambitions set out in our new plan inform this Outcome Agreement.

5. The University’s Outcome Agreement for 2017-20 is structured around the three key themes of the University Strategic Plan and refers to the Funding Council’s priorities within each section. A summary of the University’s milestones and targets for the period is available at the Annex.

6. The University remains concerned about the inequity of the arrangements that the SFC used as a basis for removing RUK funding and the way in which it plans to deal with PGT student funding, and has raised this several times with the Council in the past. It is our hope that the Funding Council will review these arrangements as a matter of urgency.

7. The University notes that the Outcome Agreement for 2017-2020 has been drafted at a time of great uncertainty in the UK Higher Education sector. Britain is due to leave the European Union during the period of the Outcome Agreement and it is, as yet, unknown what impact the exit will have on the Higher Education sector in the UK. In addition, Scottish Government funding is under severe pressure and national immigration targets present challenges to student recruitment. Should the political or financial framework change significantly in the next three years as a result of direct or indirect political changes, the University reserves the right to revise this Agreement to ensure that the targets and aspirations put forward remain realistic and achievable.
Executive Summary

Driven by the University’s Strategic Plan 2015-2020 which is founded on the principles of equality, diversity and equal opportunities, the University is committed to embedding these principles into the foundations of the institution and the people who make us who we are. Over the Outcome Agreement period the University will continue to enhance our current widening participation and outreach projects, ensuring their relevance to the particular challenges facing North East Scotland, as well as introduce new initiatives ensuring that the University is accessible to all.

As people are the basis for our success, the University will continue to implement best practice procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff. A Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy will be embedded over the Outcome Agreement Period, along with additional policies to further support and enhance equality and diversity. The University will continue its engagement with gender equality initiatives including Athena Swan and to ensure full compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The University is committed across its capital programmes to the principles of sustainability, and in this Outcome Agreement we aspire to reach a target of 26,478 tonnes CO2e per annum. The opening, in August 2015, of the new Rocking Horse Nursery, saw the University showcase the first fully certified Passivhaus building at a Scottish University, demonstrating the University’s commitment across its capital programmes to the principles of sustainable estate development.

Ensuring our graduates are equipped with the skills they need to thrive in the workplace or in further study, and can meet the needs of employers, is a core value of the University. Innovative curriculum development, with input and engagement from industry will ensure programmes are developed and enhanced to meet employability needs, also in line with SFC key priorities.

Continuing to grow the University of Aberdeen as an international hub, providing students with access to language skills and opportunities to study abroad will remain a priority. Simultaneously Aberdeen remains committed to ensuring that Gaelic language and culture has a sustainable future.

Ensuring our students are supported in completing their degree outcome is a top priority for the University, and various activities supporting retention and attainment are underway and will continue to be developed during the span of this Outcome Agreement.

Building on our achievements from REF2014, the University will work towards its REF2021 submission during the Outcome Agreement timeframe. We will work on ensuring we provide an environment and culture where our researchers thrive in order to ensure that they can produce the highest quality outputs. All levels of researchers, including our PhD students, will receive dedicated support and advice via a range of structures and policies, including Academic Line Managers, Schools and the Research Development Team.

Our impact will grow, both in terms of knowledge transfer and exchange, with projects such as the City Deal offering opportunities within Aberdeen and the region, and reaching out further to industry nationally and internationally.

The University of Aberdeen will share its knowledge and engage with the general public, providing unique insights, and will create impact beyond academia, that has the power to change the world we live in today.
1 People

This section links to the following SFC priorities:

Priority 1: Widening Access; Priority 5: High-performing institutions:
- Address under-representation from protected characteristic and socio-economic groups, including students from areas of deprivation, carers and those with care experience
- Maximise opportunities for progression from college
- Support learners from disadvantaged and under-represented groups
- Promote access to high demand courses and professions
- Address gender imbalances in programmes, eliminate discrimination and promote equality and diversity in all our activities
- Continuous improvements in the quality of university governance
- Demonstrate enhanced sustainability

University of Aberdeen Strategic Goals
- To enhance further our caring culture of belonging and collegiality in the community of staff, students and alumni, focusing on excellence realising full potential.
- To attract and retain staff and students to a globally significant international institution strengthening capacity and excellence, in Aberdeen or another University location.
- To continue to foster a positive University culture in order that all are fully engaged and committed to our future and to be champions of Equality and Diversity.

The University’s ambition is to be a globally significant international institution which is open and inclusive, embracing the ethos of equality and diversity, and working in close collaboration with the local community to enhance the economic and cultural development of our region.

1.1 Widening Participation

In seeking to attract applications from students with excellent academic potential, the University of Aberdeen has a long-standing commitment to widening participation and to promoting wider access to Higher Education. As an institution, we aim to create an outstanding and inclusive educational environment, to ensure every student has the opportunity to reach their potential. We try to raise aspirations and thus improve access to Higher Education, particularly for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. As part of this commitment, the University aims to increase the number and proportion of Scottish UG entrants from the 20%-40% most deprived postcodes over the period of the Outcome Agreement, with 17% of those entrants coming from the 40% most deprived postcodes by 2019/20. We also aim, over the period of the Outcome Agreement, to increase the proportion of our Scottish-domiciled entrants with declared disabilities to 15% and to maintain our current levels of Scottish-domiciled entrants who are over 21 and from BME backgrounds at 18% and 8.5% respectively.

We work with individuals, primary and secondary schools, and further education colleges to support learners at every stage of their journey. Our work is centred around a number of initiatives aimed at different audiences which we will continue throughout the lifetime of the Agreement. In particular, we work very closely with our local target schools which consistently have low rates of progression to Higher Education (including SHEP schools), building strong relationships with the schools’ guidance staff to help them identify pupils who may show academic promise but may not have the academic grades to support this. These pupils are then given an alternative UCAS offer based on progression into undergraduate study through the Summer School, which ensures they are given the additional support throughout their studies. Over the next three years we will continue to strengthen these links with the aim of 6.5% of our Scotland-domiciled UG entrants coming from SHEP schools by 2019/20.

In addition, the Widening Participation (WP) Team, rather than the Home Recruitment Team, represents the University at events such as Target Schools Career Events and Parents Evenings.
This means that the team which has the most experience in dealing with disadvantaged applicants is available in person before the pupil has even applied and this support continues once they commence their degree programme. A WP representative also attends the new Parents’ and Applicants Information Evenings which are being held across Scotland.

As part of our work with the Aberdeen City Virtual Headteacher, an evening Homework Club was formed staffed by a member of the WP Team but with a lot of support from student volunteers. This is about to be rolled out to all of our local target schools, and once again we will be utilising our Guidance contacts within the schools to identify pupils who they feel would benefit from this additional resource.

Through our work in the REACH/AHDP (Access to High Demand Professions) national project and our in-house Aim4Uni initiative, the WP Team has built up very strong relationships with all of our target schools, with the schools approaching us for advice and information regarding Higher Education for their pupils. Our local target schools are all 13 SHEP schools in the local area, plus one other school that has previously had SHEP rates of progression. We also work with 30 schools as part of the REACH initiative. Through the REACH programme, we work closely with target schools in the region to identify and raise aspirations of students with the potential to study high demand courses such as Medicine or Law. We run a range of activities with these schools in Aberdeen, Inverness and Elgin to support these students, including mock interviews for potential medical students (using the same multiple mini interview or MMI process as used in our admissions procedures for Medicine), sheriff court visits for potential Law students and the opportunity to shadow a current student to give greater insight in to what it is like to study these subjects. Students from the REACH programme are guaranteed an interview for Medicine, and admissions selectors in our Law School work closely with the REACH programme.

We look forward to continuing to work with the REACH programme through the upcoming funding bid and potential expansion in to other subject areas, and we will continue to work with schools identified by the REACH programme in future.

The University’s Widening Participation Team within the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service (SRAS) works very closely with AspireNorth, an information service for young people providing information about progression routes into Higher Education. For example, Aberdeen’s Widening Participation Co-ordinator is currently working with AspireNorth on an on-campus S3 day, which will involve pupils from local SHEP schools coming to the University for taster sessions. We also cross-refer pupils to the most appropriate initiative e.g AspireNorth will refer pupils interested in Medicine and Law to the University’s REACH Project Officer; and the University team will refer pupils to AspireNorth when appropriate. The Head of SRAS is the University of Aberdeen representative on the AspireNorth Programme Management Group

**Aberdeen Children’s University**

Through our work with the Children’s University, Aberdeenshire Council are working alongside the WP Team in three of our target schools in Aberdeenshire – Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Banff – to engage pupils from Primary 7 upwards in activities outside of school time. When looking at bringing in additional schools, the Council will continue working with us ensuring we are working with the most appropriate schools in the area.

In summer 2015, we held our second graduation ceremony for the Aberdeen Children’s University and continue to offer a wide range of accredited activities as part of the scheme. The purpose of the Children’s University is to encourage primary and secondary school children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to engage in educational and active extra-curricular activities in their local area as well as further afield.

Pupils are signed up to the scheme via their school and, once signed up, are issued with a Children’s University Passport. This passport allows them to build up stamps for completing accredited extra-curricular activities which include sports, after school clubs, museum visits and trips to national parks.
or other sites of interest. Once a student has accumulated enough credits, they will receive a certificate and the opportunity to graduate from the ceremony held at the University.

Graduation ceremonies for the Children’s University happen as part of our normal summer graduations programme, to give the students participating, and their parents, as real an experience of graduation as possible. The graduation ceremony for summer 2017 has already been arranged and we look forward to continuing to work with the Children’s University over the coming years.

**Carers and Care-Experienced Students**

As a University, we are fully committed to supporting care-experienced applicants and students.

In 2015/16, additional steps were introduced in to our student e-registration process to help us better identify and offer support to care-experienced students. As a result of this change, between 2014/15 and 2016/17 the number of students recognised on our systems as care-experienced went from 10 (of whom 7 were Scottish-domiciled, 6 were new entrants and 4 were new Scottish-domiciled entrants) to 49 (of whom 41 were Scottish-domiciled, 32 were new entrants and 26 were new Scottish-domiciled entrants). Over the next three years we aim to increase the number of Scottish-domiciled new UG entrants who are care leavers to 28.

Our Corporate Parenting Plan was ratified in June 2016 and its development was informed by our work with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum (STAF), the Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland (CELSIS), the Who Cares Trust, Aberdeen University Student Association and other partners.

The University is working closely with North East Scotland College, Robert Gordon University and the three local students’ associations on developing ways of jointly supporting students and applicants who have care experience. This work has led to the creation of a joint FE & HE Regional Corporate Parenting Framework.

In March 2015, the University was awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark for Care Leavers in recognition of its commitment to young people in and leaving care. The University provides a range of support mechanisms and services which can be tailored to meet the needs of individual care experienced students, including year-round accommodation, financial assistance and additional advice and support on a range of issues.

As well as supporting care-experienced students, we are committed to supporting students who may themselves have caring responsibilities. We work in support of the Going Higher in Scotland Campaign undertaken by the Carers Trust, and have a range of additional support mechanisms in place for applicants and students with caring responsibilities, including:

- specific, tailored advice on entrance requirements
- the opportunity for additional campus visits
- tailored advice on financial support available and assistance with funding applications
- a named contact for applicants and students to turn to before and during their studies

A number of new initiatives have also been put in place to help care-experienced pupils in primary and secondary education with the long-term aim to enhance educational attainment and widen access, including:

- **Homework Club**
  A pilot project developed in conjunction with Aberdeen City Council, designed to increase and enhance the educational attainment of local care-experienced secondary school pupils.
Volunteer Classroom Assistants and Care Experienced Primary School Pupils
The University of Aberdeen, working in conjunction with Aberdeen City Council, is developing a pilot project designed to increase and enhance the educational attainment of care-experienced primary school pupils. Trained students will go into local primary schools to directly support pupils in the classroom under the supervision of their teacher. This project will initially focus on supporting the literacy and numeracy skills of the pupils involved.

Homework Club
The Homework Club offers local care-experienced secondary school pupils a supportive learning environment to complete their homework and revise for exams. This pilot project, run in conjunction with Aberdeen City Council, aims to increase and enhance the educational attainment of disadvantaged secondary school youths. Supported by a team of enthusiastic multidisciplinary students, the weekly club also provides attendees with an opportunity to learn more about higher education and to engage in social activities.

'I joined the homework club to help provide a stable space for care experienced young people to receive extra help with their learning, ensuring they received the same opportunities I had. By helping these young people with their learning, their potentially difficult home environments become less of a barrier to their ambitions' - Second year student volunteer, Geography

Project SEARCH
The University actively participates in a number of initiatives which aim to strengthen partnerships which aim to benefit the community and drive a culture of inclusion and accessibility. Examples of such initiatives include Project SEARCH, which offers young people with additional needs internships to gain skills and experience to go into employment, and a new scheme offering work experience to young people in low participation areas in Aberdeen as part of the Social Impact Pledge which the University signed in October 2016.

Project Search
Project Search is an award-winning collaboration between the University, Inspire (Partnership Through Life) charity and North East Scotland College. Operated under licence from the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities (SCLD), The project offers a one-year internship programme to young people with additional support needs, allowing them to gain skills and experience to go on to employment.

http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/project-search-2431.php

1.2 Articulation and Progression from Further Education
We aim to offer articulation in to Higher Education to the widest possible range of students. The University has a large number of articulation and progression routes with further education colleges across Scotland. These routes exist where curriculums in the HNC/HND programmes match those of our degree programmes to allow students to transition from college into university with Advanced Standing. A number of additional routes are also in development and we are currently reviewing existing articulation agreements to refocus them around either a 1+3 articulation model or an enhanced 2+2 model. The University aims to increase the number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled HN entrants articulating with Advanced Standing year-on-year within the period of the Agreement as set out in the Annex.

North East Scotland College (NESCOL)
- A pilot group of students from NESCOL’s HND Legal Studies will join the University in September 2017 on the LLB degree, which will be the first such progression route in the country in the area of Law.
- Negotiations are also ongoing on a route from HND Childhood Practice into BA Childhood Practice and then onwards to PGDE Primary Education.
- A pilot is being initiated around HNC/HND Applied Science, investigating whether generalised mapping can be done from the SQA curriculum framework documents, giving us a list of essential and desired optional modules rather than having to map each HND at each institution separately. If this pilot is successful, the outline can then be used to create similar articulation routes with other FE partner colleges.
- The possibility of creating an articulation branding similar to that in place at Strathclyde Engineering Academy is being investigated. Once created, it is hoped to roll this out to other articulation partner colleges.

**Fife College**

- An articulation agreement with Fife College for Computing Science and Engineering has been signed, and we are currently in discussions over additional articulation routes in Applied Sciences and Social Sciences. We are also hopeful of being able to offer progression in to our LLB (as with NESCOL) to Fife College students.

**Dundee and Angus College**

- We have already committed to an articulation agreement with Dundee and Angus College, and we have just finished negotiations on a new route from HNC Mechanical Engineering to the BEng Mechanical and Civil Engineering degrees, with the first students starting at the University in September 2017. The next steps will be reviewing the other routes we have and looking at areas were new agreements are possible.

We continue to actively work with our partner colleges to smooth the transition between FE and HE for those students on these routes as well as identifying additional potential partner colleges and additional articulation routes. In response to feedback from students on our existing articulation routes, we are planning a pilot Summer School to see if this will ease transition between HNDs in Engineering disciplines into Year 3 of our Engineering degrees; if successful, this model could be rolled out in other subjects.

All articulating students are offered opportunities to spend time on campus in each year of their study at our partner colleges, and all articulating students are offered Associate Student status with us, giving them access to a range of facilities, including our cutting-edge library and sporting facilities. Associate Students also have access to a range of online facilities, including self-study units which are designed to give them a taste of HE-level study, to build their confidence in their learning abilities and to smooth their transition from FE to HE.

In November 2016, around 130 students from FE colleges across Scotland attended the University’s first Articulation Day. The event was open to final year HNC/HND students from our partner Further Education Colleges and aimed at giving them a taste of what we can to students following an articulation route into the University.

As well as being offered information on specific disciplines, the day offered participants the chance to learn more about the support of offer to our students and an opportunity to attend a networking lunch with University staff and students. The feedback from this event was irrefutably positive and we will be looking at running it as an annual event.

**1.3 Access and Outreach**

Recruitment to the University’s on-campus part-time courses has been decreasing in recent years. In response to this trend and in an effort to widen participation further through flexible delivery, the University will be increasing the number of fully online and blended learning opportunities in the planning period. We aim to deliver 12 new online education programmes at both UG and PG level in
2017, including two Access Courses in English and Maths aimed at those interested in Teacher Training programmes, an MSc in Decommissioning, MSc Public Health, and an MBA programme. Further programmes will be introduced in 2018 and 2019. The Access courses – delivered in full online and allowing students to complete the curriculum at their own pace - are aimed at addressing the teacher shortage in the region and, in the current economic downturn, may appeal to oil and gas workers seeking to transition into teaching.

The University is leading negotiations with North East Scotland College and the SWAP programme on the creation of a North East Scotland Access Programme. The aim is to replace/repurpose existing provision to offer students a personalised access pathway, taking account of existing qualifications and experience, offering them the most efficient access route in to their desired further qualification. On completion of this access programme, students would be able to choose between progression into a further qualification at NESCOL (e.g. an HNC or HND) or progression directly in to a degree programme at the University of Aberdeen. Discussions are also ongoing about the inclusion of Robert Gordon University in this programme to offer additional choice to students. Negotiations on the creation of this programme are already fairly advanced, and it is hoped to be able to offer the programme from summer 2017.

**Contextualised Admissions**

Our well-established contextualised admissions process seeks to ensure that admission to the University of Aberdeen is entirely on merit and on the basis of ability to achieve and to ensure equality of opportunity to all applicants. Applications are welcomed from students with excellent academic potential and the University recognises the importance of admitting applicants to a course suited to their ability and aspirations. The selection process therefore takes account of all aspects of an application and not just an applicant’s academic profile.

As recognised in the Commission on Widening Access Final Report (March 2016), the North East of Scotland has particular challenges in capturing and monitoring educational deprivation:

“We recognise, however, the particular challenge that the use of SIMD as a marker for deprivation presents to institutions in the north east of Scotland. SFC should therefore consider additional measure(s) to SIMD when monitoring the progress of Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen towards the above targets, which better reflects the link between deprivation and access in the local population.” ¹

Nonetheless, and in line with Scottish government priorities, we have a focus on recruitment of students from the most deprived postcodes (as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, SIMD) and we have consistently achieved a higher percentage of our student population from these postcodes than is represented in our background catchment area population.

While we recognise that our targets around recruitment of students from the 20% and 40% most deprived postcodes appear conservative when compared to our previous performance against this metric, we are mindful of the impact of the reduction, in the latest iteration of the SIMD index, in the number of deprived postcodes in the local area on the potential for growth. We do see developments in articulation and growth in entrants from low progression schools as a more appropriate metric. We are also in discussion with regional partners (including local authorities) about other metrics that might be relevant to the region; these discussions are at a very early stage and will be reported on more fully once more developed.

Summer School for Access

Our Summer School for Access provides a route into Higher Education for those whose current qualifications do not reflect their true potential for degree level study. It is aimed at young adults and mature students who may have experienced setbacks in their previous education, as well as those wishing to change direction within their careers or subject area.

Following a review in 2015/16 of our Summer School for Access, we recognised that some students were finding the maths component for science courses too challenging. The science programme was reformulated in light of this for the 2016 Summer School and maths was integrated into the science subject areas rather than being delivered as a standalone subject. It was hoped that this change would help with the progression of Summer School students into the University of Aberdeen and Higher Education in general.

This has been overwhelmingly successful. In 2016, 48 students were accepted on to the Summer School for Access and 45 successfully completed the programme. However, all 48 (including three who did not successfully complete the programme) have successfully achieved progression in to Higher Education, giving the summer school a 100% conversion rate into HE.

Of the 48 Summer School students, 40 were from either an MD40 postcode, a target school, or both, as follows:

- SIMD1-20: 13, of whom 9 were also from target schools
- SIMD21-40: 9, of whom 6 were also from target schools
- Target schools (not MD40): 18

To increase take-up of places on the Summer School, we work closely with partner schools in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Angus, and with the guidance staff within those schools, to identify students who would benefit from attendance at the Summer School. Partner schools are also offered priority places on the Summer School for their students.

1.4 Cultural Outreach

The University is committed to being a leading contributor to the cultural life of Aberdeen and the North East of Scotland. Staff across the University – within academic Schools, in the Library services and in the Public Engagement with Research Unit (PERU) - host a diverse range of events, exhibitions and activities which engage the public. Our events, held at various venues throughout the region, engage over 35,000 people per annum.

Social Impact – University Museums

At least 24,000 people attended University Museums’ exhibitions, including two co-curated by Museum Studies students in King’s Museum and others co-curated with members of the University academic staff. Outreach activities were particularly successful with 25 events, including both public lectures some of which were organised in conjunction with local societies and major evening events and ‘Night at the Museum’ and ‘Museum Late’ events which attracted over 3500 people. A particular focus this year was on increasing student engagement, which included a licensed ‘Museum Late’ event, a series of collections-focused visits by student societies and an increasingly active volunteering programme. This involved over 40 students as volunteers, with work including collections care, documentation and front-of-house activities. Museum students were particularly active in developing and delivering activities for public events as well as curating the exhibition ‘The Land Endures: Bringing Sunset Song to Life’. The University’s Museums will continue to engage with students and academic and non-academic colleagues across the institution to enhance the profile of the museum collections, and widen access and interest in the collection nationally and internationally, through strong engagement with the University’s digital strategy.
Society and Culture: Public Engagement with Research

The University of Aberdeen has an award winning and prolific track record in societal engagement. Hosting one of only eight RCUK Catalyst awards, the institution has established a dedicated Public Engagement with Research team (PERU) and embedded societal engagement across its research and wider academic activities. This includes hundreds of opportunities for staff and students to engage with thousands of school children and general public every year. Some highlights from the past 24 months include:-

- Leading Scotland’s largest Public Engagement with Research initiative (EXPLORATHON) with a grant from the European Commission
- Creating and delivering a University Festival, unique in Scotland’s HE calendar
- Hosting one of the UK’s largest programmes for British Science Week
- Regional hub for the ESRC Festival of Social Science
- Official Pecha Kucha NightsOrganiser for Aberdeen City
- Delivering one of the UK’s largest café Scientifique programmes

Through these and other initiatives, the University as a whole engaged with 193,725 public attendances from August 2015 – July 2016, and the initiatives directly delivered by our dedicated public engagement with research strategy accounted for 35,000 of these. In 2016, the University won the national Association for Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) awards for ‘Outstanding Collaboration’ and ‘Public Engagement Advocacy’. Beyond the engagement channels described above, the University has developed deep roots into communities in Aberdeen and beyond. Working with SHMU, the community charity tackling youth aspirations in the city’s priority regeneration areas, we have placed researchers into community galas and deliver a weekly ‘Talking Science’ radio show at the charity’s community radio project.

Explorathon

Led by Aberdeen as part of the European Researchers’ Night Scotland, Explorathon, now approaching its fourth year, is a large-scale celebration of research across Scotland. The event offers researchers training and support in public engagement and dissemination. In 2016, over 2,000 people attended Explorathon events in Aberdeen, and more than 70 University of Aberdeen staff and students were involved. The night also saw impressive levels of engagement across social media and the formation of new partnerships with venues and organisations across the city.

http://www.abdn.ac.uk/engage/public/explorathon-348.php
1.5 Gender and Athena SWAN

The University is engaged in a variety of initiatives which, it is hoped, will enhance gender equality and ensure full compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Through our Athena Swan process, institutional and School action plans have been developed to address gender imbalances in both the student and staff population.

In 2016/17, 57.6% of our total UG population was female, with 56.6% of our Scottish-domiciled population being female. The proportion is almost identical at PGT level (57.7%) but with a higher proportion of our Scottish-domiciled PGT population being female (67.2%). At PGR level, 48.4% of our total population and 57.3% of our Scottish domiciled population are female. At UG level, the gender imbalance is particularly pronounced in our STEM subjects, with 83.1% of UG Engineering students and 82.6% of Physics students being male. Conversely, 90.5% of UG Education students, 80.9% of Sociology students, 79.2% of Psychology students, and 79.3% of Anthropology students are female. There are also significant imbalances in many of our modern languages programmes, Law, and Computing Science. Work is ongoing to understand what the barriers are at subject level and what the University can do to address them, with particular focus on outreach work at primary and secondary school level (see section 2.1 below). The University aims to reach a balance of 45%/55% male/female Scottish-domiciled students by 2019/2020 and aim to improve the gender balance in all subjects with an imbalance of 75% or more by 1% year-on-year through our work with Schools and outreach programmes across the lifetime of the Agreement.

There is a strong commitment to the ethos of Athena Swan within the University with clear evidence of widespread engagement with the process. We were delighted to see our first two Schools, Psychology and Natural and Computing Science, receive Athena SWAN bronze awards in academic year 2015/16 and they have now started working towards silver awards. Another six applications for bronze will be submitted by Schools in 2016/17. All Schools are actively working on submissions at either bronze or silver level, and we have recently applied for a renewal of our institutional bronze award. We recognise that although progress has been made in enhancing gender equality at academic staff level, there is further work to be done to ensure the equal advance of women. There has been an upward trend in the past few years across all pay grades when looking at the institutional career tracks (Teaching and Scholarship, Research, and Teaching and Research), but further work is required to increase equality within the research and teaching track across the institution, and within the research track in some of our STEM subjects.

Positive actions taken to minimise gender inequality include: the elimination of short-term contracts, the introduction of a Family Friendly Policy, mandatory equality and diversity training, unconscious bias training, gender balance in selection committees, one-to-one coaching for internal candidates, revision of the promotions and annual review processes, leadership development, mentoring, internal networks, increased female representation on committees, and regular review of equal pay data. Our Athena SWAN action plan going forward also includes a number of additional positive actions, including: assessing all job adverts within the institution to ensure that any opportunities for job share and/or part-time working have been identified; clearly signposting flexible working arrangements; providing unconscious bias training for all staff involved in recruitment and selection panels.

The Remuneration Committee have actively been working to eliminate the gender pay gap over the last 4 years. A review of promotion procedures and recruitment processes have supported a reduction in the gender pay gap. In addition, the criteria for a salary award under the Senior Staff Pay Policy are restricted to retention; exceptional performance and equal pay considerations. There is no gender pay gap within Grades 1-8 and the Remuneration Committee have worked to actively eliminate any gender pay gap at Grade 9.

Planned future actions include: further support through the promotions process, research mentoring, new leadership programmes, full roll out of unconscious bias training, a maternity cover fund, and review of staff retention rates.
With regard to gender equality at board and senior management level, the Court recognises the importance of ensuring there is an appropriate mix of skills, experience and diversity amongst its members. In 2014, Court adopted a Statement of Intent on Diversity within its membership. This includes a goal of achieving and maintaining female representation of a minimum of 25%, with aspirations to achieve 40% over the longer term. Recently this aspiration has been raised to 50%.

This commitment informs the work of the Governance and Nominations Committee when considering new appointments to Court. More than half of the current composition of Court are positions which are either elected or appointed by bodies/individuals other than the Court itself. The University has, therefore, implemented steps to ensure that the electoral processes and appointing bodies for other members of Court also take diversity considerations into account insofar as such appointment processes can allow. This includes bringing the Court’s Statement of Intent on Diversity to their attention.

Notwithstanding these steps, the high proportion of positions that are not appointed by Court does, however, inhibit the extent to which it can control diversity and gender balance. In recognition of this, and following the passing of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act in 2016 which requires governing bodies to include specific categories of members who are either elected or appointed by bodies other than the Court, the Court is considering amendments to its composition. A key principle of these changes is to enable it to better reflect the diversity of the University community and to target a 50:50 gender balance. The proposed changes to the composition aim, therefore, to increase the proportion of members that Court appoints.

The University is committed to continued attention to gender equality both through continued effort through our Athena Swan process, various activities being implemented across the University, and through the development of an institutional gender action plan in line with SFC guidance.

### 1.6 Equality and Diversity

Our Strategic Plan has been designed around ‘People’ as the basis of our success. We have set ambitious targets for enhancing equality and diversity across the institution which will be championed by our staff, including targets for Athena Swan Awards, equality and diversity training amongst staff and relevant students, participation in the ECU Race Equality Mark, and other initiatives which support our diverse staff and student population.

As mentioned in previous Outcome Agreements, all staff (across all staff categories) are required to undertake training in Equality and Diversity in the Workplace. To supplement this, all staff with teaching responsibilities are also required to undertake an additional training module in Diversity in Teaching and Learning which allows colleagues to reflect on their teaching practice and provides guidance regarding developing an inclusive learning environment. In addition to using a blind review process for promotions exercises, to further ensure that equality and diversity are embedded in our recruitment processes, all staff involved in selection and promotion are required to undertake unconscious bias training.

Our HR department will be introducing a number of new processes in near future to ensure equality of opportunity. All vacancies to be advertised will be assessed for the potential to be made available for job sharing and/part-time working before being advertised, and links between advertised vacancies and the University’s existing family friendly policies will be improved. Our website will be reviewed to ensure that it reflects the diverse community of the University’s staff and students.

Our promotions exercise will use blind review of applications, and guidance will be produced for applicants on keeping their applications gender neutral. A Teaching Track Champion will be appointed, and perceived barriers to career progression within the teaching track will be investigated and assessed. A revised Framework of Academic Expectations (FAE) will be developed to better

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2 http://bit.ly/2n2Mn7c
support academic and research colleagues to understand the expectations of them when considering career progression. Our Reward Strategy will be reviewed to ensure that our staff are being rewarded and recognised throughout their careers, and we will develop a pilot Research Futures Leadership programme. Our new staff mentoring scheme will be evaluated for both uptake and effectiveness.

A maternity cover fund will be established to ensure that appropriate cover arrangements can be put in place when staff are on maternity or adoption leave in order to avoid staff feeling inhibited in the length of maternity or adoption leave they can take.

We were awarded, and have since maintained, the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2010. In addition to our commitment to the Research Concordat, we offer a range of specific support to academic and research staff including coaching, leadership, management and core skills.

A number of staff networking groups now operate across the University to support equality, diversity, tolerance and understanding and have matured to the point of becoming strategic informers as well as a source of support for staff. This includes network groups around mental health, LBGT, disability and senior women. The Senior Women’s Network was established in 2012 to provide opportunities for senior female colleagues to network informally. The group has grown to 80 members and a steering group is currently being established to lead the network.

The University jumped up 48 places in the annual Stonewall Workplace equality Index in January 2016. All advertised vacancies display the Athena SWAN logo and Stonewall diversity information as well as clear links to the University’s Equality and Diversity and Athena SWAN web pages. Wherever possible, flexible working opportunities, including job share and/or part-time, are offered and clear links are provided to the University’s flexible working policy and to support available for childcare. When advertising new vacancies, consideration is also given to how best to encourage applications from under-represented groups.

1.7 Governance

The University of Aberdeen is committed to high standards of corporate governance and the Court routinely undertakes a wide-ranging review of its effectiveness against sector guidance. Following the publication in 2013 of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance, the Court reviewed its governance arrangements in depth and agreed a number of revisions to comply with the principles of the Code. At that time, the Court identified the need to reduce its size from 28 members and to ensure a majority of independent members. In June 2015, however, the Scottish Government published a Bill on Higher Education Governance which included proposals that would change the composition of university governing bodies. The Court therefore, agreed not to pursue changes to its composition until such time as any future legislative requirements were confirmed. Following the passing by Parliament of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act in March 2016, the Court has undertaken a review of its composition to ensure it is compliant with both the Act’s requirements and those of the Code and has recently approved proposals for a new composition subject to Privy Council approval.

The Court recruits independent members under processes that are consistent with the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance and which takes into account a role description and skills matrix. Accordingly, the current independent membership of Court includes individuals with a variety of skills and experience drawn from across the public and private sector.

During 2015/16 the Court approved the scope of an externally facilitated review of effectiveness which commenced in December 2016. In addition, the Governance and Nominations Committee has a standing role to advise Court on matters of governance and to conduct on its behalf, reviews of the University’s governance. The Committee undertakes a review of effectiveness annually through benchmarking against the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance and through an annual appraisal questionnaire of governors. A similar effectiveness review of Senate was also undertaken. This review has resulted in changes to Senate’s operational processes with the intention of improving
transparency and communication with the wider community. In addition, the Senate Business Committee now includes elected Senate members.

The Court and Senate are supported in their work by a number of other key committees and staff and student members of Court are represented on many of these formal committees. In addition, the Partnership, Negotiating and Consultative Committee (PNCC) is part of the formal governance committee structure and provides recognised trade unions with a forum for engagement on key policy developments. Briefing meetings for trade union representatives are also held prior to each meeting of Court to discuss the agenda and papers.

The Audit Committee oversees and reports to Court, its view of the effectiveness of the University’s risk management arrangements the operation of which is overseen by the University Management Group but with Risk being a regular item on the Audit Committee agenda. The Court sets and approves annually the University’s risk appetite, and routinely reviews the Corporate Register of Strategic Risks. The Court and University Management Group regularly review the institutional Key Performance Indicators.

The Audit Committee also considers detailed reports from the internal and external auditors, together with recommendations for the improvement of the University’s systems of internal control and risk management, together with University management’s responses and implementation plans. The Audit Committee’s role is one of high level review of the arrangements for internal control, risk management and value for money.

1.8 Staff Wellbeing

The University takes part in the Scottish Government’s Healthy Working Lives Awards initiative and actively encourages and supports staff wellbeing. We retained our Healthy Working Lives Silver Accreditation in 2015 and have established working groups to ensure the successful submission for Gold Accreditation in 2017.

Our HR team has introduced a number of new initiatives to support staff in maintaining a healthy work-life balance across the institution, including the introduction of a “nine-day fortnight” scheme across the Professional Services Directorates in 2016, and the opportunity for staff to purchase additional annual leave twice a year to support individuals who require more leave to balance home and work needs.

The University introduced its ‘Because We Care’ campaign in academic year 2015/16. The campaign aims at improving health and wellbeing within the University through various new initiatives and events. As part of this initiative, our first Health and Wellbeing Day was held in January 2016 to raise awareness of the services offered by the University and to encourage healthy living and this event has now become a regular feature of university life, with the second annual event run in January 2017.

The University has in place free off-peak membership for staff at Aberdeen Sports Village. Over 50% of our staff have taken up the offer of membership and more than 55,000 trips to use the facilities at the sports village are recorded every year.

As part of our sustainability programme and to promote wellbeing, the University also encourages cycling and offers well supported facilities such as a bike purchase scheme, bike lockers, secure bike stands, showers and changing facilities as well as free bike maintenance sessions. The University has been awarded Cycling Friendly Employer status by Cycling Scotland.

A University Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy was launched on 9 November 2016, as part of the Healthy University Framework. The Strategy has been developed to promote the University’s commitment to supporting staff and students to safeguard their own mental health and to providing excellent support services for colleagues and students who have mental health and wellbeing concerns. As part of this strategy, the University has partnered with PAM (People Asset Management)
to provide a new 24-hour confidential helpline for staff launched in November 2016. We are introducing Wellbeing Champions across the University with associated training, and Mental Health First Aid Training has been delivered to 44 members of staff to date in support of the initiative.

Other wellbeing events introduced in 2016 and which will be continued over the period of the Agreement include:

- Walk a Mile; a signposted mile-long walking route on campus was launched to encourage staff to take a step away from their workplace during the day.
- Walking Meetings; staff are encouraged to organise ‘walking meetings’ outside of meetings rooms to encourage exercise.
- Mindfulness Training; training courses open to staff.
- Britain’s Healthiest Workplace Survey; the University took part in this survey for the first time in 2016.
- Employee Engagement Group.

1.9 Sustainability

In our Strategic Planning period 2015-2020, we aim to reduce carbon emissions by 20%, and to achieve a 4% reduction in energy consumption per m² per annum, reflecting both international and Scottish Government targets.

In the Outcome Agreement for 2017-2020, we aspire to reach a target of 26,478 tonnes CO2e. To support this ambition, the University developed a new Carbon Management Plan in 2015/16, spelling out institutional ambition for mitigation and a detailed project portfolio through to 2020 with details of planned and potential projects and activities intended to deliver significant energy efficiencies and associated carbon savings. These include a series of sustainability focussed upgrades, for example the instalment of LED lighting in some of our buildings, improved roof insulation, and the optimisation of our Combined Heat and Power (CHP) engine.

In 2016/17 and beyond, we intend to further develop our understanding of adaptation issues, including developing appropriate risk assessments and working collaboratively with educational and public sector agencies to share best practice.

We are also working to improve our understanding of our extended carbon footprint. In 2015 we were able, for the first time, to detail our emissions derived from business travel. This allowed us to produce a genuinely comprehensive institutional carbon footprint that covers all scopes of emissions.

The University continues to be committed to the redevelopment of our estate in order to support an outstanding student and staff experience. In recent years, significant investment has seen the University open new medical research, teaching, library, sporting, and child-care facilities. In all cases, these facilities have supported enhancement of the student experience. The University is in the process of finalising a capital programme for the coming ten years that will emphasise the development of new and refurbished teaching facilities on our Old Aberdeen campus. This programme will place the student experience at the heart of our campus development programme while also enhancing the condition and functionality of our older estate. In all cases the aim is to support our emerging needs in both teaching and research.

The University is committed across its capital programmes to the principles of sustainable estate development. The opening, in August 2015, of the new Rocking Horse Nursery, saw the University showcase the first fully certified Passivhaus building at a Scottish university, and the first pre-school facility in Scotland to adopt this demanding energy-efficient design concept. The project won a prestigious EAUC Green Gown Award in 2016 and extensive efforts have been made to share institutional knowledge of this project, with written and video case studies available, as well as numerous site visits for stakeholders and interested parties, such as the local authority’s planning, environment, education and housing teams.
The new Rowett building, opened in early 2016, remains on course to achieve the challenging BREEAM ‘Outstanding’ standard, and will be one of only a handful in Scotland to have achieved this accolade.

We continue to be an active participant in sector and regional initiatives to support sustainability. Our membership of the EAUC sees us participate in function specific support networks in areas such as waste, travel and energy, and we take advantage of the sector-specific training and support they provide, for example on the Public Sector Duties reporting regime, the development of adaptation action plans, and sector-wide discussion of the RICS-Ska sustainability assessment for refurbishment projects.

We are also engaged in regional networks that support collaborative efforts to address the local impacts of climate change. These include the North East Scotland Climate Change Partnership (NESCCP), Powering Aberdeen (the vehicle for the city’s Sustainable Energy Action Plan), and the recently established Aberdeen Adapts (a forum for sharing best practice on adaptation issues).

Our plans for a collaborative renewable energy project with Robert Gordon University and a major Scottish landowner, were dealt a blow in 2016 by the outcome of the Westminster Government’s review of feed-in-tariffs, which undermined the business case for the project. Should the support regime become more favourable, this project will, however, be revisited.

We will report on progress through the now mandatory Public Sector Duties sustainability reporting regime, piloted by the Scottish Government in autumn 2015 and compulsory from 2016 onwards.

Our target for annual capital and maintenance spend on estates and buildings will continue to be set at 4.5% of insured asset value.
2 Teaching and Learning

This section links to the following SFC priorities:

**Priority 2: High quality learning and teaching:**
- Meet current and future skills needs of employers and the economy
- Provision of work-related learning opportunities
- Address barriers to retention
- Internationalise the student experience and increase student mobility
- Grow the number of students developing foreign language skills
- Support implementation of the National Gaelic Language Plan
- Promote credit rating of university provision on the SCQF

**University of Aberdeen Strategic Goals**
- “To provide an outstanding educational environment reflecting the quality of an international institution, fostering a sense of community supporting all students in achieving their ambitions.”
- “Working in partnership, to offer an exceptional, flexible and individualised educational experience that is demand-driven for students in Aberdeen, at a distance, and full or part-time”.
- “To ensure every student has the opportunity to realise their potential by providing excellent research-led teaching, assessment and feedback.”
- “To equip our students with skills and experience which will allow them to maximise their opportunities as responsible global citizens upon graduation”.

We are proud of the support the institution and all of our staff offer our students to ensure that they are truly prepared for their future career and life, and we will continue to provide the best possible study experience for all of our students. The University seeks to provide an excellent international educational experience which is shaped through a partnership with students, industry, international partners, business and employers. Our graduates will be outstanding, active global citizens with the skills to make a valuable contribution to society.

As a research-focused institution ³, we are able to offer research-led teaching and have a strong commitment to providing students with a world class education delivered by staff at the forefront of their disciplines. Parity of esteem between research and teaching is a core philosophy, and changes made in 2015 to our Teaching and Scholarship promotions route sought to better facilitate the promotion of individuals focused on delivering excellence in teaching to the level of personal chair. Since 2012, in all 106 teaching-based promotions applications have been received, of which 55 have been successful including 24 promotions to Senior Lecturer and 11 to personal chair, with more staff promoted to Senior Lecturer or personal chair via our Teaching and Scholarship route than the equivalent roles under our Research track and with staff having the same statistical probability of promotion under both routes (52-57%).

As a University committed to providing our students with a top quality educational experience, we are active participants in the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) and believe that this offers an extremely robust and rigorous method not only of ensuring the highest quality of current practices but also of encouraging a process of continuous enhancement.

The University has always performed consistently highly in the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) that forms a key part of the QEF. Many of the innovations that the University has undertaken in order to provide students with an excellent education and the processes we have in place to improve even further have been praised by ELIR panel members.

³ 38.38% of our academic and teaching staff are on research-only contracts, compared to a sector average of 27.82 (17th in the UK); 88.73% of our academic and teaching staff are on contracts with at least some research element, compared to a sector average of 82.63%; 26.4% of our income comes from research grants and contracts (14th). HESA data 2014/15
Online Education

The University is making a step-change in its delivery of online education. Building on an existing base of online delivery primarily in the Schools of Education and Engineering, a further suite of 14 new online degree programmes are being developed for delivery in 2017. These will be further supplemented by further programmes in a rolling programme over the next few years. Alongside development of these new programmes, infrastructure is being put in place to support the needs of online learners and ensure that their experience is equivalent to that of those studying on campus. This enhancement of online provision will enable the University to reach out to new markets wishing to study in a more flexible way and will also enable access by international students without the immigration barriers which can impede recruitment.

e-Learning

All staff and PGR students are actively supported to use e-Learning in their teaching through workshops and one to one advice. This includes support to use the University’s virtual learning environment, MyAberdeen, online assessment tools and personal voting systems. In 2016, two digital learning spaces were created, one in Old Aberdeen and one at Foresterhill. These technology-enabled rooms support collaborative and distance learning and align with the University’s strategy to support an outstanding educational environment.

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

All degrees awarded by the University of Aberdeen comply with, at least, the minimum credit point requirements set out in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). All Aberdeen levels are mapped to appropriate SCQF levels, information is included on the Infohub website (http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/) for current students and documentation provided at graduation includes information on the SCQF.

2.1 Access to, and Provision in, STEMM Subjects

The University of Aberdeen is a broad-based university which offers programmes across the educational spectrum. Our provision in STEM subjects remains very strong and we pride ourselves of our strong partnerships with industry partners in offering a science curriculum which ensures that our graduates are ready to embark on a career in their chosen professions. In 2014/15 the proportion of our Scotland-domiciled UG entrants enrolling to STEM subjects was 43.8% and we aim to reach 45% by the end of the Outcome Agreement period.

The University is involved in a variety of activities aimed at maintaining the number of Scottish-domiciled students enrolling on to STEM courses. As an example of such activities, the School of Engineering organised an inaugural ‘Girls in Engineering’ conference in 2016/17 with a local school to widen interest in and access to Engineering. Over 100 school children participated in the event from as far as Glasgow and Edinburgh, and the plan is to make this a regular event in future. The School also has a dedicated outreach coordinator who has been named a ‘Community Star’ by the Lord Provost of Aberdeen for his contributions to the city. Archaeology have introduced a part-time two-year certificate in Archaeology aimed at distance learners.

As noted in section 1.3, we are developing a fully accredited Initial Teacher Education programme to be delivered exclusively online to widen access to initial teacher training for those who do not meet the entrance requirements for existing programmes and who are unable to attend the Summer School. The University hopes to expand this new provision to assist with the widening of access and transition into STEM subjects.
2.2 Skills Development and Meeting the Needs of Employers

One of our core values is innovation and relevance in our education, research and engagement. The University already engages extensively with industry around the skills development of our students but this agenda will be taken further in the planning period to ensure that placements are offered to as many students as possible. To this end, the School of Engineering is, for example, appointing an administrative officer with specific responsibility for industrial placements, and the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture will be expanding opportunities to allow modern languages students to undertake placements in primary schools within the STAR Award scheme.

The University is continuously reviewing its curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of both employers and students. A number of our disciplines, such as Engineering and Geology, have advisory boards in place at both UG and PG level to assist with curriculum development with representatives from industry and local schools, and offer a wide variety of industry placements. Students also have the opportunity to participate in industry-relevant initiatives. The advisory boards play an important part in helping the University to stay tuned to the needs of employers. The School of Engineering has, for example, at the advice of their advisory board, recently introduced new PGT programmes, developed distance learning options of programmes, and introduced studentships for oil and gas sector unemployed workers, to help the local oil and gas sector. Other Schools, such as the Schools of Law and Biology, are currently introducing new programmes to respond to the needs of industry.

The University will continue to engage with and promote the SFC’s UG Skills for Growth and PG Skills schemes and will regularly review the University’s offering to ensure that it is supporting the most appropriate industry sectors.

2.3 Employability

In the last two years the local economy in Aberdeen has seen a significant downturn in the region’s key industries (oil and gas) and the opportunities for graduates. The impact of this downturn is not restricted to jobs in those specific industries, but permeates the whole of the North East where most commerce and industry is in some way linked to the oil and gas supply chain.

Against this extremely difficult local environment, the employability of our graduates, as measured by the DLHE, continues to be among the best in the UK. Among HEIs with meaningful DLHE populations (classified as >500 in the Times Higher Education Supplement), we rank 5th in the UK with 96.6% of our graduates in employment and/or further study 4, a figure generally accepted as being over the threshold for ‘full employment’.

Leadership Academy

The University’s new Leadership Academy aims to develop the leadership skills that employers seek from our graduates. Hosted by inspirational leaders and external organisations, these themed leadership sessions bring students in direct contact with a range of employers. The Academy also gives students tailored sessions to support their individual learning and employability needs.

‘I would definitely recommend the Leadership Academy. Many students are scared of being leaders. I think it is because they lack knowledge and confidence, however, the workshops I attended gave me both of these things’, Emilia Saario, MA (Hons) Geography and International Relations

http://www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/skills-attributes/leadership-academy-502.php

The continued upward trend in graduates in employment and further study is also accompanied by a high proportion of graduates in graduate level employment or further study, which has been consistently at or over 80% over the last three years. Our high levels of graduates going on to further study (around 30% over the last three years) is further evidence of the quality of our graduates,

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4 Universities’ graduate employment data released ahead of TEF, THES 7 July 2016
although this is not currently reflected in the data used against Outcome Agreement measure 9b (number and proportion of graduates entering professional occupations). We are also seeing a year-on-year increase in student engagement with the co-curriculum, and have received several external employability award nominations.

The University will continue to be forward thinking, ambitious and competitive in order to build on this success. The employability agenda is supported through a range of activities and delivered through a partnership with alumni, and partners in business, industry, the public sector and the third sector. Targets have been set in our Strategic Plan around degree classifications and around positive destinations. We aim to maintain our high proportions of Scottish-domiciled graduates entering professional and positive destinations, in the face of the challenging local circumstances, at 48% and over 96% respectively through to 2020.

The Careers Service works in partnership with academic Schools and a wide range of employers to provide information and guidance to students regarding career planning, recruitment and employability, offering a provision that aligns with the University’s Employability Development Framework and the University’s Strategic Plan 2015-2020. To complement our career guidance provision the Service also delivers a range of distinctive co-curricular initiatives, which include: career mentoring; work placements; work-based projects; the STAR (Students Taking Active Roles) Award, the Leadership Academy; and enterprise & entrepreneurship opportunities. Our services are available to all current students, whether full, part-time or distance-based, and we also support alumni.

**Achieve**

Located within the University's virtual learning environment, Achieve is a set of bespoke online development resources for undergraduates to access at any stage of their studies and co-curricular activities. Devised by the University’s Careers Service and the Student Learning Service, the resources offer students ways to reflect upon, develop and enhance their skills and Aberdeen Graduate Attributes in preparation for further study or employment.

http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/graduate-attributes-and-achieve-805.php

Careers Service activities aligned with SFC key priorities include:

- Expertise in relation to employability, work-based projects, work placements, labour market information and graduate opportunities. In particular, the Careers Service plays an active role in the pan-Scotland, SFC-funded *Making the Most of Masters* scheme which provides Masters-level students the opportunity to complete their dissertation in an industry environment. ‘Working Together’, a credited course for students in Arts and Social Sciences, offers opportunities for students to act as consultants for local businesses. For PhD students, the new Enterprising Researchers programme (*see also page 31*) gives students the chance to use their transferrable skills to help local businesses.

- Providing resources to support our students in developing Aberdeen Graduate Attributes, for example our Achieve package of resources.

- Developing links with organisations and employers for membership of the network of academic School-level, Programme Advisory Boards (or industrial liaison groups) and the central Careers Service Employer Board. These fora ensure the University establishes relationships with a wide range of external representatives from different employment sectors and organisational sizes. These networks provide channels to build durable employer-University relationships that bring clear employability benefits to both parties. Our distinctive approach also helps ensure we adapt our curriculum in response to evidence of current and future skills needs of employers.

- Guidance provided to students and graduates, either in person, online via our “virtual adviser” or through our innovative Level 1 Professional Skills course. This prescribed, zero-credit course for all students is studied entirely online and covers topics relating to Aberdeen Graduate Attribute Development, Equality & Diversity and Health, Safety & Wellbeing.
- Raising awareness and the usage of the Gaelic Language as part of the Careers Service provision. For example, Gaelic-focused roles continue to feature within the co-curricular STAR Award. Promotion of Gaelic careers schemes in bilingual information is also available on the Careers Service website.

Enhancements 2017-2020 include:

- We will strengthen the links between the Careers Service and academic Schools through the development of academic employability champion roles to develop and promote employability plans tailored to their disciplines.
- A cross-University, 15-credit work-related learning course is currently under development, which aims to develop students’ experiential learning through placements, internships or professional development projects in a professional environment of their choice, and will be rolled out in 2017/18 in four academic Schools and will be supported by a series of employability seminars to support students’ experiential learning. Students secure their own placement which is approved by their academic School. The course encourages students to reflect on their personal and professional development and to make connections between their degree programme and the world of work.
- Progressing our involvement with the Graduate Apprenticeship Scheme led by Skills Development Scotland (SDS). Graduate-level Apprenticeships provide work-based learning opportunities up to Master’s degree level for employees, and were created in partnership with industry and the further and Higher Education sector. We are working towards offering apprenticeships in 2017.
- Development of a Gaelic Language Ambassador Scheme, a partnership between the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture, the Careers Service and Aberdeen City Council. The initiative will help support the University’s widening access plans through promoting the value of Higher Education and raising the aspirations of local school pupils. It is anticipated that student participation in the scheme will be recognised via the STAR Award.
- Growth of opportunities with different forms of external engagement and for students across the University to have access to work-related learning opportunities during their studies, including an innovative 15-credit, Work-Related Learning course. The course will be structured for students to secure their own placement, part-time work or personal development project which is approved by their academic School and to receive academic credit for their wider learning and skills development.

**Working Together**

**Working Together: Employability for Arts and Social Sciences:** this level 3, 15-credit course offers groups of students from arts and humanities disciplines the opportunity to come together to act as consultants for a local business or charity. The students are provided with a defined project by employers, and these have recently included the National Trust for Scotland, the Gordon Highlanders Museum and the Aberdeen Science Centre.

http://www.abdn.ac.uk/business-info/working-with-students/undergraduate-workbased-projects-647.php
2.4 Retention

The University of Aberdeen is actively investing in ways of identifying students with known characteristics that might place them at greater risk of non-continuation. This data is being made known to those best placed to support such students.

More generally, to increase continuation rates across all categories of students, we have:

- Established an institution wide Induction Group including representation from the Students’ Association, Professional Services and Schools and developed a much more integrated Induction strategy. Guidance was provided and support offered to all Schools on possible induction activities and social media sites development and management.

- Revised our ‘withdrawal from studies’ process for students, to make the process more transparent, encourage greater student feedback, and provide greater support for students considering readmission. A protocol for Schools to use to follow up on withdrawing students who wish to have continued interaction with their Schools has also been developed.

- Developed a protocol for students who enter via clearing. Clearing students have been identified as a key group of incoming students who face significant challenges to their transition into University on account of many factors that may contribute to uncertainties about continuing study e.g. last minute decision making, lack of direct communication with the Institution, difficulties forming peer groups due to late arrival, difficulties developing a sense of belonging. As a means of establishing a more effective management of this transition, a protocol was established for adoption by Schools with the overarching aim of establishing dialogue with these students as soon as they accept the offer of a place on a University of Aberdeen programme and then following up communications through personal tutors to promote a sense of welcome and belonging that will create a more positive experience for these incoming students.

- Collaborated with other rural HEIs - RGU, UHI and UWS - looking at pressures associated with students having to commute over significant distances. To date we have analysed our data and been involved in sharing some previous work and information with the other HEIs.

- Devolved authority to Schools to decide how they wish to allocate Personal Tutors to students as they deem most appropriate for their home disciplines, with additional flexibility in terms of the remit of the Personal Tutor (subject to a minimum expectation/role descriptor). It is hoped this will increase the sense of belonging of students to the School, inculcate a closer relationship between student and tutor, and help the issues that students are struggling with to be identified, and supported, at an earlier juncture. Personal Tutors are now also routinely informed whenever students miss compulsory classes on two or more occasions, or fail to submit coursework, so that again, any underlying problems might be addressed as early as possible.

We are currently reviewing our monitoring/progress communications to make them more effective at encouraging students to take action/seek help, and later this term will be contributing to a JISC project examining the use of data to support retention activities in HEIs.

As noted in our Outcome Agreement for 2016/17, in recognition of retention as a key priority for the University, we use a more stringent measure than that reflected in HESA statistics, counting all students who withdraw early, including those given exit awards, as having not completed or continued. Against this definition, all academic Schools within the University have been set a target to reach a maximum of 6% non-continuation from Level 1 by the end of the current Strategic Plan in 2020: this would give the University an overall non-continuation rate from year 1 against HESA definitions of no more than 4%. Non-continuation from Level 1 has reduced significantly, from 11.4% in 2013 to 10.5% in 2014, and early indications suggest that this trend is continuing in line with targets. All Schools have developed detailed action plans to address problem areas in relation to
retention which focus around two key areas: earlier identification of students at risk of withdrawing, and more effective mechanisms of intervention.

During the lifetime of the Outcome Agreement we will continue our efforts to increase retention of our UG entrants from different characteristic groups (including deprivation, gender, age, ethnicity, disability and care leavers) as set out in the appendix.

Among the activities being planned by Schools are:

- earlier (pre-arrival) engagement with new students
- comprehensive curriculum and degree regulation reviews to ensure that, in particular Level 1, students have a balance of curriculum breadth and sufficient subject specialism to engender a greater sense of belonging to their home disciplines
- reviews of assessment methodology and introductive of innovative, digital methods of assessment to increase student engagement (see section below)
- provision of more detailed learner analytics to personal tutors and senior personal tutors to help them in spotting early signs of a student who may be at risk of dropping out
- allocation of specialist personal tutors and provisional of additional mentoring to students in at-risk groups
- earlier initial course evaluation at level 1 to spot any issues as soon as possible
- sharing of best practice between Schools with high levels of retention and those seeking to improve

2.5 Student Satisfaction and Engagement

A key strategic goal for the University is to maintain consistently high levels of student satisfaction, with particular focus on satisfaction with teaching quality, feedback, and assessment.

During the course of our participation in the National Student Survey the University has demonstrated very consistent overall satisfaction (10th lowest variation of any institution taking part), with an average ranking for overall satisfaction of 18th. Research has demonstrated that a range of factors including subjects taught show consistent differences in responses to the NSS questions and consequently comparisons at the institutional level are best made against benchmarks. In 2016 our overall satisfaction score of 88% was above our HEFCE institutional benchmark of 87%. By 2020, we aim to have increased our overall satisfaction score to 89%

To maintain high levels of student satisfaction we undertake a range of core student surveys designed to monitor student satisfaction and engagement at all levels. These include the National Student Survey (NSS), the suite of Higher Education Academy (HEA) Surveys (UK Engagement Survey UKES, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey PRES, and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey PTES), and in 2016/17 we are also piloting the JISC Digital Student Tracker.

To streamline the delivery of these core surveys the University has initiated a Student Survey Working Group with representation from all academic schools and relevant professional services. Data collected are analysed collectively in the Centre for Academic Development, and the insight gained widely disseminated within the institution to share good practice and develop initiatives to enhance the student experience.

To this end, we will be introducing a new curriculum management process to ensure better mapping between learning outcomes and teaching, implement electronic marking and feedback, and decrease the number of programmes and courses to simplify course choice.

A key component of our strategy around student satisfaction is digital enhancement. Our investment in digital technology aims to support our goal of delivering an exceptional and personalised student experience and to allow greater engagement with our audiences and partners. Examples of recent activity include our new online prospectus, two highly successful MOOCs, and the appointment of six learning technologists to support online education. Over the lifetime of the Agreement we aim to
expand our online education offering, continue work to enhance our website, implement technologies to help monitor student engagement and support student retention strategies, and increase use of our two digitally-enhanced teaching spaces.

Along with core surveys the University also supports academic staff to undertake pedagogic research to further our understanding of student engagement and to evaluate their own academic practice. Recent examples include studies into the use of MOOCs in credit bearing courses, the impact of paid employment on student engagement, and the use of lecture recording technology on academic attainment.

2.6 Language Skills

Opportunities for language study for all students have been embedded in the University’s curriculum since the Curriculum Reform programme introduced in 2010. Through the Sustained Study route, students are able to begin or maintain the study of seven languages (Arabic, French, Gaelic, German, Mandarin, Spanish and Swedish) through the first two years of their degree. Demand is high for all seven languages, particularly at Level 1 (e.g. 80-90 enrolments in Arabic and Mandarin, 130-140 in French, German and Spanish, 40 in Gaelic and Swedish in AY2016/17). We also offer degree programmes in four Modern Languages which maintain healthy cohorts of students and combine with a range of other subjects for Joint Honours degrees. The University is one of four institutions in Scotland to offer Honours degrees in Gaelic, and makes available Gaelic language courses for beginners as part of its commitments to the Gaelic National Plan. An MSc programme in Translation Studies was introduced in 2015/16, and an undergraduate Translation Studies programme is planned for introduction in 2018/19. Our ambition is to incorporate Honours-level language pathways for Arabic, Mandarin and Swedish (currently taught up to Level 2 only) as part of this programme. The University’s commitment to ESOL is reflected in a new MSc in TESOL, recruiting 14 students this year, its second year of operation.

The Sustained Studies language courses are advertised to potential students and new arrivals as a distinctive feature of the Aberdeen degree and, as part of a broader programme review, we are looking at a range of ways to enhance and promote this provision. This will include practical steps such as reviewing the teaching timetable to free up more space for language learning, as well as a review of marketing and promotion of Sustained Studies language learning. Alongside credit-bearing courses, the University also promotes language learning through the Language Centre, which offers language courses for external learners via evening classes, as well as providing in-sessional and pre-sessional English language training for non-native speakers. Classes in Mandarin Chinese are also available via the Confucius Institute.

Modern Languages staff in the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture work closely with SCILT (Scotland’s national centre for languages) and Aberdeen City Council to promote the take-up of languages at all levels of education. In collaboration with Aberdeen City Council, we set up a Language Ambassadors scheme in 2015/16, which sends Honours-level Modern Languages students into secondary schools to promote the benefits of language learning, and allowing ML students to develop a range of skills linked to communication, presentation and advocacy. As a result of being Language Ambassadors, some students have gone on to do mini-placements in primary schools in order to support the Scottish government’s 1+2 language strategy (see also paragraph 2.2). Partnerships have also been established between local primary schools and ML students on their year abroad, who maintain regular contact with pupils through the year via blogs, Skype, postcards etc. The Language Ambassador scheme gained Bronze accreditation from the institutional STAR (Students Taking Active Roles) programme for 2016/17, and will continue to run for the foreseeable future.
2.7 Gaelic

The University has a Gaelic Language Plan (2013-2018) in place which sets out the University’s commitment to the national effort to ensure that Gaelic has a sustainable future. Evidence of Gaelic use and demand for Gaelic services was gathered as part of the launching of the University’s plan in 2013 and the institutional implementation strategy is monitored by a working group with representation from both staff and students across the University. In addition to our Gaelic degree programmes, the University organises a variety of Gaelic awareness-raising events, and provides support for Gaelic language speakers and those interested in learning Gaelic. We offer dedicated student accommodation for Gaelic-speaking students, a Gaelic Common Room where students and staff can practice their Gaelic in a social setting, Conversation and Singing Circles, language tuition opportunities for non-Gaelic speakers, bilingual material where appropriate, and promote Gaelic at public events such as our May Festival and student recruitment events. We have, and will continue to, share information about Gaelic events with local authorities and will assist in promoting their events as required.

2.8 British Sign Language

The University will make reasonable adjustments to processes to support access to services for the deaf and deafblind student population, and sign language interpretation is offered at all of our graduation ceremonies. The University looks forward to working with the SFC to advance this work further.

2.9 Internationalisation

Internationalisation is central to the University’s strategy. We work in a competitive international context and strive to ensure that our staff and students are equipped to meet the challenges that competitive environment demands. Our internationalisation strategy is multifaceted: we want to encourage international collaboration for staff and students, attract the best staff and students from across the world, and encourage Scottish students to expand their horizons through language study and travel abroad.

The University is an international institution, ranked 37th in the world for international outlook according to the Times Higher Education Supplement (The world’s most international universities 2016, THES 14 January 2016). We offer our students a very diverse and international learning environment, with 26.21% of our undergraduate students, 43.19% of our taught postgraduate students and 53.01% of our research postgraduate students coming from non-UK domiciles (as against 14.39%, 47.63% and 45.8% respectively across the sector).

Our staff also come from a more diverse range of backgrounds than the sector average, further enriching the learning environment, with 31.43% of all staff with teaching responsibilities having non-UK nationalities (sector average 24.1%), 22.5% of our teaching-only staff (sector average 20.18%) and 33.43% of staff on teaching and research contracts (sector average 25.32%). The diversity of both our students and staff brings a significant additional benefit in terms of global citizenship, understanding different perspectives on knowledge and multicultural awareness to all who study and work here. It also brings challenges in relation to integrating different experience and expectations of studying in a University environment.

Study Abroad

The University remains committed to encouraging outward as well as inward mobility and now offers all Level 3 UG students the opportunity to go abroad. Opportunities for study abroad are promoted through increased use of social media, promotional events and visits to Schools, as well as formal
information sessions delivered by the Go Abroad team. Meetings are held with returning students to review and improve our processes.

We have joined all our student exchange activities under the umbrella of “Go Abroad”. Some of our new initiatives include:

- Appointment of a team of Go Abroad ambassadors to develop social media to promote Go Abroad activity, run photo competitions, and participate in the Go Abroad Fair and promote the countries they have studied in.
- Introduction of ‘periscope’ tours as part of the Go Abroad fair.
- Themed drop-in sessions in the International Centre run by Go Abroad Ambassadors – e.g. Go Abroad Australia, Go Abroad Germany

In 2016/17, 105 students will be going abroad on the institutional International Exchange Programme, and a further 189 students will be going abroad on the Erasmus scheme. These figures do not include students participating in School-specific exchanges run within academic areas. In total, during the first few months of the 2016/17 academic year, 905 students have engaged with one or more activities run by the International Centre, including cultural events, foreign language conversation evenings and visits to places of international interest.

Support to International Students

The University's International Centre provides support to international students, from support to international students before and on their arrival in Aberdeen, various events throughout the year designed to enrich their experience in Scotland, support and advice, and job hunting. A wide variety of events are held throughout the year, including ‘International Orientation’, ‘International Peer Groups’ which match people on their social interests, ‘Global Families’ which offers an opportunity for international students with families to meet up, ‘Warm to Winter’ which includes events to celebrate winter activities in Scotland, weekly ‘Language Groups’ to practice conversational language skills, ‘Leadership Scheme’ which allows international students to volunteer through the International Centre within the STAR award scheme, and ‘January Jumpstart’, a series of events to cater to the needs of students who are in Aberdeen over the holidays. A new initiative, first run in 2016/17, was the one-to-one English Language Support Project, where students in the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture offered personalised English language support to all PGT offer holders where English was not their first language. Another project, ‘Insight’ paired prospective students with an alumni from their home country to get insight into life in Aberdeen.

1-2-1 English Language Support

For September 2016 entry, the University’s 1-2-1 English Language Support was opened to all PGT offer holders in the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture for whom English is not their first language. The initiative, which had 234 participants from 66 countries, paired prospective students with an existing student for personalised English support via Skype. Participants of the 1-2-1 English Language Support had a 10% higher conversion rate than those who did not.

“It's fantastic and a really very creative idea. I applied to many universities and all accepted me but I’d love to enrol at Aberdeen because I loved this idea and it made me love Aberdeen.” Participant of 1-2-1 English Language Support

“What I found most exciting and surprising, but totally understandable, was that they [prospective students] are not primarily seeking for the information about the city, school or the activities, but they mainly want to make a contact with people from the environment in which they will be living for the upcoming few years. They are not primarily worried about the difference in the education techniques or the language, but in the personal approach of the individuals.” – Student volunteer in 1-2-1 English Support programme

https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/international/english-language-support-project.php
The Go Abroad team will continue to expand their services and activities in 2017 and beyond, to include the following:

- **International Speakers Series & collaboration with PERU**
  Dedicating some of the University’s external events (see paragraph 1.4) to international topics that will be targeted towards current PGT students as well as the public

- **International Centre Move**
  A move to allow for larger events to take place, including: holding information sessions for Go Abroad, larger and more popular movie nights, as well as hosting events that are streamed live around the world

- **Workshop Series**
  Working with local and national charities to host workshops to assist with the transition to Aberdeen and Scotland, including budgeting workshops through money charities, Shelter and finding private accommodation, and dealing with culture shock

- **Lifestyle Video Series**
  Videos to address questions which international students may be too nervous to ask about

- **Encouraging British and Scottish students get involved in the International Centre by targeting students who have participated in Go Abroad, or reaching out to sports teams.**

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**Insight**

The **Insight programme** pairs non-UK prospective students with an alumni from their home country in order for the prospective student to gain a better understanding of what it is like to study and live in Aberdeen.

[https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/international/insight.php](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/international/insight.php)

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**Transnational Education**

The University is presently involved in a number of transnational education projects relating to the establishment of overseas campuses which, it is hoped, will lead to the establishment of overseas campus operations in Africa and the Middle East both of which, should they come to fruition, will offer scope for students at the main Aberdeen campus to travel and experience life and study at the remote campus whilst also potentially giving students at the remote campus the opportunity to spend time in Aberdeen itself. This two-way internationalisation of the student experience is expected to begin in practice at our forthcoming South Korean Campus in 2017/18 with the exact date of opening and programme offering still under discussion with partners in Korea so as to ensure best fit with the current economic situation in the country. We are also in discussion with a partner University in England which already has an overseas campus in Africa with regards to partnering on that campus in teaching and to make available its existing summer school opportunities to Aberdeen students.

In Africa in particular, these transnational projects are partnership opportunities where we are working with delivery partners so as to offer an Aberdeen education in a remote location and at a substantially reduced cost to the student compared to their coming to Aberdeen itself to study. They therefore demonstrate our willingness to share our learning resources and commercial prospects with such partners so as to open up opportunities to students who would otherwise be unable to afford them and, at the same time, to contribute to the economic and social progress of developing nations.

We have an alliance with Curtin University which is situated in Perth, Western Australia and which offers a number of opportunities for international student mobility in both directions. The alliance has a scheme for the joint supervision and award of doctoral degrees with students normally spending one of the 3 years of study at the other institution from which they started at. A joint MSc in Subsea Engineering is an advanced stage of negotiation with Curtin and will see students starting at one university and spending a semester in the other before returning to complete their research project. This MSc is likely to set a template for additional offerings in other subject areas with a Masters of Fine Art already in development with respect to creative writing.
The University is also a very active participant in international collaboration to further academic research, educational partnerships and strategic development. Aurora, a new community of European universities united by a shared commitment to advancing social good and helping solve global challenges, was launched in October 2016. The network links the University in a partnership with eight other universities: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, (Netherlands), Université Grenoble-Alpes (France), University of Aberdeen, University of Antwerp (Belgium), University of Bergen (Norway), University of Duisberg-Essen (Germany), University of East Anglia (England), University of Gothenburg (Sweden) and the University of Iceland. The member universities hope to add real value to society by working together on important societal challenges such as sustainability, climate and energy, digital technology and society, student experience and innovation in teaching and learning, human life and death, and transformations in globalising society, bringing together both students and staff. The University has taken a lead in ‘Inclusion and Diversity’ activity within the group.
3 Research and Knowledge Exchange

This section links to the following SFC priorities:

*Priority 3: World-leading research; Priority 4: Greater innovation in the economy:*

- Enhance development and diversity of researchers
- Enhance research collaboration
- Enhance public and cultural engagement and contribute to public policy and public sector delivery
- Engage with the innovation landscape in Scotland
- Embed enterprise and entrepreneurship training in our programmes
- Enhance performance in a future REF exercise
- Grow research income from the UK research councils and other sources
- Sustain a high quality environment for research training and development

**University of Aberdeen Strategic Goals**

- “To strengthen our position as a world class, research intensive university, focusing on areas of excellence”

The Strategic Plan 2015-2020 aims to increase research quality and levels of activity, to increase postgraduate research student numbers to our high quality programmes, and to increase engagement with industry and other research users.

**3.1 Research Performance**

The University continues to build on its achievements in REF2014, in which 76% of our research was rated 3* (internationally excellent) or 4* (world leading). In terms of research power (quality x volume) the University of Aberdeen was ranked 29th in the UK. Since then, the University of Aberdeen has undergone significant restructuring and refocusing of research areas and priorities. We will be building research capacity and ensuring we provide an environment and culture where our researchers thrive.

The delivery of a strong submission to the second REF will be dependent on enabling academic staff to develop and progress their research careers. Our focus over the period of this outcome agreement is therefore on building a supportive research community and peer environment which will allow talented researchers to reach their full potential.

**Strategic Initiatives**

- **Curtin Partnership:** The University of Aberdeen recently announced a strategic partnership with Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia to delivery high impact research and innovative teaching programme. The research will be delivered through a new Global Energy Institute which will offer Masters programmes and research programmes led by the needs of industry. Research strands in medicine will explore the challenges of delivering health care in remote and rural areas, and in creative arts, where such international alliances are rare, academics are already collaborating on creative writing courses. The research activities are accompanied by 12 PhD studentships, due to start in 2017, to carry out research in both Australia and Scotland.

- **Nutrition Research:** January 2017 saw the opening of the new research facilities for the University of Aberdeen’s Rowett Institute for Nutrition Research by the Chancellor, HRH The Duchess of Rothesay. The new building includes a state of the art, purpose built Human Nutrition Unit which ranks among the best facilities in Europe. The new facilities will ensure the continuation of cutting edge nutrition research in the North East of Scotland, and enhancing the close links Rowett researchers already have with clinical and academic colleagues across the Medical School and the Institute of Medical Sciences at the Foresterhill campus.
- **The Centre for Medical Mycology** was set up earlier this year based on the ground-breaking research of the University’s Aberdeen Fungal Group (AFG). One of only 22 MRC Centres in the UK, it represents an investment of £6.5m by the MRC and the University of Aberdeen. Researchers will spearhead innovative research and training to generate knowledge that will improve the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of fungal diseases which contribute towards 1.3 million deaths every year. The official opening comes just a month after the University announced a new £600k research centre at the University of Cape Town (The AFGrlica Unit), specifically for targeting the fungal infections that kill up to one million people a year in the continent. The AFGrlica Unit complements an existing Wellcome Trust-funded Strategic Award, led by the AFG, where PhD students from low and middle income nations, including Africa, are trained in Aberdeen and other medical mycology Centres in the rest of the UK.

- **Centre for Civil Society and Rule of Law (CISRUL):** CISRUL studies the application of ideas globally, drawing on expertise from Modern Languages, History, Law, Politics, Sociology, Divinity and Education to examine how political principles function within and beyond the contemporary West. Concepts such as ‘citizenship’, ‘civil society’, and the ‘rule of law’ are used as often by policy makers as by scholars. Core to CISRUL’s mission is informing academic and public debate on how they are used, and to what effect. Currently supported by £300k funding from the ESRC, CISRUL represents a strategic focus for interdisciplinary research across the arts and humanities and the social sciences.

- **Soil science and climate change research** at the University of Aberdeen was recognised as world leading and best in the UK by REF 2014. Research in this area remains a priority and has attracted major international funding. N-Circle is a major Centre which brings together researchers from the UK and China. Led by the University of Aberdeen, it involves UK partners from the University of Cambridge, Scotland’s Rural College, ADAS and the University of East Anglia. The Centre will focus on the recycling nitrogen resources and closing the nitrogen cycle, supported by just under £3m from the BBSRC and the Newton Fund and over £4m from Chinese funders. The Red Soil project, funded by NERC, examines the management of red soils, infertile and unstable soils leached excessively by rainwater. Working with partners in China, the research adopts a red soil critical zone approach, reaching beyond soil processes to encompass the atmosphere above, geology and groundwater below. The insights gained and modelling outputs will provide valuable data for policy decisions in China about their management.

- **Research capacity building in Tanzania:** The University of Aberdeen and the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) have been awarded €2m by the European Union to help develop higher education and research capacity in Tanzania and create a sustainable oil and gas sector in the East African country. The three year project will promote learning, research and knowledge sharing between the University in conjunction with the Aberdeen Institute of Energy (AIE) and the UDSM.

- Interdisciplinary research to explore the **Aberdeen Burgh Records:** the historical importance of the Aberdeen Burgh records have been recognised by UNESCO by placing them on the Memory of the World Register. Historians and lawyers are now collaborating on a £310k Leverhulme project to analyse legal practice and the development of the law in the city between 1398 and 1511. The continuity of the council registers allows questions of legal change to be addressed meaningfully, and not just relying on ‘snapshots’ of evidence from different points of time. The team intends to enlarge and sharpen perspectives on law and legal change over time, seeking to foster European comparison and, in a Scottish context, prompt a deep reconsideration of the geography of law and politics in the Kingdom.
3.2 Competitive Research and Research Income

The University generated a research income of £63,999k in 2015/16. As part of our Strategic Plan for 2015-2020 we aim to increase research, consultancy and other knowledge exchange income from this baseline to at least £65m by 2020. Income from research councils is expected to increase from £13,326,000 to £16,246 by 2020.

Research income from grants and contracts showed an increase of 4% in 2015/16 compared to the previous year. This is against a background of restructuring and refocusing our research agenda. The income per FTE academic staff has grown by 16%, from £47.8k per FTE in 2014/15 to £55.4k in 2015/16. The institutional Strategic Plan 2015-20 sets out ambitious growth targets for research income, and we have put in place strategies and processes that will enable us to achieve them.

The main opportunities for growth of quality activity and income for research and knowledge exchange arise from changes in the external funding landscape and development of external partnerships.

The City Deal will offer opportunities within Aberdeen and the region, and reaching out further to industry nationally and internationally. The Government’s White Paper, ‘Higher Education: Success as a Knowledge Economy’, announced the creation of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) which will bring together all the research funding councils, research support currently located within HEFCE and Innovate UK. This, together with the stronger emphasis on interdisciplinary research recommended by Sir Nicholas Stern in his review of the Research Excellence Framework, will create funding opportunities for institutions whose research strengths and knowledge exchange activities are well aligned with government priorities.

The way in which the University enables and encourages interdisciplinary research is currently under review. A working group will report to management early in 2017, having taken evidence from the academic community and considered good practice elsewhere in the sector. The review will also consider the role that major research facilities play in the development and delivery of interdisciplinary and challenge-led research.

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), administered by RCUK, is a £1.5bn fund (2016/17 to 2020/21) to support research projects that answer the Government’s research priorities and that support development in ODA countries. Research strengths identified in the REF, and investment in facilities in the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health help to ensure that researchers at the University of Aberdeen are well placed to access the fund.

BBSRC has recognised the potential within the institution through an award to pump prime activities and applications to the GCRF. The University has attracted further enabling awards to support research excellence from the Wellcome Trust (Institutional Strategic Support Fund, £1.5m over 5 years) and the MRC (MRC Discovery Award which provides development funding for research areas that have the potential to be recognised as MRC Centres of Excellence in the near future).

The main challenges for the University of Aberdeen include an increasingly competitive funding environment, and uncertainty over Brexit in terms of access to EU funding and retention of key staff, including those from EU countries and those who wish to continue their careers within the EU.

Early in 2017 we will launch the Grants Academy which will be the underpinning infrastructure to support the development and nurturing of the University’s future leaders in research. The Grants Academy will support all stages of the research life cycle from ideas conception, identification of a funding opportunity, through development of a funding application, research delivery, award management and onward implementation of research findings for impact. It will promote a community of researchers providing constructive peer support, complemented by networking events, interdisciplinary sandpits and staff development. It is based on best practice in the sector and on our own experience with quality assurance and internal peer review of some RCUK grant applications, which has seen an increase in our NERC and BBSRC success rates. These activities will be
supported by core funds and will be supplemented by enabling funds from external funders (see above).

**REF Preparations**

We will be participating in the consultation process on the next Research Excellence Framework and have begun the identification of excellent research outputs and impacts that may be submitted in 2020. Over the duration of this Outcome Agreement, we will focus on enabling and supporting excellent research, knowledge exchange and researcher development. Much of this activity is supported from our institutional core grants, supplemented by external enabling grants.

**Academic Impact**

Researchers at the University of Aberdeen published 2,546 outputs during 2015. The category normalised citation impact (citations per paper, normalised for subject, year and document type) has increased to 1.76 from 1.48 in 2015 (2016 metrics not available yet). In 2015/16, 87% of outputs funded by either RCUK or medical charities were made available publicly, in line with funders’ open access mandates. Overall, 61% of the journal articles published by University of Aberdeen researchers in 2015/16 were open access compliant. Compliance with the funders’ open access mandate has increased from an estimated 58% in 2014/15 to 87% in 2015/16.

We will continue to monitor academic impact, and the international reach of our publications. Effective dissemination and open access will remain a priority for the duration of this outcome agreement. In 2017, we will deliver a new public research portal which will feature prominently on our research web pages and which will enable the public to access our OA research publications.

**Enhanced Research Collaboration**

The University has renewed its commitment to membership of the Research Pools and we continue to play a major role in pooling initiatives and national research partnerships:

Northern Research Partnership in Engineering (NRPe), Scottish Institute for Research in Economics (SIRE), Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA), Scottish Informatics and Computer Science Alliance (SICSA), Marine Alliance for Science and Technology (MASTS), Soillse (Gaelic Research Capacity); Scottish Universities Physics Alliance II (SUPA, ScotCHEM, Energy Technology Partnership (ETP).

Additionally, we value our existing collaborations with the Research institutes, Scottish Government and NHS Scotland, particularly through the James Hutton Research institute, the Marine Laboratory and Health Science Scotland. Together with the University of Dundee and the Robert Gordon’s University and through our joint research institute (Offshore Renewal Institute), we continue to see the Renewables Industry as an opportunity for collaborative, interdisciplinary research.

Linked to our internationalisation strategy, new networks are being created to enhance the collaborative opportunities for our researchers. A few examples include our status as a founding member of the new European Network, AURORA, our renewed commitment to the Confucius Centre, a global Alliance with Curtin University and the multiple partnerships supported by the Newton Fund and Global Challenge Research Fund. The AURORA Network in particular will provide a platform for enhanced collaboration and to seek new opportunities for research and knowledge exchange across Europe.
Enhanced Public and Cultural Engagement

As outlined in Section 1.4, public engagement remains a priority – the University of Aberdeen’s Public Engagement with Research Unit maintains a calendar of popular events which include Explorathon, British Science Week and the successful lecture series Café Scientifique. We will continue to build on this success.

Between 2012 and 2015 PERU delivered the University’s Catalyst project. The Catalyst project, one in only seven awarded by the EPSRC across the UK, focused on the interplay between skills development and practical experience. Our model is to tightly align the two in pan-Scotland training programmes, with residential courses in public engagement, featuring a ‘live’ public event. Among those taking part in the training are SFC pooling initiatives such as SUPA and EastBio, the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities and the Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences. Working with the University’s Researcher Development Unit, the Catalyst award has enabled us to consolidate a strategy for interconnected skills-through-practice which has been referenced and echoed by Universities across the UK, including Southampton and Oxford. Since completing the project, we have continued to apply and expand this model.

We will deliver a new public research portal in 2017. It will provide continued access to the institutional repository of publications and, in addition, will deliver researcher fingerprinting technology which will enable identification of expertise. The portal will allow researchers, research users and members of the public to explore expertise and publications across all research areas within the University of Aberdeen.

3.3 Knowledge Exchange

Delivering excellent non-academic impact of our research is one of the two specific goals articulated in our institutional Strategic Plan 2015-2020. The REF recognised 85% of our impact as either 4* (world-leading) or 3* (internationally excellent).

One of the first initiatives to be launched under the City Deal is a new MSc programme, which was developed to address industry needs. The MSc Oil and Gas Innovation is a collaboration between the Oil and Gas Innovation Centre and Scottish universities that aims to develop new technologies in exploration, production and decommissioning. The University of Aberdeen is co-ordinating this new MSc programme which is research-led and aimed at individuals with industry experience or companies with innovative ideas that they wish to develop. The first students will enrol in September 2017.

Over the last year, knowledge exchange activities have continued to perform well, and our spin-out companies and KE team have been recognised externally for the quality of their work. Knowledge exchange and innovation will remain important factors in our ability to attract external funding, as most funding streams expect non-academic impact and knowledge exchange activities among the outcomes to be delivered from grant income.

The University has continued to play a major role in the City Deal, a regional initiative with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, the Robert Gordon University, Scottish Enterprise and Opportunity North East (ONE). The City Deal provides opportunities for industrial engagement through projects that address industry needs and seeks to contribute to the economic development of the region through new job and company creation, through the Innovation Theme of the Deal. The four strands of Innovation include Oil and Gas, BioPharma, Food and Drink and Tourism, with “Big Data” playing a role in each of the strands. The leading strand, the Oil and Gas Technology Centre (OGTC) has been incorporated and has identified some initial priorities for the oil and gas sector. The University and RGU are working together to work towards those priorities. The first initiative in response to the changing industry landscape in oil and gas, was launched in 16/17 through a new MSc in Decommissioning, with significant industrial engagement. Further postgraduate training is expected in response to the industrially defined needs within the City Deal framework. The development of
BioPharma and food and drink themes are seen as key contributors to the growth of these sectors in the region and areas for economic diversification.

The University has achieved two spin-outs in 15/16 with our additional membership of the new company, Opportunity NorthEast, out of 11 required over the planning period, with a further two achieved in 16/17 to date. Our new companies continue to attract venture funding. The number of start-ups from students has been significantly enhanced by the Enterprise Campus and ABVenture Zone, which provides business incubator space for students. Our involvement in Enterprise Campus has resulted in development and sharing of best practice in student entrepreneurship across the sector. Providing accelerator programmes and access to business plan competitions remains a key objective, in particular with our collaborators within ONE, Elevator and as contributor to Converge Challenge. We have renewed our partnership with Santander Universities to provide our students with access to business plan competitions, finance, mentors and internships with SMEs.

**ABVenture Zone**

In partnership with Robert Gordon University and Elevator, ABVenture Zone provides an incubation space to support growing businesses and entrepreneurs to develop new products and services. Part of the Accelerate Aberdeen programme, which is funded through Aberdeen City Council under the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport Superconnected Cities initiative, the incubation space is particularly suitable for digital and IT idea development but is equally open to entrepreneurs targeting other sectors.

http://www.abventurezone.com/

We have embedded knowledge exchange outcomes and non-academic impact in the activities offered through the Grant Academy; enabling funds to support KE activities are available through our UIF allocation and the BBSRC GCRF impact accelerator award and we are also providing bespoke training to embed culture change in our interactions with industry. An MRC Proximity to Discovery award will support KE and people exchange in 2017/18 to support our engagement with the life science industrial sector and cluster development as part of ACRD. We are recording and monitoring non-academic impact to provide a portfolio of case studies from which to learn and improve.

We continue to seek opportunities to secure matched funding from industry, whether that is for KTP projects, Innovate UK, studentships, or for SFC funded Innovation Centre projects. Our industry and overseas supported research income remains strong at over £12m for 15/16, at 19% of our total research grant income.

ABVenture Zone is an incubation space for new start up and spin-out companies, encouraging entrepreneurs to develop new products and services. It is part of the Accelerate Aberdeen programme, funded through Aberdeen City Council under the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport Superconnected Cities Initiative. It offers flexible space and state of the art facilities. ABVenture Zone opened in May 2015 and, in less than 2 years, has hosted 20 entrepreneurs; eight start-up companies have been formed by University of Aberdeen postgraduate students.

Jumpstart: In the summer of 2015 the University of Aberdeen Business School teamed up with Elevator, a social enterprise dedicated to supporting entrepreneurship and business development across Scotland. The aim of the partnership was to bring together the talented participants on the University’s MBA programme with start-up teams supported by Elevator. Students and start-up companies were matched up and the students worked alongside the start-up companies to provide advice and support. This activity was linked to the compulsory courses the students were taking in Finance, Strategy and Supply Chain Management. Supporting the real needs of start-up companies proved an exciting challenge to the students, some of whom have subsequently joined the starts ups they supported.
3.4 Innovate UK Engagement

We aim to increase the number of Innovation Vouchers (or similar) to 10 by 2020 from a baseline of 4 in 2014/15, and increase Follow-on IVs (or similar) with a 30% conversion activity by 2020. We also aim to have one Horizon 2020 IV over the span of the Outcome Agreement. We will continue to promote IVs and H2020 IVs to our SME partners as a first step for innovation and collaboration.

We will be refreshing our strategy for industry engagement, to reflect the changing opportunities addressed within the UK Government’s Industry, the proposed Industrial Strategies Challenges Fund (ISCF), Innovate UK’s Thematic based support structure and Scotland’s Innovation landscape. Our engagement in the City Deal, along with our existing knowledge exchange activities, provide a robust platform from which to engage in the ISCF and Innovate UK. The new Manager for Scotland (Innovate UK) provides an additional communication route for Universities to increase the level of stakeholder engagement, but also to promote the new structure to both researchers and companies. We are working in partnership across Scotland and locally to deliver workshops to promote the new thematic calls for Innovate UK, and particularly to ensure SMEs continue to access the KTP scheme to increase their level of R&D capability. Innovate UK funding will be a key target for converted IVs (or similar) and the recent restructuring of funding opportunities available through Innovate UK will aid this objective.

We remain a committed member of the North East KTP centre, with the new membership provided by Abertay University and UHI broadening the offering of the Centre and contributing to its sustainability.

Interface and the SFC Vouchers have complemented the landscape for academic and industry funding. Our engagement with Interface remains strong and we have created a few areas of excellence with a strong record of meeting the industry demands provided by Interface (e.g. Food & Drink, ICT and App development, engineering services). In 2015/16, four Innovation Voucher projects were approved, and we anticipate increasing this number through access to our research expertise via our Expert Unit portal (to be launched in 2017). Our strategic leadership in Interface Food and Drink has provided the wider sector with an alternative model to Innovation centres, whilst still addressing industry demand lead collaborative needs, through the use of Industry Special Interest Groups.

Whilst we recognise the opportunity through the Innovation Centres to enhance industry collaboration, our engagement and successes have not been universal across the Innovation Centres, resulting in particularly good examples of collaboration with Stratified Medicine, IBioIC, and OGIC. In our engagement with industry through Innovation Vouchers and Innovation Centres, we use standard non-transactional template agreements. We have capitalised on areas of strength to engage with the UK Catapults, particularly in Transport and Cell and Gene Therapy.

We will be working with our partners to ensure we support the priorities in the Scottish innovation and skills agenda, to be published later this year. Our University Innovation Fund submission outlines in detail how we will address the individual UIF Outcomes and the Priority Actions.

3.5 Support for Researchers

Research active staff across all career stages and disciplines are supported strategically by a suite of strategies, policies and associated action plan which positively impact the career and professional development support and opportunities for our researchers. The wider context for researchers is drawn from our institutional Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and companion strategies for People, Research and Knowledge Exchange, Athena SWAN and Teaching and Learning. The remit of the Strategic Plan includes creating an environment and culture where there is an expectation of research excellence and where researchers can thrive. The institution holds an Athena SWAN Bronze Award which recognise our ongoing commitment to the advancement and promotion of careers and personal development of women in STEMM and the HR Excellence in Research Award (achieved in

The University has introduced a system of Academic Line Management to ensure the effective general management of staff within a defined group within the University and the provision of academic leadership. The new system allows for bringing line management closer to individual researchers (ALMs manage no more than 14 other members of staff).

The University’s new Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (see paragraph 1.8) promotes the University’s commitment to supporting staff and students to safeguard their own mental health and to providing excellent support services for colleagues and students who have mental health and wellbeing concerns.

### 3.6 Researcher Development

Institutional support for researchers is provided within Schools and disciplines and across Professional Services. A dedicated Researcher Development Team is located within the Centre for Academic Development and supports the provision of training and professional development activities for research students, research-only (postdocs) and academic staff. Working collaboratively with Professional Services colleagues, Schools add disciplines the Centre supports strategic priorities in teaching, learning and researcher development and provides a sustainable and integrated environment for staff and students seeking to develop their teaching, learning and research practice.

The Centre supports early career researchers and academic staff to maximise their research and teaching capacity and career development through training and development opportunities in the following areas:

**Academic Leadership**

Bespoke Principal Investigators (PI) development programmes promote excellence in leadership and management for PIs. These programmes are designed to support new and aspiring and also experienced PIs to ensure that they are equipped to reach their full potential by enhancing their understanding of the University environment. The programme outlines their roles and responsibilities, raising awareness of the support available within the University and developing their people management, leadership and project management skills. Programmes are targeted towards junior and senior PIs within Colleges. Since their introduction in 2007, we have delivered over 16 programmes to 296 PIs across the University.

**Researcher Skills and Career Development**

The Researcher Development programme provides a University-wide programme of development opportunities, designed to enhance personal and professional development of postgraduate researchers and research staff through a variety of open and bespoke courses, workshops and individual interventions. Training programmes and courses are designed for all our postgraduate researchers and/or research staff and recognise that not all of our researchers will remain in an academic role. To this end, the Centre coordinates a comprehensive programme of activities to support researchers to deliver societal and economic impact in a global environment - for example in enterprise, entrepreneurship, creativity and commercialisation, teaching and self-management. The Centre promotes the importance of engaging in skills development in a variety of ways and the importance of building a portfolio of evidence of skills and learning.

Working in collaboration with the Careers Service and the Public Engagement with Research teams, the centre provides opportunities for researchers to practically develop skills including leadership development (Enterprising Researchers; Leadership Academy, Explorathon), engagement and knowledge exchange and writing and intrapreneurship.
Research Governance and Ethics training, in accordance with the Concordat for Research Integrity, is provided through an online module for all PGR students and research active staff. A companion module for Research Integrity is under development and will be launched in 2017.

**Teaching Enhancement**

The CAD supports teaching development across all levels of researcher (including postgraduate research students) through workshops and development programmes accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). A teaching continuing professional development (CPD) framework has been developed which recognises excellence in teaching and learning activities.

Our CPD framework includes an accredited CPD programme in the Principles of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, four PG Cert programmes and support to achieve fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (at Associate Fellowship, Fellowship, Senior Fellowship and Principal Fellowship level). Since the introduction of the new framework the number of individuals obtaining a fellowship annually has been accelerating and is currently double the 2014 figure (39 to 82). As of January 2017, 34.1% of individuals with teaching responsibilities at the University hold HEA fellowships at one level or another. In calculating this percentage we have included doctoral students who are engaged in teaching. In line with the support we give to early career researchers such as doctoral students, and our commitment to ensuring the highest standards of teaching, many of the doctoral students engaged in teaching gain HEA Associate Fellow status. The equivalent figure considering academic staff alone increases to 35.3%. In both cases, our percentage of staff with Fellowships is above the sector average which according to the HEA is around 30%. In addition we have a number of staff who hold other recognised teaching qualifications or accreditations such as a PGCHE, GTCS registration, Academy of Medical Educators’ accreditation etc. The current strategic plan commits the University to ensuring that 100% of staff involved in teaching hold a recognised teaching qualification or accreditation by 2020.

**3.7 Support for Postgraduate Research Students**

In 2017, the University will deliver a single Graduate School for postgraduate research students (PGR students) that will support their recruitment, development and management across the entire PhD journey. The Graduate School (or Doctoral College) will deliver a high level of pastoral care and support professional and personal development, with a strong emphasis on generic skills, employability, practitioner engagement and entrepreneurship. It will also support supervisors through clearly signposted support services and clearly articulated expectations, complemented by a programme of supervisor training. Research methods and research specific skills are provided within schools and disciplines.

It continues to be challenging for the University to grow the postgraduate research (PGR) population although the University has successfully increased the number of international students studying at PGR level. Britain’s exit from the European Union will make this target even more challenging. In 2014/15 the University had 860 PGR students. Our aim is to have reached a total of 1,100 students by 2020. The structured, supportive environment that will be provided through the Graduate School relating to support for researchers around academic leadership, career development/employability, innovation and creativity skills and evidence of institutional investment in training and development and of how our academic leaders (PIs and supervisors) are supported are essential to be embedded within funding applications and within the new Graduate School. Clear messages around this vibrant, supportive community can also be exploited when engaging with prospective postgraduate students.

**Researcher Development**

Centrally, academic writing and generic skills development for PGR students is provided by the Researcher Development team and the Student Learning Service, based in the Centre for Academic Development (see below for specific detail on researcher development). PGR students have access to skills development through workshops, individual writing advice sessions and online materials. All
new PGR students are provided with the opportunity, via their School or College working in partnership with the Centre, to undertake an introductory development session on demonstrating and/or tutoring. In tandem with this, Schools frequently offer discipline-specific support and development around marking and feedback provision.

PGR researcher development is supported through the dedicated Researcher Development team within the Centre for Academic development. The Centre supports early career researchers and academic staff to maximise their research and teaching capacity and career development through training and development opportunities.

The Enterprising Researchers Project, funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), provides unique opportunities to collaborate with business and industry. Businesses from all sectors can host a doctoral researcher, or small team of researchers, to leverage the skills of postgraduate researchers to address specific business needs. Taking part provides researchers with valuable insight into the private sector and provides specific examples of both leadership and enterprise skills. Successful partnerships have been made with employers including Deeside Water and Mitchells of Inverurie

Enterprising Researchers

Enterprising Researchers is an initiative which pairs uniquely qualified University of Aberdeen researchers with local businesses to address complex business needs. Our expertly trained researchers provide strategic insight and advice to overcome specific challenges. To date, we have placed ten researchers in successful collaborations with a range of businesses across retail, oil and gas and food and drink industries. These projects highlight the capacity of postgraduate researchers to make impactful contributions towards business growth and innovation.

www.abdn.ac.uk/enterprising-researchers

Supervisor training is coordinated jointly between the Colleges and the Centre. Each of the Colleges have agreed to implement a more structured approach to supervisor training by delivering a three-part training programme focusing on (i) monitoring & progression, (ii) supporting PhD writers and (iii) examining research projects. As the new Graduate School develops, supervisor training provision will be reviewed and refined in particular to embed PGR wellbeing and research integrity.
# Appendix B

## University of Aberdeen summary of baselines, milestones and targets

(* denotes priority measure)

### Priority 1: Widening access – learning that is accessible and diverse, attracting and providing more equal opportunities for people of all ages, and from all communities and backgrounds

#### Measure 1: Articulation - The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled learners articulating from college to degree level courses with advanced standing

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scotland-domiciled HN entrants from college to UG programmes</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Scotland-domiciled HN entrants articulating with Advanced Standing</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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#### Measure 2: Deprivation - The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants from the 20% and 40% most deprived postcodes

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of SDUEs with known postcode</td>
<td>1521</td>
<td>1,018.48</td>
<td>1,064.78</td>
<td>1,101.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a: SDUEs from 20% most deprived postcodes</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>34.65</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>62.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b: SDUEs from 40% most deprived postcodes</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>173.25</td>
<td>193.2</td>
<td>212.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a: Proportion of SDUEs from 20% most deprived postcodes</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b: Proportion of SDUEs from 40% most deprived postcodes</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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#### Measure 3: SHEP Schools - The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants from the SHEP schools (i.e. schools with consistently low rates of progression to higher education)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total SDUEs</td>
<td>1523</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>1,208</td>
<td>1,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of SDUEs from SHEP schools</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>63.53</td>
<td>72.45</td>
<td>81.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of SDUE from SHEP Schools</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
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#### Measure 4: Protected Characteristics - The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants by different protected characteristic groups and care leavers

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>635.25</td>
<td>664.13</td>
<td>686.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Proportion</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Proportion</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Proportion</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1257</td>
<td>207.9</td>
<td>217.35</td>
<td>224.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21 Proportion</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 and over Proportion</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>1411</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>1,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of White SDUEs</td>
<td>1411</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>1,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of BME SDUEs</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>98.18</td>
<td>102.64</td>
<td>106.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of SDUEs with unknown Ethnicity</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion - White</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion - BME</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion - Other</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>1335</td>
<td>150.15</td>
<td>169.05</td>
<td>187.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number - Known Disability</td>
<td>1335</td>
<td>150.15</td>
<td>169.05</td>
<td>187.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number - Not known/refused</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion - Known Disability</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion - Known/refused</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion - Not known/refused</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Care Leavers</td>
<td>1519</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number - Care Leaver</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number - Not a Care Leaver</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>1515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion - Care Leaver</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>2.25%</td>
<td>2.24%</td>
<td>2.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 5: Retention by Protected Characteristics - The number and proportion of full-time first year Scotland-domiciled entrants from different characteristic groups returning to study in year two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD20 full-time first year SDUE</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>34.65</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>62.44 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD20 full-time first year SDUE Retained</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31.60</td>
<td>44.44</td>
<td>58.07 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion MD20 retained</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>91.20%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD20/40 full-time first year SDUE</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>173.25</td>
<td>193.2</td>
<td>212.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD20/40 full-time first year SDUE Retained</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>159.56</td>
<td>179.68</td>
<td>199.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion MD20/40 retained</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>92.10%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male entrants</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>519.75</td>
<td>543.38</td>
<td>561.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males Retained</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>489.08</td>
<td>518.93</td>
<td>545.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Males retained</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>94.10%</td>
<td>95.50%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female entrants</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>635.25</td>
<td>664.13</td>
<td>686.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females Retained</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>609.84</td>
<td>640.89</td>
<td>666.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Females retained</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96.50%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21 Entrants</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>1,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 21s Retained</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>907.32</td>
<td>950.54</td>
<td>988.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Under 21s retained</td>
<td>93.6%</td>
<td>95.80%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 and over Entrants</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>207.9</td>
<td>217.35</td>
<td>224.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 and over Retained</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>189.60</td>
<td>203.22</td>
<td>216.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of 21 and over retained</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
<td>91.20%</td>
<td>93.50%</td>
<td>96.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrants - White</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>1,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White - Retained</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>1,009.26</td>
<td>1,060.67</td>
<td>1,102.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion retained - white</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
<td>95.50%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrants - BME</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>98.18</td>
<td>102.64</td>
<td>106.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BME - Retained</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>94.15</td>
<td>98.53</td>
<td>102.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion retained - BME</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>95.90%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrants - Ethnicity not known</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known/refused - Retained</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion retained - Ethnicity not known</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrants - No Known Disability</td>
<td>945</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Known Disability - Retained</td>
<td>881</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion retained - No Known Disability</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrants - Disability</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>150.15</td>
<td>169.05</td>
<td>187.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability - Retained</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>141.44</td>
<td>162.12</td>
<td>181.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion retained - Disability</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>94.20%</td>
<td>95.90%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrants - Not known/refused</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known/refused - Retained</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion retained - not known/refused</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care Leavers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrants - Care Leavers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care Leavers Retained</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion retained - Care Leavers</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2: High quality learning and teaching -- an outstanding system of learning that is accessible and diverse where students progress successfully with the ability, ideas and ambition to make a difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 6: Retention - The number and proportion of full-time first year Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants returning to study in year two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of full-time first year SDUE</td>
<td>1055</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>1,208</td>
<td>1,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of full-time first year SDUE retained</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>1,088.70</td>
<td>1,147.13</td>
<td>1,198.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion retained</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure 7: Satisfaction - The difference (+/-) from the individual institution’s benchmark figure for students satisfied with the overall quality of their course of study in the National Student Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Satisfaction</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>89 *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Measure 8: STEM - The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants to STEM courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of SDUE to STEM courses</th>
<th>43.8%</th>
<th>45%</th>
<th>45%</th>
<th>45%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of SDUEs to STEM courses</td>
<td>667.00</td>
<td>519.75</td>
<td>543.38</td>
<td>561.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Measure 9a: Graduate Destinations - The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled graduates entering positive destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible population</th>
<th>1025</th>
<th>914.99</th>
<th>913.63</th>
<th>1075.11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of graduates in positive destinations</td>
<td>96.8%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of graduates in positive destinations</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>878.39</td>
<td>877.08</td>
<td>1032.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Measure 9b: Graduate Destinations - The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled graduates entering professional occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible population</th>
<th>tbc</th>
<th>914.99</th>
<th>913.63</th>
<th>1075.11</th>
<th>1075.11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of graduates in professional occupations</td>
<td>tbc</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of graduates in professional occupations</td>
<td>tbc</td>
<td>439.20</td>
<td>438.54</td>
<td>516.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Measure 10: The number of research postgraduate students

| RPG students | 860 | 910 | 960 | 1,100 |

### Measure 11: Total income from the UK Research Councils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RCUK income</th>
<th>£13,326k</th>
<th>£14,867k</th>
<th>£15,518k</th>
<th>£16,246k</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Measure 12: Total research income from all sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research income</th>
<th>£63,316k</th>
<th>£59,471k</th>
<th>£62,073k</th>
<th>£65,000k</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Measure 13: IVs - The number of SFC innovation Vouchers (IVs), Follow-on IVs and H2020 IVs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation Vouchers (IVs)</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follow-on IVs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2020</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Measure 14: UIF - Individual HEI UIF progress measures and sector wide reporting

For 2017-18 institutions are asked to provide a narrative on progress with their contribution to University Innovation Fund priority outcomes (these will be identified during consultation with the sector during the latter part of 2016 and signed off by the SFC’s Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee by January 2017)

### Priority 5: High-performing institutions – a coherent system of high-performing, sustainable institutions with modern, transparent and accountable governance arrangements

### Measure 15: Carbon - Gross carbon footprint (3-year period)

| Tonnes CO2e | tbc | 29,000 | 27,739 | 26,478 |

*
1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This paper presents the University's Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report and seeks to gain approval from the University Court to publish it by 30 April 2017 as required by the Equality Act 2010.

1.2 The University is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained within it.

1.3 A significant aspect of the duty is the publication of a report on the progress made by the University in meeting its Equality Outcomes and how it mainstreams equality across its activities. This report is required to be published by the end of April 2017.

1.4 In addition, the PSED has been extended recently to include additional reporting requirements in relation to the composition and profile of the University Court.

1.5 The University Court is invited to:

- Note the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and;
- Receive and approve the University’s Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes report.

1.6 Further information can be gained from Mrs Debbie Dyker, Director of Human Resources by e-mail d.j.dyker@abdn.ac.uk or telephone 01224 273732 or Janine Chalmers, Equality and Diversity Adviser by e-mail janine.chalmers@abdn.ac.uk or by telephone on 01224 273883.

2. **BACKGROUND**

2.1 The University, as a public body, must comply with the General and Specific duties (known as the Public Sector Equality Duty or PSED) contained in the Equality Act 2010.

2.2 The general duty requires universities to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity, considering the need to: remove or minimise disadvantage, meet the needs of people with protected characteristics, and encourage participation where it is low;
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

2.3 The specific duties aim to help universities to better meet the general duty. They are designed to support the development of evidence-based policies and practices; improve transparency and accountability; and deliver positive outcomes for individuals. The specific duties are to:

- report on progress on mainstreaming the general duty into all functions;
- develop and publish a set of equality outcomes that cover all protected characteristics (or explain why not all protected characteristics are covered);
- assess the impact of policies and practices against the needs of the general duty;
- gather and use information on employees;
- publish gender pay gap information;
- publish statements on equal pay for gender, race and disability;
- have due regard to the general duty in specified procurement practices;
- publish information in a manner that is accessible.
2.4 The Scottish Government has recently amended the specific duties in the Equality Act 2010 to introduce a new requirement on public sector bodies to publish the gender composition of their boards (University Court) and to produce succession plans to increase the diversity of their boards.

The amendments require that:
- the Scottish Ministers, from "time to time", gather information on the relevant protected characteristics of board members of listed bodies, to be aggregated into Scotland wide statistics on board participation;
- the Scottish Ministers provide that information back to listed bodies;

Public sector bodies must publish in their mainstreaming reports:
- information on the gender composition of boards;
- how they will increase the diversity of boards through succession planning, including use of data on protected characteristics.

3. **Strategic Context**

3.1 The principles of Equality and Diversity are embedded throughout the University's Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020. The University's mission within the Strategic Plan includes the commitment to "a culture of equality and diversity in which all staff and students thrive". The values included in the Strategic Plan commit the University to:

- Sustainable partnerships with stakeholders - driving a culture of inclusion and accessibility
- Respect for all within and beyond the University
- An empowered and ambitious community in which all can thrive.

4. **Equality Outcomes**

4.1 The University, along with all other public sector bodies, was required by the Equality Act 2010 to develop a set of Equality Outcomes in April 2013 and to produce a Mainstreaming Equality Report. An Interim Equality Outcome and Mainstreaming Report was then required to be published by April 2015. The full reports and the evidence used to develop the University's Outcomes can be found here: [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/vision-2271.php](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/vision-2271.php)

4.2 The University must now report on its progress against its Equality Outcomes and review the Outcomes themselves. The new Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report must be published by April 2017.

4.3 The University's current Equality Outcomes are as follows:

- The principles of Equality and Diversity will be a day-to-day consideration within all of the University's activities, both strategically and operationally;
- Staff will have greater understanding of their responsibilities in Equality and Diversity and apply this in their practice to positively advance equality;
- The University will be an inclusive community where staff and students are able to fulfil their full potential in their work or studies;
- The diversity of the University community will be celebrated and recognised so that all staff and students feel respected and valued;
- The University will further gender equality and address the gender balance in STEMM subjects.
5. **Consultation**

5.1 Consultation on what should be included in the Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes report has been undertaken with the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity, representatives from the University’s equality networks and the Campus Trades Unions.

6. **Resource Implications**

6.1 There are resource requirements arising from fulfilment of the PSED but not from this paper.

7. **Risk Management**

7.1 The University is legally required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Failure to do so could lead to prosecution by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the Equality Outcomes. Clearly, the Outcomes should result in a positive impact on equality and diversity across the protected characteristics.

9. **Sustainability & Social Responsibility**

9.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this paper.

10. **Recommended Action**

10.1 The University Court is invited to:

   - Note the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty;
   - Receive and approve the University’s Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes report.

11. **Further Information**

11.1 Further information can be gained from Mrs Debbie Dyker, Director of Human Resources by e-mail d.j.dyker@abdn.ac.uk or telephone 01224 273732 or Janine Chalmers, Equality and Diversity Adviser by e-mail janine.chalmers@abdn.ac.uk or by telephone on 01224 273883.

13 March 2017 [version] [Open]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board/Committee</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previously considered by</td>
<td>University Management Group 13 March 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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1 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on (1) the progress made by the University of Aberdeen in meeting its legal requirement to mainstream equality into its functions and fulfil the requirements of the general duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010; and (2) the progress made by the University towards achieving its Equality Outcomes.

1.2 The University developed a Single Equality Scheme in 2013 and reported on progress in 2015. The following five equality outcomes were agreed through a process of consultation with the staff and student community:

- The principles of Equality and Diversity will be a day-to-day consideration within all of the University’s activities, both strategically and operationally.
- Staff will have greater understanding of their responsibilities in Equality and Diversity and apply this in their practice to positively advance equality;
- The University will be an inclusive community where staff and students are able to fulfil their full potential in their work or studies;
- The diversity of the University community will be celebrated and recognised so that all staff and students feel respected and valued; and
- The University will further gender equality and address the gender balance in STEMM subjects.

1.3 These outcomes have provided a clear focus for the University's activities in relation to Equality and Diversity over the last 4 years.

2 Strategic Direction

2.1 The principles of Equality and Diversity are embedded within the University's Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020. The University’s mission within the Strategic Plan includes the commitment to embed “a culture of equality and diversity in which all staff and students thrive”. The values included in the Strategic Plan commit the University to:

- Sustainable partnerships with stakeholders - driving a culture of inclusion and accessibility
- Respect for all within and beyond the University
- An empowered and ambitious community in which all can thrive

2.2 The University has also agreed a specific vision for Equality and Diversity:

To strive to create an inclusive culture which celebrates the diversity of the University's staff and students. In recognising that this diversity brings new and engaging perspectives and enriches the experience of all who work, study and visit the University we will take a proactive approach to embedding and mainstreaming the principles of Equality and Diversity by:

- Driving the agenda at the highest strategic level and throughout the University;
- Communicating the Equality and Diversity Vision and the University's expectations widely to all staff and students;
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination;
- Sharing experiences and good practice;
- Educating staff and students on Equality and Diversity and their responsibilities;
- Engaging staff and students on Equality and Diversity matters.

2.3 One of the most significant changes since the publication of the report in 2015 has been the creation of the role of Vice Principal for People Strategy. This development reflects the
importance of the ‘People’ pillar within the University's Strategic Plan which includes the key goal “to foster a positive culture wherein our people are engaged, committed to our future, and champions of equality and diversity”. The role of Vice Principal for People Strategy encompasses the Equality and Diversity agenda. They chair the University's Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity and are a champion for Equality and Diversity.

3 Structure of Report

3.1 The structure of this report has been set out to show clearly how the University is meeting the general duty within the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, there will be information on our progress and actions required in relation to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advancing equality of opportunity, considering the need to: remove or minimise disadvantage, meet the needs of people with protected characteristics, and encourage participation where it is low and;
- fostering good relations between people from different groups.
- diversity within the composition of boards

3.2 The report also outlines the progress that the University has made towards meeting our Equality Outcomes since our review in 2015.

4 ELIMINATE UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION

This section highlights how we have been working towards meeting the first of the four ‘needs’ of the general duty within the Equality Act 2010 and mainstreaming equality to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We have made progress in this regard through supporting staff and students to increase their knowledge of equality and diversity, enhancing our promotions process to mitigate against bias, implementing equality impact assessments, reviewing and making clear strides towards eliminating our gender pay gap and enhancing support for staff and students.

4.1 Equality and Diversity module – Diversity in the Workplace Training

4.1.1 All University staff are required to complete a mandatory online Equality and Diversity training module – Diversity in the Workplace. Since publication of the report in 2015, completion rates have increased significantly, with 70% of staff completing this training. We continue to aim for a 100% completion rate and have introduced, since the report in 2015, a requirement that all new staff are to complete this training module within the first three months of their employment. Since the last report we have also introduced a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) on completion rates of the Equality and Diversity training across the University. This KPI requires Directors and Heads of School to monitor the uptake in their areas and report on progress. This has resulted in significant increase in uptake, particularly in the academic areas. We have also implemented a robust training plan around this. The target to reach 100% completion rate has also been embedded into our Athena SWAN action plan.

The impact of these interventions will be monitored through staff surveys and analysing trends in relation to issues raised with the Staff Wellbeing Coordinators.

Action: Achieve 100% uptake of Diversity in the Workplace on-line training (Action 2.1)
4.2 **Unconscious Bias Training**

4.2.1 Since 2015, the University Unconscious Bias training has been delivered to a range of staff groups, using both internal and external trainers. Thus far, the Senior Management Team, members of the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity, College Diversity Leads, Human Resources staff and other senior colleagues have received training and/or briefing. Members of the University’s Promotion Panels have also received training with a follow-up briefing paper prepared for discussion before each promotion panel meeting. This takes into account unconscious bias research which suggests that raising awareness of bias immediately before a decision-making situation mitigates against bias occurring.

4.2.2 The impact of the unconscious bias training is evidenced by the feedback received. 95% of respondents to the feedback survey rated the training as Good or Excellent, with respondents commenting that the training had motivated them to make behavioural changes in decision-making situations. Feedback also suggested that all staff should receive the training and that follow-up sessions should be available. We have acted on this feedback by committing to additional training sessions from an external training consultancy.

4.2.3 We are aware that unconscious bias can pervade all areas of the University, from senior management decision-making to one-to-one discussions between staff and/or students. We are committed to continuing the roll-out of training.

**Action:** Develop and roll out a plan for unconscious bias training, considering both face-to-face and on-line options (Action 2.2).

4.3 **On-line Equality and Diversity Training for Students**

4.3.1 The University has introduced an online equality and diversity training module for students, following an equality and diversity survey of students in 2015. This training is mandatory for all Level 1 students and the uptake has been steadily increasing. To date 711 students of the 2600 students offered the training (27.3%) have completed it. Completion of the training, is added to their degree certificate transcript.

4.3.2 We are clear in our responsibility to ensure that students treat each other and staff with respect and that the students’ contribution to creating an inclusive and tolerant culture is equally important as that of staff.

4.3.3 Our intention is to ensure that all students complete this training and that it becomes viewed as an essential aspect of studying at the University of Aberdeen. This will be enforced through increased communication to students, engaging with Personal Tutors to encourage them to promote the training and gaining feedback on the training so improvements can be made to it where appropriate. While it is too early to assess the wider impact of this training, feedback on the course so far has been positive.

**Action:** Monitor uptake of the student equality and diversity on-line training (Action 2.3)

**Action:** Implement feedback/suggestions process (Action 2.4)

4.4 **Mitigating Bias in the Promotions Process**

4.4.1 To mitigate the potential for unconscious bias/discrimination in our promotions process, we have introduced the opportunity for the first stage of the process to be conducted on the basis of a ‘blind review’. We will monitor the impact of the introduction of this.

4.4.2 Our promotions statistics indicated that application rates for promotion are similar for both men and women when distribution within the population is taken into account, however, overall there was no clear trend on who was more successful in gaining a promotion (see
table 1 below). We provide coaching and training for all managers on discussing promotions with their staff and we are responding to feedback (which indicated that staff require increased guidance and support in navigating the promotions process) from career development focus groups to ensure that information regarding the promotions process is fully accessible and routinely publicised. We also provide ongoing one-to-one coaching for staff and a well-publicised mentoring scheme. At present we have 42 females and 15 males being mentored through the scheme.

Table 1: Success rates within promotion process by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applied</th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Success rates (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>% female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>52.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>57.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Action: Review the impact of the introduction of blind review on promotion outcomes (Action 3.2).

Action: Continue to offer awareness sessions for all staff on the annual promotion exercise (Action 3.3).

4.5 Equality Impact Assessment

4.5.1 The University continues to assess its policies and decisions through the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment process. Managers who are proposing new policies or initiatives are required to explain in their covering papers to University committees whether an Equality Impact Assessment is required and provide clear reasons if they believe it is not required. The Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity oversees the Equality Impact Assessment process and provides feedback on assessments presented to them. Whilst this process is in place we have established from the quality of the impact assessments presented, that further guidance and training is required in this area and have identified this as a key priority for the forthcoming 6 months.

Action: Revise the guidance in committee paper templates (Action 1.1).

Action: Provide additional training on equality impact assessment for appropriate staff (Action 1.2).

4.6 Equal Pay Statements

4.6.1 Equal pay between men and women is a legal right under both domestic and European law. We recognise that it is our duty to promote equality across the four main strands of gender, ethnicity, disability and age. This duty, and requirement, extends to the provision of equal pay for work of equal value.

4.6.2 The University recognises the importance of ensuring our pay system delivers equal pay for equal work and to be confident that the University is achieving this an Equal Pay Audit is carried out every three years.

4.6.3 The University’s Equal Pay Audit analyses four equality strands: gender, ethnicity, disability and age. Our analysis also gives consideration to Occupational Segregation factors.

4.6.4 Our most recent Equal Pay Audit was conducted in December 2016, using snapshot data as at August 2016. The data used in this review excludes the salaries of; Principal, Vice Principals, Clinicians and TUPE transfers with protected grades. The gender balance for the population under review currently stands at 56% female and 44% male. There has been very little change in the overall gender balance over the past four audit periods. Gender pay gap information is presented in section 4.7.
4.6.5 The proportion of black and minority ethnic groups (BME) currently stands at 8% alongside 88% white and 4% unknown. The BME representation has increased slightly from our last audit conducted in 2013. The overall Ethnic Pay Gap (EPG) for 2016 is 3%. This is based on a mean BME salary of £38,873 and a mean White salary of £40,206.

4.6.6 The number of employees with a declared disability is currently 103, representing 4% of the total population. For comparison, the number of employees declaring a disability from the 2013 review was 35, representing 1% of the total population. The overall Disability Pay Gap (DPG) is 16%, based on a mean salary of £33,140 per annum compared to a mean salary of £39,416 per annum for non-disabled staff. The number of colleagues who have a declared disability is low; although the overall Disability Pay Gap is 16%, the low numbers make it difficult to probe further due to data protection and confidentiality.

4.6.7 Research has shown that occupational segregation is one of the main causes of the pay gaps in the United Kingdom (Equality Challenge Unit, 2014). The University is committed to monitoring occupational segregation, equal access to training/development, supporting mobility as well as flexible working opportunities. The spread of the University population across 9 HESA Occupational Groups can be identified in (Table 2 below).

4.6.8 Occupational Segregation analysis according to HESA Groups shows within the University; Groups 1, 2 and 9 are characterised by comparable distribution of males and females. Groups 3 and 6, consist of a higher number of females while groups 4, 7, 5 and 8 are characterised by a significantly higher distribution of a particular gender (Table 2).

Table 2 : occupational segregation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HESA Employee Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 Elementary occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Process, plant and machine operatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Sales and customer service occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Caring, leisure and other service occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Skilled trades occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Administrative and secretarial occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Associate professional and technical occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Professional occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Managers, directors and senior officials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |
|----------------------------------|
| Female | Male |

4.6.9 Examples of imbalanced groups’ composition using the University ‘Post Long Description’ (F/M):

**Group 4:** Income Assistant (3/0), Payroll officer (5/0), School Finance Person (5/3), Information Assistant (10/2), Senior Information Assistant (13/2), School Administrative Officer (7/1), Clerical Assistant (6/3), Personal Assistant (16/0), Receptionist (6/1), Secretary (81/4)

**Group 7:** Sales Assistant (3/0)

**Group 5:** Ground Person (2/17), Assistant Engineer/Electrician (0/6), Electrician (0/8), Engineer (0/6)

**Group 8:** Maintenance (0/3), Porter/Driver (0/11)
The examples above of imbalanced groups reflect those most commonly reported across all sectors.

The University will continue to analyse Occupational Segregation and strive to achieve a more even distribution of gender across occupations.

4.7 Gender Pay Gap Information

4.7.1 The overall (vertical) Gender Pay Gap (GPG) currently stands at 24% for 2016. This is based on a mean female salary of £34,272 per annum and a mean male salary of £45,334 per annum. When the GPG is calculated based on the median calculation this also stands at 24% and has reduced very slightly from 25% in 2013 and 36% in 2010.

4.7.2 The data used in this review excludes the salaries of; Principal, Vice Principals, Clinicians and TUPE transfers with protected grades. It is important to note that the overall GPG is indicative of the uneven distribution of males and females across the pay grades rather than an issue of equal pay for equal work. The University will conduct annual Gender Pay Gap Reporting to comply with the new Government Legislation and ensure the institution gender pay gap is continually monitored.

4.7.3 Although the gender pay gap overall is 24%, Table 3 below demonstrates the gaps within each grade. The pay gap within grades shows acceptable gaps within the recommended 5% threshold. The pay gap within each grade does not exceed 2% (except in Grade 9 and 9 off scale).

Table 3: Pay gaps by grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>MEAN (FTE Salary £'s)</th>
<th>MEDIAN (FTE Salary £'s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Off</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1547</td>
<td>1212</td>
<td>2759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7.3 In general terms the University does not have significant need for concern over Equal Pay when comparing Equal Pay for Equal Work. To ensure the University continues to meet Equal Pay obligations and sector benchmarks we will commit to the following actions to avoid unfair discrimination, to reward fairly the skills, experience and potential of all our staff and thereby to increase efficiency, productivity and competitiveness and enhance the University’s reputation and image:

**Action:** Examine our existing and future pay practices for all our employees including part-time workers, those on fixed-term contracts or contracts of unspecified duration (Action 1.3).
Action: Carry out regular monitoring of the impact of our pay practices and report at least every three years (Action 1.4)

Action: Provide training and guidance to managers and supervisory staff involved in decisions regarding pay and benefits (Action 1.5)

Action: Discuss and agree our equal pay policy with representatives of the recognised campus trade unions (Action 1.6)

4.8 Transgender Policies/Training

4.8.1 We are in discussions with the Scottish Transgender Alliance to deliver training to approximately 50 members of key staff from across the University, both staff and student facing. The Staff and Post Graduate LGBT Network have been proactive in suggesting how the training is delivered.

Action: Deliver training to appropriate staff by December 2017 (Action 1.7).

4.8.2 We have engaged with our student transgender forum to ascertain their support needs. The discussions indicated that further clarity is required for our transgender staff and students on how to request a change of name on certificates, e-mail addresses and ID cards. It was noted that some students where instigating this process through Student Support, but would have preferred to have been empowered to make the requests on their own behalf.

Action: Promote transgender training as identified in 4.8.1

4.8.3 In consultation with the Scottish Transgender Alliance we are reviewing the language used in research and surveys conducted at the University to ensure that the wording used for questions relating to gender identity and sexual orientation is inclusive of transgender, non-binary and lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals. At this stage, draft guidelines have been created for the School of Psychology and it is intended that these will be refined for consideration across the University.

Action: Develop and implement draft guidelines on gender language (Action 1.8)

4.9 Widening Participation

4.9.1 Although widening participation and socio-economic status are not included in the Equality Act 2010, there has been an increasing the collaboration between the Equality and Diversity and Widening Participation teams at the University over the last two years. In particular through the engagement of the Widening Participation Manager in the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity and through the Equality and Diversity involvement in project work. This collaboration has allowed projects in both areas to take account of equality and diversity outcomes. Two of the most significant of these projects are outlined below.

4.9.2 Scottish Funding Council (SFC) REACH Project

4.9.3 The University is a partner institution with the successful SFC REACH Project. This programme focuses on raising the number of applicants, offers and entrants from disadvantaged backgrounds into high demand and competitive areas of study. REACH focuses on schools with below-average progression rates on to higher education and pupils from the most deprived areas of Scotland.

4.9.4 We have achieved all targets previously set for applicants from areas of social deprivation (MD40 applicants) into Medicine and Law. Despite the University being in an area which has significantly lower areas of social deprivation than other parts of Scotland, we have been able to raise aspirations and support those pupils who wish to enter legal or medical fields from traditionally low progression areas.
4.9.5 We are now assessing the link between the success of this project and the admissions rates in relation to the protected characteristics.

Action: Analyse data produced as a result of the REACH project and cross-reference with equality protected characteristics (Action 3.4)

4.9.6 Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) Attracting Diversity Project

4.9.7 The ECU Attracting Diversity Project is a national initiative which involves a number of Higher and Further Education institutions in Scotland. The purpose of this initiative is to develop and implement interventions to attract and increase student diversity, to develop more inclusive approaches in recruitment functions and to better target underrepresented groups.

4.9.8 The University became involved in this project in late 2014. A team from across the University and the Student’s Association has been working together to progress the aims of the project with priority objectives as follows:

- To embed the continuous improvement and refinement of equality and diversity considerations in student recruitment functions;
- To embed the continuous improvement and refinement of the University’s data recording process in regards to equality and diversity in student recruitment;
- To conduct an analysis of the current data held by the University so as to identify any unintentional equality gaps in student recruitment;
- To conduct a review of the equality data that we do and don’t record;
- To embed the continuous improvement and refinement of the recruitment process in response to the data analysis exercise.

4.9.9 In the project’s current phase, we will develop an outreach initiative with a local secondary school with the aim of developing a resource which can be used by academic departments to tackle equality barriers and misconceptions at a secondary school level. We will work with a class of S3-S4 pupils to develop a poster and presentation on gender in Computing Science. This initiative will involve a series of on-campus and in-school workshops. A focus group will also be held with parents / guardians to learn about their views of the subject in relation to gender. At the end of the project the pupils will attend an event at the University to give a presentation on what they have learned. The University’s team will use the data and information gathered from the work with the schools and the pupils to develop the resource.

Action: Development of appropriate resources to support the initiative to be completed by June 2017 (Action 3.5).

4.10 Enhanced Support Mechanisms for Staff and Students

4.10.1 Since the report in 2015, the University has introduced a revised Academic structure, with new academic line managers, thus enhancing the support offered to staff, including addressing equality issues. An extensive training programme has been provided to the new academic line managers and this has included training on equality and diversity. This represents a significant change in the University’s line management structures and, together with the updated performance management and promotions processes creates a more coherent support structure for staff and ensures the opportunity to effectively further communicate and roll out equality initiatives to staff.

To further support academic line managers we will continue to provide our suite of training and development opportunities which will include promoting equality and dealing with equality related concerns.

Action: Continue to deliver training for Academic Line Managers and provide specific sessions on:

- Promoting equality
• Dealing with equality-related staff concerns
• Supporting disabled staff

(Action: 4.2)

4.10.2 In relation to student support, a system of Personal Tutors has been implemented. Personal Tutors are the first line of support for students and have an important role in monitoring and supporting students with equality concerns. We are clear that Personal Tutors require support to fulfil their role sufficiently and have already provided them with guidance in specific areas, particularly in relation to the Mental Health Strategy.

To further support them we will provide training on supporting students with equality related concerns and raise awareness on the support mechanisms available within the University.

Action: Provide training/briefing to Personal Tutors on:

• Supporting students with equality-related concerns
• The support mechanisms available at the University

(Action 4.2)

5 FOSTER GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT GROUPS

This section showcases the work the University has undertaken to meet the second need of the general duty within the Equality Act 2010: to foster good relations between people from different groups and mainstream equality and diversity.

Our equality networks provide opportunities for fostering good relations and the review of our equality governance structures now underpins and facilitates those opportunities. In addition, the networks contribute their valuable insights and views into a range of University groups, including the Employee Engagement Working Group. We continue to enhance our packages to welcome international staff and students, which in the current political climate has become an increasing priority. We are proud of our work with Stonewall Scotland and our increasing ranking in their Workplace Equality Index.

5.1 Equality Network Groups

5.1.1 As reported in the 2015 report, the University has a thriving set of equality network groups. These include the Staff and Post Graduate LGBT Network; the Senior Women’s Network; the Disability Network and the Harassment Advisers Network. Since then further enhancements have been made by Groups agreeing to take a self-managing approach. The Staff and Post Graduate LGBT Network has led the way with this approach. The Senior Women’s Network has now established a Steering Group and developed a clearer remit for the Network which hadn’t previously existed. The Disability Network Group has identified two co-chairs and has outlined a plan for meetings in the forthcoming year and is currently developing a Network Charter. The Harassment Advisers Network will be transferred into the Staff Wellbeing Coordinator remit (Further information about this can be found in section 6.1 below).

5.1.2 The key outcomes from the Network Groups since the 2015 report are:

• The University signed Stonewall’s No Bystander Pledge, but is clear that the pledge, in our University, applies to all of the protected characteristics;
• A Transgender Policy is currently being developed and training being commissioned from the Scottish Transgender Alliance;
• The Networks have contributed to the development of values for the University through the Employee Engagement Group;
• The Network groups have provided specialist guidance and supported the development of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the University staff and students.
• The Senior Women’s Network members supported the University’s 15 delegates on the Leadership Foundation’s Aurora Programme by becoming mentors or becoming Aurora Role Models under the banner of “pass it on”; and
• The Senior Women’s Network has increased in size to approximately 80 members.

5.1.3 The University Race Working Group is seeking to establish a race network at the University, although we have been involved in a Scottish Race Network organised by the Equality Challenge Unit. Our data indicates the low levels of staff who identify as BME and so this area may pose challenges. However, we are very clear that this is an area which requires to be progressed, particularly in the light of the Brexit vote.

5.1.4 We have been proactive in engaging with staff and students who could potentially be affected by the outcome of the vote and also providing reassurances where possible. For staff, this includes establishing webchats to provide the opportunity for staff to raise questions and convey information as appropriate.

Action: Establish a Race Equality Network Group by November 2017 (Action 4.8)

Action: Continue to monitor the impact of Brexit and provide ongoing support to staff and students (Action 3.11)

5.1.5 We are also in the process of establishing a Parent’s Network, which was convened initially in one area of the University to support the development of the University’s Athena SWAN submissions. Discussions at the meetings highlighted that it was a helpful Network to the members and the University. In addition, we are establishing a Carers Network, as we are keen to engage with the issues faced by this group of staff and to work towards becoming a ‘Carers Positive’ employer. We have commenced the process of collecting data in this area.

Action: Achieve accreditation as a Carers Positive Employer (Action 4.5)

Action: Establish an active Carers Network (Action 4.6)

Action: Establish the Parent’s Network (Action 4.7)

5.2 Equality and Diversity Governance

5.2.1 The Governance structure of Equality and Diversity has been reviewed and improved since the 2015 report. This was initiated by an increasing engagement and involvement from all areas of the University in Equality and Diversity initiatives, including Athena SWAN. The review resulted in the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity becoming more reflective of the diverse nature of our community with a representative from each of the equality network groups now having a place on the Group. We have also added Widening Participation team members to the membership, the University Chaplains and three Heads of School and the Head of the Business School. These changes have been effective since the start of academic year 2016/17 and have already proved positive in relation to the broader range of agenda items and the input of a wider membership. The Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity has also widened its remit to include specific reference to intersectionality.

5.2.2 The increased focus on Athena SWAN and Equality and Diversity has resulted in equality and diversity groups forming in two of our three Colleges or with Athena SWAN teams taking on board wider equality objectives. The chairs of those groups have become equality and diversity champions. The Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity now has three Heads of School in its membership (one for each College) to reflect the growing need for input and collaboration on equality initiatives.

5.2.3 The Gender Equality Steering Group has been revised to better reflect the diversity of the University community and now reports to the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity, as do the Equality Network Groups. The equality and diversity governance arrangements can be seen in the diagram below.
5.3 **International Student and Staff Induction**

5.3.1 The increasing diversity of our student population and in particular international students has promoted relevance of Equality and Diversity issues as part of the induction process for new students to the University. Since 2015 the Equality and Diversity team have introduced specific E&D sessions for international students at the start of term. The feedback from these sessions has been very positive and we will continue to offer these sessions and enhance them where feedback dictates.

5.3.2 We are in the process of enhancing the induction programme for new staff starting with the University and, specifically, staff joining us from overseas by introducing welcome sessions for them and their families. The aim of these sessions is to assist staff and their families settle into working at the University, life in Aberdeen and provide the opportunity to network with others in similar circumstances.

**Action:** Introduce welcome sessions for international staff and their families (Action 4.11)
5.4 Stonewall Scotland – Diversity Champions Programme

5.4.1 The University is a supporter of Stonewall Scotland and continues to be a Stonewall Diversity Champion. We improved our ranking in the Stonewall Workplace Equality index in 2015/16. The decision was taken not to participate in 2017/18 as we received a substantial level of feedback on the previous submission and were keen to concentrate on delivering on our action plan, resulting from the feedback. We are planning to submit an application for the 2018 process.

Action: Submit an application to the 2018 Workplace Equality Index (Action 3.6)

5.5 Employee Engagement

5.5.1 The University has established an Employee Engagement Working Group since the report in 2015. The remit of the Group, chaired by the Vice Principal for People Strategy, is to explore current engagement processes, develop an Employee Engagement Strategy and provide recommendations for improvement.

5.5.2 A range of key objectives have been identified from the Employee Engagement Strategy Working Group including:

- Embedding a culture of openness, respect, honesty and dignity at work for all members of the University community;
- Promoting opportunities for members of the University community to work in partnership and improve staff and student wellbeing.
- Developing a set of values for the University which further build on the University's Strategic Plan. The values are being finalised, however they will place a significant importance on respect, tolerance and diversity.

Action: Ensure link is made between the Employee Engagement Strategy/Action Plan and equality and diversity considerations. (Action 4.12)

5.6 Launch of LGBT Boxing Initiative

5.6.1 A new initiative to encourage LGBT people to participate in boxing has been launched. The University of Aberdeen Boxing Club is working in partnership with Boxing Scotland and LEAP Sports to offer classes for LGBT people that aim to challenge perceived barriers to participation in the sport. This initiative was developed as a result of conversations with LGBT students who were keen to participate in boxing, but reluctant to join a club.

Action: Monitor uptake and seek feedback from participants (Action 3.15)

6 ADVANCE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

This section details the examples of mainstreaming equality which contribute to advancing equality of opportunity, the third ‘need’ of the general duty contained in the Equality Act 2010. At the heart of understanding how to advance equality is gaining reliable qualitative and quantitative evidence. We are delighted to have established a University Equality and Diversity Research Group, whose work will provide robust data which can be used to inform policy and practice. Since 2015 the University has established a Mental Health Working Group and launched a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy to further equality for staff and students with mental health and wellbeing concerns. Our continuing commitment to
advancing equality for women has proved successful in relation to our Athena SWAN initiatives. We are proud to be advancing equality and raising awareness of learning disabilities through our prize-winning Project SEARCH initiative.

6.1 Equality and Diversity Research

6.1.1 The School of Psychology has led in setting-up a University-wide Equality and Diversity Research Group (EDRG), comprising a multi-disciplinary team of researchers and policy makers from across the University. The purpose of the group is to utilize the knowledge-base and skills available to support rigorous quantitative and qualitative research that will provide an evidence-base that can inform equality and diversity policy and process within the University and potentially across the sector. The research of the EDRG is currently supported by Research Council grant funding and University funding from the Principal’s PhD studentship in Equality and Diversity.

The group's projects include:

- A systematic review of existing research examining how bias might impact all aspects of higher education;
- A quantitative investigation into whether there are gender differences in marks awarded for work where student gender is known relative to where gender is unknown;
- Quantitative and qualitative examinations of gender differences in help-seeking behaviour; and
- Quantitative and qualitative examinations of gender differences in contributions to small group teaching.

Action: Advisory Group on Equality & Diversity to monitor progress on the projects (Action 3.14)

6.2 Mental Health and Wellbeing

6.2.1 The University has developed a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, including a policy and action plan. The strategy was developed by the University’s Mental Health Working Group, chaired by the Vice Principal for People Strategy. The Group undertook an audit of mental health and wellbeing services within the University. The results indicated that the University offers a wide range of support for students and staff with mental health and wellbeing concerns. One of the key objectives of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy is to foster a shift in culture across the University to one which is open about mental health and wellbeing and which encourages staff and students to discuss mental health and wellbeing concerns.

6.2.2 The Mental Health Working Group, which comprised staff with experience in mental health and student sabbatical officers, identified that:

- It was vital to use positive language in policies and guidance related to mental health and wellbeing and that a continuum of mental health conditions would be an appropriate approach given the range of mental health conditions and degree to which they manifest themselves within different individuals;
- Preventative measures were critical to addressing mental health issues. Instilling the principles of ‘self-care’ and resilience in staff and students would act as underpinning support mechanisms. This also applied to givers of support – there must be recognition that there is a limit to the extent of support which an individual staff member can provide to staff and students with mental health issues;
- The Personal Tutor role would be central to identifying potential mental health issues in students. Personal Tutors would receive specific training and guidance.

6.2.3 The strategy and policy documents also highlight that the University appreciates that mental ill health or wellbeing concerns can arise from factors within or outwith the University, or a combination of both. The Mental Health Working Group had noted that the new Academic Line Manager arrangements and the introduction of the Personal Tutors would help
significantly with identifying any internal factors which may be affecting the mental health of staff or students and managing those effectively.

6.2.4 The actions which have already been undertaken to support the launch of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy include:

- 59 staff and students have completed Mental Health First Aid training;
- Lunchtime Mindfulness sessions are held weekly;
- Coaching and mentoring schemes are offered to staff;
- A communication was issued in the staff e-zine regarding the work of the Mental Health Working Group which yielded a number of expressions of interest from staff keen to become involved;
- The role of the Harassment Adviser has been reviewed and will be replaced by a wider role of Wellbeing Coordinator. A training plan for the new coordinators has been developed;
- There are plans to recruit a Mental Health Practitioner;
- A ‘map of support’ will be issued to Personal Tutors and those with pastoral care responsibilities along with additional guidance;
- The University entered the ‘Britain’s Healthiest Workplace’ survey and received feedback which is being used to develop targeted actions and events;
- An Employee Assistance Programme was launched in November 2016 providing 24hr telephone counselling and online support;
- The University held its third successful Staff Wellbeing Day on 11 January 2017 and a similar event was held on 30 January for the student community. Another staff event is planned for mid-2017.
- Resilience workshops for students have been delivered
- Students requiring pastoral support now have the option to meet with a ‘therapet’ dog and pastoral carer from the organisation PEACE (more information at [http://www.petandcompanion.com/](http://www.petandcompanion.com/)) in the Inter-faith Centre.

The University is developing, in consultation with staff and students, a calendar of Wellbeing events.

Diagram 2: Mental health and Wellbeing postcard developed in advance of the formal launch of the University’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Action: Monitor the use of the Employee Assistance Programme and analyse trends where they occur in relation to equality issues/bullying/harassment (Action 4.9)

Action: Monitor uptake of use of Wellbeing Coordinators and trends in issues to ascertain where further support may be required (Action 4.10)
6.3 **Leadership Foundation Aurora Programme**

6.3.1 We have responded to requests, through the career development focus group meetings, to support women’s development. One of the key initiatives has been the University’s participation in the Leadership Foundation’s Aurora Programme. Fifteen female members of staff were funded by the University to attend the programme in 2015/16.

6.3.2 The impact of this has been significant, with a number of schools now funding their colleagues to attend the programme, therefore creating a cohort of women who have recently undertaken external management development training. We have undertaken a feedback exercise with the participants, collecting comments through an anonymous survey and also through workshop sessions. The feedback suggested that the external networking opportunities were extremely valuable, and this will be factored into the continuous improvement of internal management development training. 82% of delegates reported increased confidence, 36% had applied for promotion and 18% received more positive feedback since their Aurora experience.

6.3.3 We have been keen to employ the ‘pass it on’ idea and The cohort of delegates have been keen to support other female colleagues, by becoming involved in the University’s enhanced Mentoring Scheme and by providing presentations on their learning to University committees and groups. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this has also been highly beneficial career development opportunities for the Aurora delegates.

6.3.4 Due to high demand (70 applicants) and limited spaces for Aurora, we offered internal support for unsuccessful applicants. This included hosting workshops on ‘Academic Leadership for Women’ and an ‘Interviewing for an Academic Job’ workshop, both led by Professor Karen Kelsky. A focus group identified concerns relating to career progression including: understanding of the promotions process, and flexible and part-time working advertised as part of job roles.

**Action:** Promote increased networking, development and mentoring opportunities (Action 3.12)

**Action:** Monitor uptake and effectiveness of Aurora Leadership development Programme (Action 3.16)

6.4 **Athena SWAN**

6.4.1 The University has signed up to the principles of the Athena SWAN Charter which seeks to advance and support the careers of women in higher education. The initiatives which have stemmed from this include:

- A highly successful annual International Women's Day Conference since 2014;
- An ‘Inspiring Women’ exhibition which was created using the profiles of current and past staff and students and is exhibited across the University;
- Established a coaching programme for staff returning from maternity or paternity leave;
- Central funding available for leadership development;
- Re-launched University mentoring programme, which has seen a significant increase in uptake;
- The membership of the Gender Equality Steering Group has been revised to achieve a better gender balance and to reflect the diversity of the University community
- Central funding for maternity leave cover has been proposed.

6.4.2 We currently hold an Athena SWAN Bronze institutional award (and have recently submitted an application to have this renewed) and two of our Schools hold Bronze Departmental awards. All of our Schools will have applied for an Athena Swan award by November 2017.
6.4.3 This has been an area of real change and the impact on the institution has been significant. Each of our Schools now has a Self-Assessment Team (SATs) which routinely analyses data and implements initiatives which would make a difference at a local level. Some of the SATs are now broadening their remit to encompass broader equality areas, thus increasing awareness and engagement from across the University. The University’s Principal meets with the SAT leads on a quarterly basis to hear concerns and to facilitate progress. The SAT leads have also become more involved in wider equality and diversity initiatives and consultations.

6.5 Project SEARCH

6.5.1 We have been supporting young people with learning difficulties to gain work experience and jobs through Project SEARCH.

6.5.2 Project SEARCH is a collaboration between the University of Aberdeen, Inspire (Partnership Through Life) charity and the North East Scotland College, operated under a license from the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities (SCLD) and funded by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. The project is based on an international model which originated in the USA and is a one year Internship programme supporting up to 12 young people per year with additional needs to gain skills and experience to go on to employment.

6.5.3 The Interns are supported to undertake 3 internships/work placements over a one year period of study. It is the normal expectation that each participant will undertake 3 placements over the course of the year. The on-site team (which comprises the University Employer Partner Co-ordinator, the Senior Job Coach from Inspire and the Tutor from North East Scotland College), work together to identify work placement opportunities based on the student’s experience, interests and skills assessment. The project has achieved the following local and national recognitions:

- Foremost ‘up and coming’ site – Project SEARCH 2014 European Conference, Glasgow
- ‘Raising Achievement’ Award 2014 – Aberdeen Children’s and Young People’s Services
- Green Gown Awards 2014 Finalist
- Highest Employment Rate in Europe – Project SEARCH 2015 International Conference, Arizona, USA
- First provider in the North East of Scotland to be accredited by Developing Young Workforce (North East) at Gold Level in November 2016

6.5.4 23 interns have been supported to find and sustain jobs in the North East of Scotland. In November 2015, the ‘Interns Into Employment’ toolkit was launched to support local businesses in employing Project SEARCH graduates. ‘Meet the Intern’ events encourage members of the local business community to engage with the project by becoming a Mentor to one of the interns or by delivering a workshop/seminar/talk to the interns on their area of expertise as part of the curriculum.

Action: Measure the impact of the Project SEARCH initiative on the interns and the staff supporting them across the University (Action 3.13)
6.5 Excellence in Diversity Awards

6.5.1 The University was delighted to have been shortlisted in the Excellence in Diversity Awards 2016 and then awarded Highly Commended in the Education category. We have been able to use our achievement as a lever to publicise equality and diversity initiatives within the University and outwith.

7 COURT DIVERSITY

This section details the examples of mainstreaming equality which contribute to advancing equality through improving the diversity within the composition of Court and governing bodies. This is the fourth and newly published amendment to the ‘needs’ of the general duty contained in the Equality Act 2010.

7.1 The University has been actively seeking to increase the diversity profile of Court, its governing body, since 2015.

7.2 The Court has adopted a Statement of Intent on Diversity which sets out its commitment to its own membership reflecting the diverse nature of the University community insofar as is possible and practicable. This includes a commitment to addressing gender imbalance and the Court has, in 2016, extended its goal in this regard from 40% to 50%. This goal is across all categories of membership on Court rather than just those members appointed by Court itself. The Court is also part of the Committee of Scottish Chairs’ ‘40:40:20’ policy commitment.

7.3 We recognise, however, there are barriers to achieving gender balance on Court, namely that a significant number (2/3rd) of its members are elected or externally appointed by external bodies. We have brought the Statement of Intent on Diversity to the attention of those bodies or individuals who either elect or appoint members. This approach was adopted for the nominations process for General Council Assessors on Court in 2016, where gender balance was achieved in the two positions available.

7.4 The collation of equality monitoring data on new Court members has been introduced and will enable future baseline reporting against all protected characteristics to be undertaken. There have been two vacancies for independent members of Court during the reporting period, with one woman and one man being appointed. In support of both processes the University put in place a number of additional measures to help increase awareness of the positions among under-represented groups, but with a particular focus on women. Those measures included:

- Equality Impact Assessments of the role description, person specification and advertisement were undertaken. Adjustments were made to the wording of the person specification and advertisement to mitigate against the risk of indirect bias against women in terms of the experience required and further text was added to the advertisement emphasising the diversity of the University community.
- Increasing the range of advertising networks used beyond mainstream print media to professional networks for women and other under-represented groups. These have included:
  - Public Appointments Scotland;
  - Women on Boards;
Non-Executive Directors;
Diversity Network Sites (Ethnic Jobsite, Asian Jobsite, Diversity Jobsite, LGBT Jobsite, Disability Network and Disability Jobsite); and
Communications to staff, students and alumni and inviting nominations for consideration;

- The proactive identification of potential female candidates from the University's own network of contacts;

7.5 The need to achieve gender balance and greater diversity in the overall membership of Court is a key principle underpinning proposals for a new composition of Court that were agreed in December 2016. The proposals will increase the proportion of the membership appointed by Court to 48% and should over time enable the Court to better address the issue of gender balance and diversity. The Court, through its Governance and Nominations Committee, commenced the process of planning for the transition to the new composition with the achievement of gender balance and greater diversity being a key driving factor.

Action: Continue to carry out equality monitoring of Court Membership, reporting to University Management Group (UMG) and Court on progress towards targets (Action 4.4)

7.6 The University Court currently has a composition of 28. The following figures are based on the membership in office as at the following dates since 2015:

Table 4: Gender profile of Court

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>31 July 2015 (Financial Year End)</th>
<th>31 July 2016 (Financial Year End)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 demonstrates that 28.5% of our court membership is female. This has increased from 25.9% in 2015.

8 EQUALITY OUTCOMES

8.1 The University developed a set of equality outcomes in 2013 following extensive consultation with staff and students. These were reviewed in 2015, with progress reported in the 2015 Interim Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report. Our Equality Outcomes, as agreed in 2013 are as follows:

Outcome 1
The principles of Equality and Diversity will be a day-to-day consideration within all of the University's activities, both strategically and operationally;

Outcome 2
Staff will have greater understanding of their responsibilities in Equality and Diversity and apply this in their practice to positively advance equality;

Outcome 3
The University will be an inclusive community where staff and students are able to fulfil their full potential in their work or studies;

Outcome 4
The diversity of the University community will be celebrated and recognised so that all staff and students feel respected and valued;
Outcome 5
The University will further gender equality and address the gender balance in STEMM subjects.

8.2 The Outcomes have been reviewed again through a process of additional consultation with:

- Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity
- Senior Women’s Network
- Staff and Postgraduate Student LGBT Network
- Wellbeing Coordinators
- Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team Leads
- Staff Disability Network
- University Management Group
- University Court
- Aberdeen University Student Association
- Human Resources Business Partners
- Campus Trade Unions

8.3 The consultation indicated that there was agreement that the first four Outcomes were strategic/high-level in nature and required to be underpinned with measurable objectives (see attached Action Plan). It was considered inappropriate to change those outcomes themselves, as they have provided overall focus to Equality and Diversity initiatives and were considered to continue to be relevant to our strategic objectives.

8.4 However, it was noted that the fifth Outcome highlighted one protected characteristic, which was appropriate in 2013 and 2015 given the sector and national priorities regarding women’s representation in STEMM areas. However, the University’s work in this area has identified gender imbalances in other areas, for example the low participation of men in Primary Education or studying for a degree in English and the low participation of women studying Divinity. We have therefore decided to remove Outcome 5 and integrate actions stemming from it into the other four Outcomes.

8.5 Our Equality Outcomes cover all of the equality protected characteristics and we have developed a detailed action plan for continuing to meet the Equality Outcomes.

8.6 The progress made, in the last two years, in relation to furthering the Equality Outcomes can be found below.

8.7 Outcome 1
The principles of Equality and Diversity will be a day-to-day consideration within all of the University’s activities, both strategically and operationally. Progress to date includes:

- Equality and Diversity is a key pillar of our 2015-20 University Strategic Plan
- Focus groups were held, involving a range of stakeholders, to develop the University’s Strategic Plan
- The University’s Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council includes specific equality objectives and targets which are aligned to the University’s Equality Outcomes. See Action 1.11.
- All recruitment and selection panels are required to be gender-balanced. If this is not achievable, an explanation must be provided.
- All candidates for jobs at the University are required to explain their understanding of equality and diversity and their involvement in promoting equality and diversity in previous roles, during the interview process.
- Equality and Diversity is prominently displayed on the University’s recruitment webpages, with links to further information.
Diagram 3 showing the prominence of Equality and Diversity on our external-facing recruitment pages

- The importance of equality and diversity has been strengthened in our promotion procedure by asking candidates to evidence how they have contributed to the Equality and Diversity agenda in dealing with staffing matters.
- An initial blind review stage has been introduced to promotion procedures to reduce the potential for unconscious bias.

Table 5: updated promotions requirements which now include Equality and Diversity activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotion section</th>
<th>form section</th>
<th>Equality and Diversity requirement/ guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing People</td>
<td></td>
<td>How you have contributed to the Equality and Diversity agenda of the University in respect of how you have managed staff in areas such as recruitment, development/promotion with specific reference to any examples relating to discrimination, harassment and bullying, work-life balance, family friendly policies and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities.

| Teamwork and motivation | Covers team work and team leadership when working in both internal and external teams. This may include the need to contribute as an active member of the team (including, where applicable, evidence of interdisciplinary collaboration); motivating others in the team; promoting the Equality and Diversity agenda and providing leadership and direction for the team. |

- Equality implications of new policies and procedures are required to be highlighted to University Management Group/University committees.
- For example lower numbers of females in senior roles led to involvement in the Aurora Management Development Programme.
- Enhancements to the governance of Equality and Diversity.
- Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity now has a specific remit to consider intersectionality and its membership has been broadened to include Heads of School, representatives from the Equality Network Groups, the University Chaplains and a Staff Wellbeing Coordinator.

8.8 Outcome 2

Staff will have greater understanding of their responsibilities in Equality and Diversity and apply this in their practice to positively advance equality. Progress to date includes:

- Staff are required to complete Equality and Diversity online training and specific mandatory training for those staff involved in recruitment and selection
- 70% of staff have completed the mandatory training (a significant increase since the report in 2015)
- Key Performance Indicators regarding equality and diversity online training have been developed and have produced positive engagement resulting in an increased uptake in the training
- Heads of Schools now receive quarterly data reports regarding the uptake of the mandatory training in their area in order for them to take appropriate action to ensure that all staff complete the training
- Staff undertaking internal management development programmes are required to have completed the online Equality and Diversity training prior to commencing the programme
- Unconscious bias training has been delivered to approximately 70 staff. Feedback indicates that staff recognised the need to monitor and evaluate their own thoughts and behaviours in relation to decision-making at all levels in the University
- Staff equality and diversity questionnaire results indicate an increase in knowledge of equality initiatives.

8.9 Outcome 3

The University will be an inclusive community where staff and students are able to fulfil their full potential in their work or studies. Progress to date includes:

- Aurora Leadership Development Programme – 15 female delegates attended in 2015/16
- Due to high demand (70 applicants) and limited spaces for Aurora, we offered internal support for unsuccessful applicants. This included hosting workshops on ‘Academic Leadership for Women’ and an ‘Interviewing for an Academic Job’ workshop, both led by Professor Karen Kelsky (founder and President of The Professor Is In, which provides advice and consulting services on the academic job search and all elements of the academic and post-academic career).
- Staff Wellbeing Coordinators will be available to staff by June 2017. They will replace the existing Harassment Advisers and will have a wider remit to encompass a range of wellbeing concerns.
- A Personal Tutor system introduced, which ensures that students always have a point of contact for academic or non-academic concerns
• An Academic Line Management structure has been introduced. All managers have received comprehensive training, including training on equality and diversity
• Student support website been revised to be more accessible and provide an enhanced level of guidance to students
• A University-wide fund for covering maternity leave is proposed
• The Aberdeen University Students Association launched their Body Positive campaign
• Equality monitoring in relation to attendance at internal management training has been introduced. Positive action measures have been implemented to encourage more males to participate in middle management programmes
• Internal leadership roles are not open for nomination; expressions of interest must be invited offering the opportunity to highlight to underrepresented groups
• The University expanded its on-site nursery, which is open to staff and students, to accommodate 76 children in an award-winning Passivhaus building. We have also asked the Nursery Trust to consider an extension of their opening hours. Additional nursery spaces have also been secured for staff on the Foresterhill site to have access to the on-site nursery.
• Guidance on childcare provision is available to all staff through the HR Handbook, HR Partners and through discussions with line managers
• Student Support have proposed a policy on Mainstreaming Reasonable Adjustments, which would ensure that the most commonly requested adjustments would be routinely undertaken, to the benefit of all students

8.10 Outcome 4
The diversity of the University community will be celebrated and recognised so that all staff and students are respected and valued. Progress to date includes:
• Successful annual International Women’s Day (IWD) conference held, including opportunities for networking
• Inspirational speakers have presented at the annual IWD Conference since 2014 which has been consistently over-subscribed. In 2016, 96% of participants rated the overall experience/quality of the event as good/very good. A live web-link to the Conference is provided to encourage wider participation with a Twitter feed throughout.
• In 2016 we exhibited female artists’ work as part of the conference experience, and included speed mentoring for participants. We will use IWD to raise the profile of our staff and students by including internal speakers at future events.
Diagram 4 showing the social media campaign regarding International Women’s Day 2016 at the University of Aberdeen

- Black History Month events held
- Holocaust Memorial Day events held
- Three successful Wellbeing Days have been held, with feedback indicating that there is an appetite for more events and that participants had gained knowledge about the support mechanisms open to them in relation to mental health and wellbeing concerns. Approximately 300 staff attended each Wellbeing Day.
- The Chaplaincy has been re-branded to reflect the wide-ranging work which it undertakes. It is now called the Inter-Faith Centre
- In summer 2016, we launched new branding guidelines which provide clarity to all users and audiences. The development of the brand and supporting documentation followed wide consultation. The brand portal provides information on our messages, visual identity, a branding toolkit, guidelines, advice and support. We are committed to ensuring we promote and celebrate the diverse nature of our community in all publications. In July 2016, an audit highlighted that 56% of images on our website were represented by females. The University is undertaking a review of its website and marketing materials and we will ensure that diversity is a key part of our new website, student prospectus and job adverts

8.11 Outcome 5
The University will further gender equality and address the gender balance in STEMM subjects. Progress to date includes:

- Proportion of female academics at Grades 8 and 9 are in an upwards trend
- All Academic Schools will have submitted an application to Athena SWAN Charter by April 2017
- Two Academic Schools have achieved an Athena SWAN Bronze award since 2015 which indicated significant progress
- The University submitted an application to have its Institutional Bronze Award renewed in November 2016
- The University has appointed two Institutional Athena SWAN Officers to drive the gender equality agenda forward
- In 2016 no significant gender pay gap was reported, including at Professorial grades
- New flexible working policies have been introduced, including a nine-day-fortnight
- Interview coaching is offered to all internal job candidates
- The Aberdeen University students Association has revised and launched new maternity and paternity guidelines for students.

9 Staff and Student Information

9.1 Appendix 2 of this report provides staff and student data.

9.2 Since 2015 we have reviewed our data collection practices and undertaken a data cleansing exercise. This has yielded positive results and another such exercise is planned to take place in 2017.

9.3 Since 2015, we can now report on sexual orientation of staff and students, as a direct result of collating information for the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. We can now also report on the religion/belief of staff, although we recognise that approximately a quarter of our staff have not provided information in relation to this or sexual orientation. The forthcoming data cleansing exercise will support our endeavours to gain information for all staff.

9.4 We are delighted to be able to report that the previous data cleansing exercise undertaken since 2015 has resulted in more appropriate declaration statements in response to the
question regarding disability – the ‘unknown’ reported figure has dropped by 10%, from 12.4% in 2013 to 1.6% in 2016, which indicates that increased numbers of staff have completed equality monitoring forms. However, we recognise that the number of staff declaring a disability remains relatively low in comparison to the general working population, although this continues to be a sector-wide issue. We have also recently incorporated a question regarding carers status into the recruitment equality monitoring form. We will be monitoring the outcome of doing this.

Overall, our gender figures remain stable. However, we continue to see significant gender imbalances at subject level and already have plans in place to address these. In relation to our goal to increase female representation at senior levels, we have implemented positive action measures, such as requiring recruitment search consultants to be mindful of our equality outcomes when presenting candidates.

Our data indicates that we have recruited increasing numbers of younger staff (up to age 25 years). This is a positive indication of the University's appeal to younger candidates.

We collect data on intersectionality for staff and student e.g. (i) age and gender or (ii) race and gender and utilise the analysis to enable a greater understanding of our community, tailor our services and support appropriately and limit the possibility of unconscious bias and discrimination.

**Action:** Undertake data cleansing exercise to increase participation in equality monitoring across the University (Action 4.13)

**10 Conclusion**

The equality and diversity agenda has continued to be a prominent aspect of the University's priorities since the last report in 2015. Evidence from staff surveys indicates that the level of awareness of equality initiatives has been increasing and the impact of the University's commitment to the Athena SWAN Charter has been positive for all of the equality characteristics. Evidence from a range of sources clearly indicates that equality is increasingly mainstreamed into the core of the University's functions and that the engagement and knowledge of staff and students in this area has developed significantly.

The University's Equality Outcomes have shaped and guided activities in this area and align with the University’s Strategic Plan commitments on equality and diversity.

We have made progress regarding all of the protected characteristics and our action plan details how we will continue to do so. Examples of activities by characteristic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected characteristic</th>
<th>Development since 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Gender                   | Successful Athena SWAN accreditations and established Athena SWAN teams  
                           | Aurora leadership Programme – 15 participants with follow-up activities  
                           | Career Development Focus Groups to support women  
                           | Proactive Senior Women’s Network  
                           | Gender Pay Gap greatly reduced |
| Disability               | Project SEARCH – 23 interns secured employment  
                           | Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy launched  
                           | Body Positive initiative led by the Aberdeen University Students Association  
                           | Staff Disability Network Group revised remit and Charter  
                           | Mainstreaming of reasonable adjustments for students |
| LGBT                     | Staff LGBT Network now also includes Post Graduate students  
                           | Increasing rankings in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index  
<pre><code>                       | No Bystanders Pledge signed by University Principal and Vice Principal |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Action/Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Race                   | Creation of Race Equality Network in progress  
                          | International Staff and Student welcome sessions and inductions               |
| Religion/belief        | University Chaplaincy is now the Inter-Faith Centre  
                          | University Chaplains fully integrated into the governance structure of Equality and Diversity |
| Age                    | Supporting young people into University through the SFC REACH Project  
                          | Widening opportunities and breaking down barriers through the ECU Attracting Diversity Project |
| Gender Reassignment    | Transgender policy and training being developed and delivered  
                          | Review of buildings to incorporate gender neutral toilets where possible and always considered within new-build proposals |
| Pregnancy and maternity| Maternity and paternity coaching available to staff  
                          | Maternity leave cover fund proposed  
                          | Increased nursery childcare provision  
                          | Breastfeeding rooms established and promoted |

10.4 As well as engaging with specific groups, we have also ensured that our equality governance structures address intersectionality and are accessible and applicable to all staff and students. By increasing support to our community through Academic Line Managers and Personal Tutors and strengthening our data collection systems and processes, we have aimed to address the diverse needs of our community. Through our events and public engagement activities, we pursue a policy of celebrating the vibrancy and diversity of our campus.

10.5 We look forward to continuously improving our practice in equality and diversity though delivering on our action plan; and to striving for excellence so that all our staff, students and visitors can be sure of a welcoming, inclusive and tolerant University in which to work and study.

Appendix 2: Staff and Student Profile Data 2015-2016
Appendix 1

University of Aberdeen

Equality Outcomes Action Plan

2017 – 2019

**Outcome 1:** The principles of Equality and Diversity will be a day-to-day consideration within all of the University’s activities, both strategically and operationally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Responsible person</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Success Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Provide additional guidance within the committee paper template regarding equality impact assessment</td>
<td>Standard of equality impact assessments demonstrate new guidance is required</td>
<td>Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>Increase in understanding of equality impact assessment process measured by increased quality of equality impact assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Provide additional training on equality impact assessment for appropriate staff</td>
<td>Feedback from consultation on the Outcomes indicated this would be welcomed</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 2017</td>
<td>Deliver 4 training sessions by Q1 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Examine our existing and future pay practices for all our staff including part-time workers, those on fixed-term contracts or contracts of unspecified duration.</td>
<td>Equal Pay Review</td>
<td>Director of Human Resources</td>
<td>Ongoing and all actions complete by September 2018</td>
<td>Equal pay statements available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Undertake regular monitoring of the impact of our practices and report at least every three years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gender pay gap reduces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Provide training and guidance to managers and supervisory staff involved in decisions regarding pay and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pay Policy published by Q3 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pay and benefits training for managers delivered by Q1 2018
1.6 Discuss and agree our equal pay policy with representatives of the recognised campus trade unions.

1.7 Deliver Transgender awareness training to student-facing staff
   Results of focus groups with student groups
   Equality and Diversity Adviser working with Staff and Postgraduate LGBT Network
   December 2017
   Training delivered
   Feedback on training positive with identified gaps in support reviewed

1.8 Develop Transgender Guidelines for staff and students
   Results of focus groups with student groups
   Equality and Diversity Adviser working with Staff and Postgraduate LGBT Network
   December 2017
   Guidelines developed and publicised

1.9 Review annually the new remit, composition and membership of the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity
   Consultation suggested that the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity should widen its membership
   Vice Principal, People Strategy
   Annual review in advance of the first meeting of the academic year – November 2017
   Review undertaken and changes implemented where appropriate

1.10 Monitor the impact and effectiveness of the new remit, composition and membership of the Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity
   1 year review and discussion at AGED meeting
   Equality and Diversity Adviser
   May 2018
   Review complete

1.11 Deliver on equality objectives within the University’s Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council
   SFC Outcome Agreement
   Director of Planning working with Equality and Diversity Adviser
   2017/2018
   Objectives achieved

**Outcome 2: Staff will have greater understanding of their responsibilities in Equality and Diversity and apply this in their practice to positively advance equality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Responsible person</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Success measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Ensure all staff complete the mandatory Equality and Diversity training</td>
<td>70% of all staff have completed the mandatory</td>
<td>Director of Human Resources working with</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>100% completion rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diversity training | Diversity in the Workplace module | Directors and Heads of School
---|---|---
| 2.2 Develop a plan for implementing unconscious bias, either face-to-face or on-line delivery | Feedback from sessions already undertaken indicated that all staff should be trained in unconscious bias | Equality and Diversity Adviser | June 2017 | Plan developed and implemented, Training available to all staff
| 2.3 Monitor the uptake of the student on-line equality training | Figures on the uptake of training | Senior Careers Adviser working with Equality and Diversity Adviser | Ongoing with annual figure produced | 100% of First Years completed
| 2.4 Measure feedback from the training and assess impact | | | | Feedback sought and results used to inform changes/additional interventions

**Outcome 3:** The University will be an inclusive community where staff and students are able to fulfil their full potential in their work or studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Responsible person</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Success measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Review support offered to disabled staff and implement changes where appropriate</td>
<td>Staff Disability Network consultation</td>
<td>Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>Review conducted, Recommendations from review implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Monitor the success rates in the promotion process to ascertain impact of ‘blind review’ and report back to Promotions Review Group</td>
<td>Promotion success rate data</td>
<td>Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td>June 2017 and June 2018</td>
<td>Analysis of promotions data by protected characteristics shows proportionate success rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Deliver promotions awareness sessions for staff</td>
<td>Promotion success rate data Feedback on promotions process</td>
<td>HR Partners</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
<td>2 awareness sessions delivered before the 2018 promotions round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Implement monitoring of the impact of the Widening Participation REACH project in relation to protected characteristics</td>
<td>Link between widening participation initiatives and Equality and Diversity</td>
<td>Head of Widening Participation</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>Monitoring by protected characteristics implemented Data used to improve admission rates in under-represented groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Implement actions arising from the Attracting Diversity project, including the development of appropriate resources</td>
<td>Phase 3 targets for the project</td>
<td>Head of Widening Participation</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>Identified actions implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Submit an application for the Stonewall Workplace</td>
<td>Action plan arising from previous submissions</td>
<td>Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>Application submitted Improvement in ranking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Equality Index 2018                                                                 | 3.7 Develop a calendar of Wellbeing events | Feedback from third Wellbeing Day indicated that staff and students would value calendar of on-going events | Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing in conjunction with Head of HR Specialist Services | September 2017 | Calendar developed and publicised Monitor feedback from events
| 3.8 Roll out No Bystander pledge                                                     | Feedback from launch of the No Bystander pledge | Head of HR Specialist Services | Ongoing engagement | All Directors and Heads of School signed up to the pledge Awareness of pledge increased and measured through Staff Survey
| 3.9 All academic areas to apply for Athena SWAN award by April 2017                 | University KPIs Athena SWAN Action Plan | Heads of School working with Athena SWAN Officers | April 2017 | Applications submitted
| 3.10 Develop British Sign Language Plan                                             | Scottish Government consultation | Equality and Diversity Adviser | October 2018 | BSL Plan developed following consultation Implementation and impact monitored
| 3.11 Monitor the impact of Brexit on staff and student experiences and provide ongoing support | Local/internal and national consultation | Director of HR Director of Student Life | ongoing | Appropriate consultation with staff and students undertaken Actions taken in line with government guidance
| 3.12 Develop a communication plan for promote networking, development and mentoring opportunities for all protected characteristics | Aurora feedback questionnaire Feedback from International Women’s Day Conference Discussions at Equality Network Groups | Equality and Diversity Adviser Communications | Communication plan developed by June 2017 ongoing | Communication plan developed and implemented
| 3.13 Monitor the impact of the Project SEARCH initiative on the interns and the staff supporting them across the University | Currently limited data regarding the impact of the Project, other than data regarding the number of interns who secure employment | Executive Assistant and Policy Officer Equality and Diversity | Implement feedback by September 2017 | Data gathered Engagement with placement providers and interns undertaken Changes implemented where appropriate
| 3.14 Equality and Diversity Research Group to provide project progress reports and clear outcomes to Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity | Creating a robust data set in relation to the projects on which to base future policy decisions/initiatives on | Equality and Diversity Research Group Leader Equality and Diversity Adviser | First report due May 2017 Results of research due May 2018 | Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity involved in establishing outcomes for the Research Group
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.15 Monitor the effectiveness of the LGBT Boxing initiative</th>
<th>Monitor levels of involvement in the initiatives</th>
<th>Equality and Diversity Adviser</th>
<th>March 2018</th>
<th>Number of individuals participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.16 Monitor the effectiveness of the Aurora Leadership Development Programme</td>
<td>Monitor numbers of participants</td>
<td>Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>Number of individuals participating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outcome 4: The diversity of the University community will be celebrated and recognised so that all staff and students are respected and valued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Responsible person</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Success measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Develop guidance on mental health and wellbeing for Personal Tutors and Line Manager</td>
<td>Mental Health Working Group discussions and associated action plan</td>
<td>Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing, working with Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>Guidelines developed and publicised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2 Develop and deliver training for Academic Line Managers and Personal Tutors on:</strong></td>
<td>Feedback from ALMs and PTs</td>
<td>HR Partners</td>
<td>Training sessions delivered by September 2018</td>
<td>Sessions delivered and feedback received and used to inform future sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting equality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with equality-related staff or student concerns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting disabled staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Develop a method of capturing the impact / value of the equality network groups</td>
<td>Discussion at Senior Women’s Network Steering Group meeting</td>
<td>Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>Template developed and implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Undertake annual equality monitoring of court membership and report to UMG and Court</td>
<td>Court membership equality profile data</td>
<td>Secretary to Court Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td>November 2017</td>
<td>Equality Monitoring report delivered to UMG and Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Achieve accreditation as a Carers Positive employer</td>
<td>Results of Equality and Diversity questionnaire</td>
<td>Head of HR Specialist Services</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>Accreditation achieved by September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Develop a Carers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Equality and Diversity</td>
<td>November 2017</td>
<td>Network established by Q4 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network</td>
<td>Adviser</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Re-instate the Parents Network</td>
<td>Athena SWAN submissions/action plans</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>Parents Network established</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Establish Race Equality Network</td>
<td>Discussions at Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity Discussions at Race Equality working Group</td>
<td>November 2017</td>
<td>Network established</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td></td>
<td>Network providing support to members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Network feeding in to University policy development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 Monitor trends in relation to equality issues reported through the Employee Assistance Programme and take action to address staff concerns</td>
<td>Management reports from providers of Employee Assistance Programme</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Reports received and analysed Equality-related concerns addressed through policy/guidelines/briefings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of HR Specialist Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10 Monitor trends in relation to equality issues reported through the Staff Wellbeing Coordinators and Mental Health Champions</td>
<td>Feedback sessions/monitoring forms</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Reports received an analysed Equality-related concerns addressed through policy/guidelines/briefings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11 Develop and implement welcome sessions for international staff and their families</td>
<td>Staff profile data</td>
<td>First sessions to be delivered by April 2017 and ongoing from then</td>
<td>Sessions introduced Feedback sought and changes made where appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anecdotal feedback that welcome sessions would be helpful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of HR Partners/HR Partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12 Principles of Equality and Diversity to be linked with the development of the Employee Engagement Strategy/Action Plan</td>
<td>Employee Engagement Working Group meetings Equality Network Groups meetings</td>
<td>Ongoing with a view to finalising Employee Engagement Strategy by June 2017</td>
<td>Employee Engagement Strategy agreed and fully recognises and incorporates equality and diversity principles and considerations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of HR Specialist Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13 Undertake data cleansing exercise</td>
<td>Gaps in staff profile data Requirement to increase engagement with the equality monitoring process</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>Increased levels of return on equality monitoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head of HR Specialist Services/Equality and Diversity Adviser</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## STAFF DATA 01-10-2015 & 01-10-2016

### Table 1a: Staff age by College 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>CASS</th>
<th>CLSM</th>
<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Total UoA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 and under</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 and over</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1096</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1b: Staff age by College 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>CASS</th>
<th>CLSM</th>
<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Total UoA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 and under</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 66</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1070</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2a: Staff gender by College 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>CASS</th>
<th>CLSM</th>
<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Total UoA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1096</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2b: Staff gender by College 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>CASS</th>
<th>CLSM</th>
<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Total UoA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1070</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 3a: Staff disability by College 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISABILITY</th>
<th>CASS</th>
<th>CLSM</th>
<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>93.6%</td>
<td>1043</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1096</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Table 3b: Staff disability by College 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISABILITY</th>
<th>CASS</th>
<th>CLSM</th>
<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
<td>No. %</td>
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## Table 4a: Staff working hours by College 2015

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<th>FT/PT</th>
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<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
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<td>100%</td>
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## Table 4b: Staff working hours by College 2016

<table>
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<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>46</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1070</td>
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<td>377</td>
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## Table 5a: Staff ethnicity by College 2015

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<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1096</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHNICITY</td>
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<td>CLSM</td>
<td>COPS</td>
<td>Business School</td>
<td>Professional Services</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9.3%</td>
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<tr>
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Table 5b Staff ethnicity by College 2016

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<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>23</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8.5%</td>
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Table 6a: Staff religion by College 2015

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<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
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<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>33</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian - Roman Catholic</td>
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<td>5.7%</td>
<td>34</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
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<td>0.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Table 6b: Staff religion by College 2016
### Table 6a: Staff sexual orientation by College 2015

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<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1096</td>
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### Table 6b: Staff sexual orientation by College 2016

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<th>COPS</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>Professional Services</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>0.5%</td>
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<td>0.5%</td>
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### Table 7a: Leavers 2014/15

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<th>Professional Services</th>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>39%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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Table 7b: Leavers 2015/16

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Table 8: Progression and Promotion
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Table 9a: Student age by level (Headcount).

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Table 9b: Student age by level (Headcount %).

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Table 10a: Student gender by level (Headcount).

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Table 10b: Student gender by level (Headcount %).
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Table 11a: Student ethnicity by level (Headcount).

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Table 11b: Student ethnicity by level (Headcount %).

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<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>141</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>224</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian - Church of Scotland</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>1272</td>
<td>1253</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian - Other denomination</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>1313</td>
<td>1282</td>
<td>2185</td>
<td>2120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian - Roman Catholic</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>1065</td>
<td>1525</td>
<td>1581</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>139</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>772</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>1037</td>
<td>1186</td>
<td>5072</td>
<td>5381</td>
<td>6628</td>
<td>7088</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>1056</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>1473</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>173</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information not known</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>324</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1701</td>
<td>1653</td>
<td>3032</td>
<td>3021</td>
<td>10473</td>
<td>10682</td>
<td>15206</td>
<td>15356</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12a: Student religion by level (Headcount).
Table 12b: Student religion by level (Headcount %).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE</th>
<th>TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE</th>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other religion or belief</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian - Church of Scotland</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian - Other denomination</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian - Roman Catholic</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information not known</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13a: Student sexual orientation by level (Headcount).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE</th>
<th>TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE</th>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay man</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay woman/lesbian</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information not known</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13b: Student sexual orientation by level (Headcount %).
### Table 14a: Student gender identity by level (Headcount).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEl</th>
<th>RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE</th>
<th>TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE</th>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IS GENDER NOW SAME AS BIRTH?</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R/U</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>871</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 14b: Student gender identity by level (Headcount %).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEl</th>
<th>RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE</th>
<th>TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE</th>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IS GENDER NOW SAME AS BIRTH?</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R/U</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 15: Student retention by gender and disability 2015/16/17 (FT UG students).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student retention by gender and disability.</th>
<th>FTE Full Time Undergraduate</th>
<th>% Full Time Undergraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No known disability</td>
<td>4392</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Declared</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/Refused</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5083</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No known disability</td>
<td>3448</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Declared</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/Refused</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4052</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>9135</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student retention by ethnicity and gender.</td>
<td>FTE Full Time Undergraduate</td>
<td>% Full Time Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4527</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/R</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5069</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3495</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/R</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4024</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8022</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Student retention by ethnicity and gender 2015/16/17 (FT UG students)
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper provides details of the main items of business considered by the Senate at its meeting on 25 January 2017 of relevance to the University Court. The report focuses on (i) changes to degree regulations (ii) a proposal for an overseas campus in Rwanda (iii) an update on transnational education (iv) the outcome from the annual Senate survey.

1.2 This paper includes one item for approval and three items for information.

1.3 Further information may be obtained from Dr Rachael Bernard (r.bernard@abdn.ac.uk or extension 3388).

2. ITEM FOR ROUTINE APPROVAL

2.1 The Court is asked to approve, on the recommendation of the Senate, the draft Resolution, ‘Changes to Regulations for Various Degrees’. This enacts the changes in Degree Regulations recommended by the Quality Assurance Committee since January 2016. The draft Resolution is available at www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/court/intranet.

2.2 The majority of these changes reflect (i) typographical amendment to text previously approved or (ii) introductions, amendments and withdrawals of degree programmes which are reflected in the relevant supplementary regulations as detailed.

3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Court is invited to note the following items of information from the Senate:

3.1

TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION UPDATE

3.2 The Senate received a paper updating them on the current Transnational Education initiatives and their present state of development/future prospects. Senate noted that projects including Rwanda, Ghana, Dubai, Sri Lanka, Qatar and Egypt were currently under consideration. It was confirmed to Senate that all proposals were at varying stages of development with only Rwanda now having approval to progress, subject to the conditions imposed by Senate.

REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE SENATE SURVEY

3.3 The Senate received an update on the outcome on the Annual Senate Survey. The paper provided data in response to the numerical questions asked and confirmed that the Senate Business Committee (SBC) had considered the written answers submitted. Senate were invited to submit comments in writing for further consideration by SBC.
4. Resource Implications

4.1 There are no immediate resource implications arising from this paper.

5. Risk Management

5.1 Not applicable.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Sustainability & Social Responsibility

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Recommended Action

8.1 The Court is asked to approve the Resolution on ‘Changes to Regulations for Various Degrees’ in section 2 and to note the information included in section 3.

9. Further Information

9.1 Further information is available from Dr Rachael Bernard (r.bernard@abdn.ac.uk or extension 3388).

[7 March 2017] [version 1] [Open]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Board/Committee</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previously considered by</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further approval required</td>
<td>Court</td>
<td>28 March 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This paper provides a summary outturn of the Annual Accounts for year ended 31 July 2016, comparing our performance with the Scottish sector and our benchmark group in the UK. The report excludes the Open University in Scotland, as their results are not separately available from those of The Open University and SRUC, who have a different funding arrangement and a 31 March year-end date.

1.2 Court is invited to note our financial position as at July 2016 compared to the Scottish sector and our benchmark group in the UK. This is the first year that the sector has prepared financial statements using the new Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2015. As a result, there are only two years of comparable financial data available for institutions at the present time.

1.3 University of Aberdeen tuition fee income increased by 9.0% for the year to 31 July 2016, compared with a peer group average increase of 9.8% and overall Scottish growth of 9.0%. International fees growth was strong at 8.3% compared with a UK average of 7.2%. When considered as a percentage of total income, international fees remain low at 10.3%. The Scottish average is 13.7% and achieving our UK peer group average of 14.8% would equate to an additional £12m of fee income. Our internationalisation strategy provides an opportunity to grow income via our aims to improve international student recruitment, for example through our work in China, and to develop transnational education opportunities with prospects in Rwanda and Qatar currently being considered. Our 2015/16 results, when compared to our Scottish and UK peers, support the requirement to increase international income as per our financial strategy presented to Court in December.

1.4 Staff costs, adjusted for pension scheme liability movements remain higher than average. When taken as a percentage of total income, adjusted staff costs represent 58.8% of income at Aberdeen, compared with 51.7% for the UK peer group and 52.5% for Scotland. The difference between the Aberdeen and UK figures equates to £15.5m. Assuming that income growth can be achieved whilst maintaining our current staffing complement, our percentage would move closer to that of our peers. For example a £12m increase in international fees as described in section 1.3, would reduce our staff costs to 55% of income. The financial strategy agreed at Court, requires the University to keep tight control of staff costs by effectively retaining our staff complement at the current level and using this resource to diversify and grow our income.

1.5 Our deficit before other gains and losses of £4.6m is the only reported deficit within our UK peer group and one of only a few in Scotland. Working initially towards a break even position with the aim of generating a surplus would increase the level of cash available to invest in our infrastructure etc.

1.6 In terms of balance sheet strength Aberdeen remains healthy, our cash holdings have increased due to the sale of Rowett land at Bucksburn, recouping part of the cash outlay on the new RINH facility. Our debt is low in comparison with the sector and our net current liability position, the extent to which the University can meet current liabilities from cash and other current assets, remains weak when compared with the sector. Increased surpluses from actions highlighted within our financial strategy will not only improve this, but will also generate the cash required to invest in our facilities etc.

1.7 Further information is available from Mr David Beattie, Director of Finance david.beattie@abdn.ac.uk or Mr Craig Sherrit, Assistant Director (Financial Accounting) c.a.sherrit@abdn.ac.uk
2. **Strategic Context / Results**

2.1 **University of Aberdeen summary financial position**

2.1.1 The University of Aberdeen reported an overall deficit of £7.4m for the year as reported in our new Annual Report & Accounts 2016, and a deficit of £4.6m prior to accounting for the gain on the disposal of land and movements in the value of investments and pension scheme liabilities etc. Once adjusting for individually significant items, for example the costs of the voluntary severance and early retirement schemes, we returned an underlying operating surplus of £0.3m for the year to 31 July 2016. Further details are available in Appendix 1.

2.2 **Surplus/(Deficit)**

2.2.1 When compared with our Scottish peers, the University is ranked 14 out of 17 for our unadjusted headline deficit of £4.6m and our underlying surplus of £0.3m is ranked 11th.

2.2.2 Surplus generation is necessary to increase cash balances in order to support investment in our infrastructure, staff and the student experience. Excluding the outlying institutions, Edinburgh and Glasgow School of Art (£40m insurance claim in respect of the fire), from the analysis reduces the average unadjusted deficit to £0.1m from a surplus of £5.8m and the underlying figure from £6.1m surplus to one of £2.5m. For 2015/16, a breakeven position before other gains and losses (unadjusted) would have generated an additional £4.6m of cash, whilst achieving the Scottish average would have increased cash by £10.4m (£7.1m excluding outliers).
2.2.3 When compared with our UK group, Aberdeen was ranked lowest in both categories. When comparing surplus generation with the UK peer group, we must note that the different funding model for England will significantly impact upon the results.

2.3 Income

2.3.1 The University’s total income of £230.0m remained flat in 2015/16 when compared the revised FRS102 figures for 2014/15. Meanwhile our UK peer group saw an average increase of 4.1% and a Scottish average increase of 3.1%. Income sources for Aberdeen and both groups are shown below.

2.3.2 As expected due to the differing funding models for Scotland and England, our UK peer group shows a significantly lower proportion of funding council grants than the Scottish sector, however when taken together with tuition fees, both groups show around 60% of income being generated from these categories. In comparison, Aberdeen earns around 56% of income from government funding and tuition fees, but generates a significantly higher proportion of research grants and contracts, with 28% compared with 22% for both our peer group and within Scotland.
2.3.3 Undertaking an above average level of research activity impacts on our ability to generate a surplus. Our Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) return for financial year 2015/16 shows that teaching activities are shown to generate a surplus. Publicly funded teaching shows a small surplus with income being the equivalent to 101% of expenditure, whilst for non-publicly funded teaching, income represents 146% of expenditure. The TRAC return reports a deficit on research activity, mainly as we cannot recover the full economic cost (fEC) of research activity from many of our funding bodies. Although the recovery rates differ for the various funding categories, in overall terms income earned represents 70% of the cost of research activities. As a result earning a higher than average percentage of our income from research activities reduces our ability to cover all associated costs, and therefore on our ability to generate a surplus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4 Income analysis</th>
<th>Aberdeen %</th>
<th>Scotland %</th>
<th>Scotland (Excluding Edinburgh) %</th>
<th>UK Group %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total income – movement on previous year</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition fees – movement on previous year</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International fees as a percentage of total income</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International tuition fees – movement of previous year</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent FC grants – movement on previous year</td>
<td>-3.7</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent FC grants as percentage of total income</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research income – movement on previous year</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research council as percentage of research income</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research council – movement on previous year</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income – movement on previous year</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.4 Income at Aberdeen has increased by 0.2% for the year compared with the Scottish sector average increase of 3.1% and the UK group average of 4.1%.

2.3.5 Overall tuition fee income growth of 9.0% is in line with UK (9.8%) and Scottish (9.0%) figures, with our international fee growth outperforming the UK peer group by approximately 1%. However, our international tuition fees as percentage of total income remains low at 10.3% compared with 14.8% for the UK group and 13.7% for Scotland. Achievement of our UK peer group average would have resulted in an additional £12m of international tuition fees for financial year 2015/16.

2.3.6 Recurrent funding from the Scottish Funding Council (teaching and research) has fallen by 3.7% during the year. Continued pressure on public funding makes future cuts likely, as a result the University must grow other sources of income to meet rising costs, to generate surpluses and cash to enable further investment.

2.3.7 Research income increased by 2.4% during 2015/16 compared with a 2.4% reduction for the UK group and a 0.7% increase in Scotland. The reduction within the sector is predominantly due to large Research and Development Expenditure Credit claims in 2014/15. Research Council income of 21.9% as a percentage of research income is below both the Scottish and UK sector averages in the year. The TRAC return shows that income from Research Council research activity covers 66% of costs. As this is lower than our overall recovery percentage, a lower proportion of research council funded activity improves our overall surplus position.
2.4 Expenditure

2.4.1 Total expenditure of £234.5m represents 102% of income and results in a deficit before other gains and losses of £4.6m. University expenditure and that of our Scottish and UK peer group averages are analysed as follows:

2.4.2 Staff costs (excluding restructuring costs) as a percentage of total expenditure of 56.9% are higher than both the Scottish and UK group averages. When adjusted to take account of pension scheme liability movements, Aberdeen figures remain high. Staff costs adjusted for pension movements represent 58.8% of total income, compared with our UK peer average of 51.7% and 52.5% in Scotland. A return to the UK average would require the equivalent of a £15.5m reduction in staff costs.

2.5 Cash and debt

2.5.1 The Group’s cash reserves at the year-end were £21.2m, an increase of £13.8m over the previous year. The increase is mainly due to the sale of the Rowett site. The average and top three cash balances in both groups are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>£m</th>
<th>UK Group</th>
<th>£m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>193.9</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>165.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>175.8</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>101.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathclyde</td>
<td>115.0</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.2 University borrowing of £72.1m includes the Barclays loan facility of £40.0m and finance leases in respect of student accommodation at Hillhead (£31.9m). Borrowing levels remain low when compared across the sector, the average and top three institutional figures are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>£m</th>
<th>UK Group</th>
<th>£m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>130.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>259.0</td>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>302.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrews</td>
<td>102.4</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>250.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathclyde</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>211.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5.3 Our gearing ratio, or debt as percentage of total funds is low compared with the UK peer group, and in line with the Scottish average. Aberdeen debt of £72.1m represents 20% of total funds (value), compared with an average of 28% for the UK group and 19% in Scotland. Many of our UK peers have borrowed heavily to invest, this has been facilitated by the changes to the English funding model. In Scotland many of the smaller institutions have little or no borrowing.

2.5.4 Although the level of borrowing at Aberdeen remains low, surplus generation and cash generated from operating activities are also low compared with peers in the UK and slightly above the Scottish average.

![Cash from operating activities - UK Group](chart1)

![Cash from operating activities - Scotland](chart2)

2.5.5 Cash from operating activities excludes items such as financing costs and interest receivable, non-cash items of income and expenditure and working capital movements, i.e. changes to debtor and creditor levels. Although our surplus/(deficit) position is one of the poorest in Scotland, our cash generation is slightly above the Scottish average for a number of reasons. Our depreciation charge, the non-cash cost of using our assets, is historically high due to our previous policy of revaluing assets. An increase in asset values due to revaluation in turn increases the annual depreciation charge. In addition, during 2015/16 we impaired (wrote down) the value of certain properties and investments, although this has a negative impact on the surplus/(deficit) position, there is no cash outflow associated with an impairment charge.

2.5.6 Cash generation impacts on our ability to invest for the future, the ability to borrow, and the cost of doing so, as well as the financial sustainability and cost of our pension scheme. Cash generation does not only relate to growing income but is equally improved by effective cost management.
2.6 Balance sheet and reserves

2.6.1 Our balance sheet is in a healthy position with unrestricted reserves of £327.8m compared with our UK peer group average of £441.9m and the Scottish average of £223.4m. In addition, Aberdeen holds endowments of £41.3m giving a total worth of £369.1m.

2.6.2 Although reserves balances give a useful indication of the total value of the University, in terms of liquidity the net current assets or liabilities figure is helpful. This provides an indication of the extent to which the University can meet its short term creditors from cash and other current assets. At 31 July 2016 the University was in a position to cover 72% (2015:70%) of short term liabilities from cash etc. compared with our UK group average of 144% (2015:136%) and the Scottish equivalent of 151% (2015:147%) of short term liabilities.

2.6.3 An important point to note is the differentiation between reserves and cash positions. Whilst the University has unrestricted reserves of £327.8m this does not represent the level of cash that is available for investment. Reserves include historic surpluses and the movement in the value of land and buildings over time. Many of these reserves have been invested in new facilities and when added to endowment holdings, represent the worth of the University as opposed to the funds we have at our disposal.

2.6.4 Pension liabilities have increased by £7.4m with movement represented by an increase of £9.3m to £36.4m for the University's Superannuation & Life Assurance Scheme (UASLAS). The revised accounting standard requires that the University must recognise the liability for contributions payable in respect of the recovery plan for the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). For the financial year ending 31 July 2016, the provision is £26.8m, a reduction of £1.7m during the year. The liability for the Strathclyde Pension Fund (SPF) has reduced by £43k during the year and has resulted in a provision of £2.7m. In addition, as a result of the merger with Northern College the University is responsible for the payment of enhanced pensions to a number of former employees of the College and the actuarial valuation at 31 July 2016 has reduced by £0.1m to £4.1m.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 This paper has no resource implications.

4 Risk Management

4.1 Not directly applicable, although risks relating to financial sustainability and income are included in the University's Corporate Risk Register.

5 Equality Impact Assessment

5.1 Not applicable: an Equality Impact Assessment is not required as a result of this paper.

6 Environmental Impact

6.1 Not applicable: there are no environmental impacts arising from the issues in this paper.

7. Recommended Action

7.1 Court is invited to note our financial position as at 31 July 2016 compared to the Scottish Sector and our competitors in the UK

8. Further Information

8.1 Further information is available from Mr David Beattie, Director of Finance, david.beattie@abdn.ac.uk or Mr Craig Sherrit, Assistant Director (Financial Accounting) c.a.sherrit@abdn.ac.uk
APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY RESULTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2016

Summary Comprehensive Income Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£000</td>
<td>£000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>229,962</td>
<td>229,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>234,533</td>
<td>251,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deficit) before other gains and losses</td>
<td>(4,571)</td>
<td>(22,177)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other gains/(losses)</td>
<td>5,025</td>
<td>8,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td>(495)</td>
<td>(568)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actuarial loss in respect of pension schemes</td>
<td>(7,408)</td>
<td>(1,046)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive deficit for the year</td>
<td>(7,449)</td>
<td>(14,964)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite returning an overall deficit, once adjusting for individually significant items, the University returned a small underlying surplus for 2015/16 as follows:

Underlying Surplus/(Deficit)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£000</td>
<td>£000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deficit) before other gains and losses</td>
<td>(4,571)</td>
<td>(22,177)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary severance and early retirement scheme</td>
<td>3,783</td>
<td>3,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension provision adjustments</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>14,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and development expenditure credit claim</td>
<td>(2,180)</td>
<td>(1,060)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impairments</td>
<td>3,136</td>
<td>1,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlying surplus/(deficit) on operating activities</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>(3,486)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£000</td>
<td>£000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-current assets</td>
<td>623,554</td>
<td>626,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>21,208</td>
<td>7,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other current assets</td>
<td>26,198</td>
<td>39,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans and leases due within one year</td>
<td>(1,815)</td>
<td>(2,050)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other current liabilities</td>
<td>(63,531)</td>
<td>(65,220)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net current liabilities</td>
<td>(17,940)</td>
<td>(20,040)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loans and leases due after more than one year</td>
<td>(70,240)</td>
<td>(72,054)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred income</td>
<td>(94,965)</td>
<td>(95,080)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension provisions</td>
<td>(70,017)</td>
<td>(62,556)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other provisions</td>
<td>(1,314)</td>
<td>(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total net assets</td>
<td>369,078</td>
<td>376,527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reserves

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Endowments</td>
<td>41,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income and expenditure account</td>
<td>134,231</td>
<td>139,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revaluation reserve</td>
<td>193,533</td>
<td>198,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total funds</td>
<td>369,078</td>
<td>376,527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>