Senior Governor Role Description

The Senior Governor is responsible for the leadership of Court, for its effectiveness, its conduct and for ensuring the University is well connected with its stakeholders, including its staff and students.

Principal Duties & Responsibilities

- Responsible for the leadership of Court and that the necessary business is carried on efficiently, effectively, and in a manner appropriate for the proper conduct of public business;

- In the absence of the Rector or with his or her agreement, to chair meetings of the Court;

- To ensure the Court exercises efficient and effective use of the resources of the University for the furtherance of its charitable purposes, maintains its long-term financial viability, and safeguards its assets, and that proper mechanisms exist to ensure financial control and for the prevention of fraud;

- To ensure the Court sets the strategic direction of the University, through an effective planning and risk management process, and that the performance of the University is adequately assessed against the objectives approved by the Court;

- To ensure that Court acts in accordance with the instruments of governance of the University and with the University’s internal rules and regulations.

Delivery of the Role and Responsibilities

The Senior Governor plays a central role in setting and maintaining excellent standards of governance and ensuring the Court discharges its responsibilities. He or she specifically will:

- Establish a constructive and supportive but challenging working relationship with the Principal while recognising the proper separation between governance and executive management, and avoiding involvement in the day-to-day executive management of the University;

- Act fairly and impartially at all times in the interests of the University as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate;

- Command the respect of Court and facilitate the conditions for all members to work together effectively, contributing their skills and expertise as appropriate, and will seek to build consensus among them;

- Lead the process of the appointment of the Principal;

- Be responsible for appraisal of the performance of the Principal;

- Secure the recruitment of an effective group of governors;

- Ensure that there is effective evaluation and feedback on the performance of Court, its Committees, and individual governors;

- Ensure that the Court conducts itself in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life, embracing selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

In addition, the Senior Governor will play a representative role in the life of the University, including:
• Being a member of the Scottish Committee of University Chairs;

• Generally, representing the University internally and externally with key stakeholders, including attendance at events;

• Using personal networks and influence to advance the cause of higher education generally, and the University of Aberdeen in particular;

• Involvement in the promotion of philanthropic giving.