

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

Wednesday, 26 April 2023

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

10.3 Audit and Risk Committee Report

12 REF Stocktake 2023

THE FOLLOWING PAPERS ARE ENCLOSED BUT HAVE BEEN REDACTED ON THE GROUNDS OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

10.4 Finance and Resourcing Committee Report (Sections 6.2, 8.7 and 8.9)

11 Director of Advancement Report (Section 5.7)

There will be a meeting of the **UNIVERSITY COURT** on **Wednesday 26 April** at 9am to 3pm in the **ROWETT INSTITUTE SEMINAR ROOM**. Coffee and breakfast available from 8:30am.

BUSINESS

All items of business are for discussion, providing information or context relevant for current or future decisions. Those items that require a decision today are annotated accordingly.

- 1 WELCOME AND RECTOR'S REPORT (enclosed)
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REMINDER OF COURT AND MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES (enclosed)
- 3 MINUTES OF 1 March 2023: For Approval (enclosed)
- 4 ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING (enclosed)
- 5 REPORT FROM THE SENIOR GOVERNOR (enclosed)
- 6 REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND UPDATE ON HE SECTOR / UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTS (enclosed)
- 7 EXTENDED DISCUSSION TOPIC: Enhancing our Data and Systems
- 8 FINANCE AND PLANNING
 - 8.1 2022/23 Updated Financial Projection (**Strictly Confidential**) (enclosed)
 - 8.2 USS Debt Monitoring Report 2021/22 (enclosed)
 - 8.3 Presentation on King's and Johnston Capital Projects
- 9 BI-ANNUAL STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE (enclosed)
- 10 REPORTS FROM COURT SUB-COMMITTEES
 - 10.1 Governance and Nominations Committee Report: For Decision (Part Confidential) (enclosed)
 - 10.2 Remuneration Committee: To Formally Note (enclosed)
 - 10.3 Audit and Risk Committee: **Strictly Confidential** (enclosed)
 - 10.4 Finance and Resourcing Committee Report (Part Confidential) (enclosed)
 - 10.5 Pensions Advisory Group: For Decision (enclosed)
- 11 REPORT FROM DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS (enclosed)
- 12 REF STOCKTAKE 2023 (**Strictly Confidential**) (enclosed)

- 13 PEOPLE, INCLUSION & CULTURE
 - 13.1 Gender Pay Gap Report 2022: For Decision (enclosed)
 - 13.2 Gaelic Language Plan 2019-2024 (enclosed)
 - 13.3 Update on Cultural Change: Working Across Schools and Directorates (Presentation/Oral Update)

- 14 EDUCATION
 - 14.1 Outcome of Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (enclosed)

- 15 GOVERNANCE & REGULATORY
 - 15.1 Annual Prevent Duty Report (enclosed)
 - 15.2 Resolution for Formal Approval: Code of Practice on Student Discipline: For Approval (enclosed)

- 16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday 21 June 2023 at 9am to 3pm.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COURT
REPORT FROM THE RECTOR

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

1.1 This paper provides Court with a report from the Rector.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 The paper is **for information** and no action is required.

3 REPORT ON ACTIVITIES SINCE LAST MEETING

- 3.1 I was part of the delegation that attended the Presentation of Loyal Addresses by Privileged Bodies at Buckingham Palace. It was an honour to represent our university along with colleagues. I also attended Dinner with key donors, a wonderful evening, very well organised with very meaningful conversations and great speeches delivered by our team.
- 3.2 I came out to cheer our students at the Granite City challenge. Amazing success all round, many congratulations to our students who took part in various activities.
- 3.3 Attended the Scholar's Reception and had the privilege of hearing from our scholarship students the great impact our university is having in each and every student. I listened to one of the scholars share her personal story, which gives me so much joy being a part of this great University. It was also an opportunity to meet several sponsors and to thank them for the partnership. Did I say I was the MC? I will encourage Court members to attend these events and see first-hand the remarkable work done by staff of the University, plus the added benefit of seeing my MC skills in action.
- 3.4 I attended the Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) Activities Ball and had the pleasure of presenting one of the Awards. It was a very enjoyable event, especially watching our students having so much fun, and also very well behaved. The event showcased the wonderful culture of the University.
- 3.5 I joined our students and AUSA Team at the AUSA Election Results Announcements. Many Congratulations to Venessa Mabonso Nzolo who was re-elected as President and to the other Sabbatical Officers.
- 3.6 Met with some Heads of Schools which afforded me the opportunity to thank them for their dedication and hard work, and equally to highlight the many positive points of feedback I hear from students.

4. FURTHER INFORMATION

4.1 Further information is available from the Rector, rector@abdn.ac.uk.

Confidentiality Status: Open



UNIVERSITY COURT

26 April 2023

DECLARATION OF INTEREST, BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION AND REMINDER OF COURT AND MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

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.

BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION:

All items of business are for discussion, providing information or context relevant for current or future decisions. Those items that require a decision today are annotated accordingly.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COURT AND COURT MEMBERS

Enclosed is a reminder for Court, for information, of:

- (a) its remit and primary responsibilities and the schedule of decisions reserved to it;
- (b) the role and duties of members, in particular, as trustees in charity law;

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Court, email b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk.

Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COURT AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS AS CHARITY TRUSTEES

1. REMIT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.1 The constitutional basis, authority and responsibilities of the University Court are derived largely from the statutes contained in the Universities (Scotland) Acts from 1858 to 1966 and in the Ordinances and Resolutions made thereunder. Latterly this has been supplemented by the requirements of the Higher Education Governance Scotland (Act). The University is also a registered Scottish Charity and as such the Court as the governing body is the board of trustees, its members are charity trustees and subject to Scottish charities law, with accountability to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR). The powers and functions of the Court are drawn from these requirements of statute and are set out in its Statement of Primary Responsibilities <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/court-information.php#panel2452>
- 1.2 The Court has delegated many of its functions to its sub-committees: Audit and Risk, Commercialisation, Finance and Resourcing, Governance and Nominations, and Remuneration. These are set out in the respective remits of each Committee – and going forward brought together under a Schedule of Delegations expected to be considered by Court in November 2022. It should be noted, however, that Court as the governing body remains ultimately responsible for any decisions made by sub-committees on its behalf.

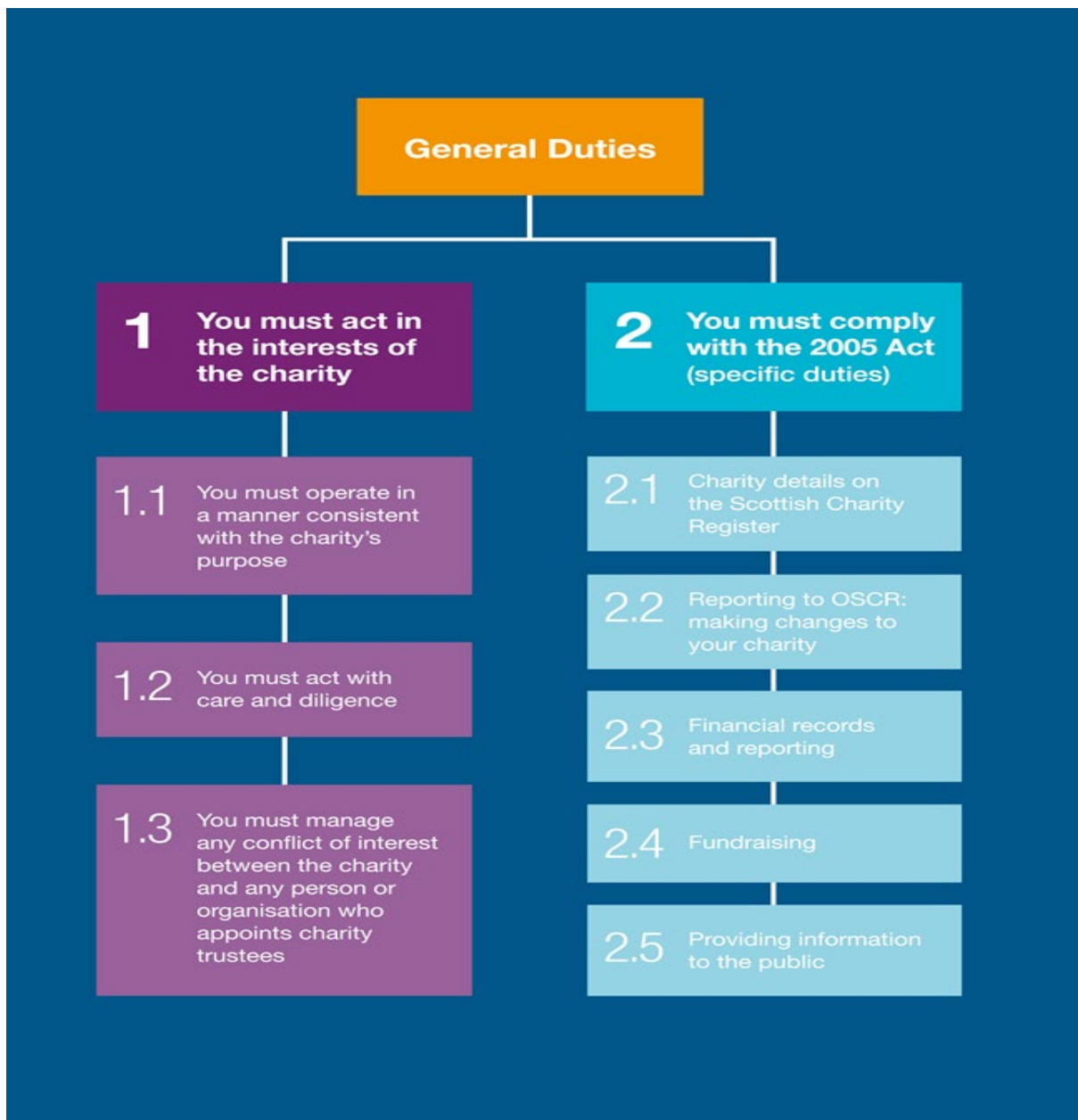
2. ROLE OF MEMBERS, CODE OF CONDUCT AND DUTIES OF CHARITY TRUSTEES

- 2.1 Members are reminded of their role as a governor (detailed below), the Court's Code of Conduct for Members (provided in your letter of appointment a condition of appointment) and, in particular, your duties as charity trustees under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. You should also be aware of the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance <http://www.scottishuniversitygovernance.ac.uk/2017-code/> and the Financial Memorandum with the Scottish Funding Council: [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Guidance_Governance/Financial Memorandum with higher education institutions - 1 December 2014.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Guidance_Governance/Financial_Memorandum_with_higher_education_institutions_-_1_December_2014.pdf)

Duties in Charities Law

- 2.2 These are summarised below, but more detailed guidance on the duties of charity trustees OSCR were provided in papers for the September 2020 meeting or available here <https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/guidance-and-good-practice-for-charity-trustees/> All members are asked to regularly review their responsibilities as individual charity trustees in law.

- 2.3 All charity trustees have legal duties and responsibilities under the **2005 Act**. A duty is something that you must do, and all the duties must be met. These duties are separated out into **general duties**, that set out a broad framework that all charity trustees must work within, and **specific duties** detailed in the 2005 Act – OSCR note that you might delegate the practical details of the specific duties to your charity’s staff, volunteers or professional advisers, but that the charity trustees are ultimately responsible for making sure the specific duties are met. The general and specific duties apply equally to **all** charity trustees and to **all** charities. All of the charity’s trustees should work together to make sure that these duties are met. If you fail to comply with these duties then this is **misconduct** and OSCR have powers to take action against charity trustees, where appropriate. OSCR state that their response will be proportionate depending on the situation. Where a charity trustee has acted reasonably and honestly it is unlikely to be treated as misconduct.
- 2.4 As a charity trustee, the key duty is to look after the charity’s **assets** and for making sure that the charity fulfils its **charitable purpose(s) – the University’s purposes based on OSCR registration categorisations are:** the advancement of higher education, of health, of citizenship or community development, and the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science.
- 2.5 The general and specific duties under the 2005 Act are:



3. COURT'S AGREED ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR COURT MEMBERS

3.1 In addition to the duties under law, the Court's agreed role description for governors, taking into account the requirements of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance is:

Each governor is responsible, collectively with fellow governors, for the effective leadership of the University in all its aspects. That translates into more specific responsibilities of which the following are key:

- To play an appropriate part in furthering the values of higher education and the mission of the University of Aberdeen in particular;
- To ensure that the Court exercises efficient and effective use of the resources of the University, 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 exercise oversight in respect of the academic, corporate, financial, estate and human resource functions delegated to the authority of the Principal as chief executive;
- To ensure that Court conducts itself in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life, embracing duty, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability and stewardship, openness, honesty, leadership and respect. Members must at all times regulate their personal conduct as members of the Court in accordance with these standards;
- To establish constructive and supportive but challenging working relationships with the University employees with whom they come into contact, whilst recognising the proper separation between governance and executive management;
- To act fairly and impartially in the interests of the University as a whole using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate;

Ends

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2023

Present: Julie Ashworth (in the Chair for Minutes 95 onwards)
Keith Anderson (except for Minutes 102 to 135)
Eleanor Bentley
George Boyne
Martina Chukwuma-Ezike (in the Chair for Minutes 94)
Owen Cox
Nick Edwards
Gary McRae
Helen Martin (Minutes 94 to 128)
Lyndsay Menzies (except for Minutes 107 to 110)
Caryn Miller
Martin Mills
Anne Minto
Vanessa Mabonso Nzola
Iain Percival (via Teams for Minutes 102 onwards)
Charlotte Pope-Williams (via Teams)
Diane Skåtun
Camilo Torres Barragán
Robert Traynham
Neil Vargesson
Ilia Xypolia

In attendance: Liza Boffen-Yordanova
Marion Campbell (94 to 128)
Debbie Dyker
Pete Edwards
David Evans
Jenny Fernandes
Karl Leydecker
Tracey Slaven
Alan Speight (via Teams for Minutes 94 to 128)
Louise Thomson
Iain Torrance KCVO
Mark White
Bruce Purdon (Clerk)

Apologies: Colette Backwell
Iain Mackay
Joachim Schaper
Otto Thoresen

WELCOME AND RECTOR'S REPORT

- 94 The Rector opened the meeting and introduced her written report to Court on activities that she had undertaken since the last meeting (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). The Rector noted, in particular, the Christmas lunch that she had hosted for students unable to return home for the holiday period and her appreciation to the AUSA and Student Support teams for their continued work for the benefit of the student community.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REMINDER OF COURT AND MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 95 The Court noted the standing reminder of the responsibilities of Court and members as charity trustees (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). No declarations of interest in the agenda were noted.

MINUTES OF 22 NOVEMBER 2022

- 96 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 November 2022 were approved.
- 97 The Court also noted the action note of the informal Deep Dive discussion on Research Strategy held on 7 February 2023.

ACTION LOG, MATTERS ARISING AND DECISIONS BY CIRCULATION

- 98 The Court noted a report on the updated Action Log (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). The report also recorded that since its last meeting the Court had approved by circulation the University's Annual Modern Slavery Statement.

REPORT FROM THE SENIOR GOVERNOR

- 99 The Court received and noted a report from the Senior Governor on the meetings and activities she had undertaken since the previous meeting (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). The Senior Governor reflected, in particular, on the visit of Her Majesty The Queen Consort in January, the extended informal discussion that the Court had held in February on the University's research strategy, and that Court members were now partnered in a buddy system with Heads of Schools and Directors of Professional Services. The Senior Governor also reminded members to advise the Clerk of any training or development needs that they required.

REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND UPDATE ON THE SECTOR/UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTS

- 100 The Court received a report on policy developments relating to higher education and the recent achievements of staff and students at Aberdeen University (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*) supplemented by an oral report from the Principal. As part of this, the Principal updated Court on the progress of the King's and Johnston capital project tenders and that there would be more to report at the next meeting of Court. The Principal also

anticipated future discussions with Court on the development of the next major University fundraising campaign.

- 101 The Principal also reported on the UK higher education financial context where recent data showed that one third of institutions had been in deficit in 2021, a figure that was likely to have increased in 2022. The Court then discussed the current status of the sector wide industrial dispute over pay, pensions and workload. A pay settlement decided nationally, of between 5-8% before incremental awards, was being implemented for all staff, as was required under local contractual terms. This and other financial projections discussed later in the agenda, regrettably meant that the University had to pause until September 2023 some recruitment of staff (exceptions being where posts related to REF investment, supporting growth in student numbers, statutory requirements or income generation activity). The pay settlement would be unaffordable for a number of institutions without taking cost-saving measures. While the situation with regard to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) was expected to improve at its next valuation in 2024, the Principal reminded Court that universities were not the trustees of that scheme and, therefore, could not of and by themselves resolve the issues under dispute.

UPDATE AND EXTENDED DISCUSSION ON STUDENT RECRUITMENT

- 102 The Court received an update paper and presentation on student recruitment (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). This focused, in particular, on postgraduate taught international applications, reflections on the challenges experienced with the September 2022 intake, the current position in relation to the January 2023 postgraduate taught international intake, the lessons learnt from both of those admissions rounds and the new actions implemented for both January 2023 and September 2023. The University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, gave the presentation on behalf of the Vice-Principal for Global Engagement, who due to illness was unable to attend the meeting in person or deliver the presentation remotely.
- 103 The Principal noted that he had received a near final draft report from an external independent review that had been undertaken on the challenges experienced in the September 2022 intake. He reported on its draft recommendations, which once finalised, would be shared with Court. The Principal, meantime however, noted that the Senior Management Team took collective and individual responsibility for the issues that were experienced in the September 2022 intake. As part of this, the Senior Management Team had reflected on the robustness of its evaluation of the risks to sustaining the University's recent success in growing student numbers.
- 104 The Court discussed the continuing challenges that had been highlighted in the paper/presentation around conversion of applicants to entrants in some overseas markets and the risk of overreliance on one area. The Court also received assurances regarding how the University was monitoring its third-party admissions support, particularly in relation to the quality of entrants being maintained.

- 105 The Court was assured that, following the announcement that the Director of External Relations was leaving the University, interim measures were in place to ensure that staff in those areas were supported in the face of a challenging situation and workload pressure, and to provide these key areas with leadership and guidance. As part of this, the appointment of an Interim Director for the student recruitment and admissions part of the Directorate was being considered.
- 106 The Court discussed the steps that were being taken to take forward any short-term applications process improvements, prior to a longer-term and wider process review being undertaken. The Court also discussed the potential greater use of deposits for some overseas markets and noted that the University had advised applicants that deposits might potentially be required going forward.

FINANCE AND PLANNING

2022/23 UPDATED FINANCIAL PROJECTION

- 107 The Court received an update paper on the year-end projected financial position (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*), which took into account the January 2023 student intake.
- 108 Key points noted from the report were:
- That 630 January 2023 entrants for Post-Graduate Taught (international) was the assumption for the revised 2022/23 tuition fee forecast. This would result in a gross tuition fee shortfall of £14.1m against the annual budget.
 - Net savings/income movements identified to date to improve the University's budget position amounted to £3.8m. Achieving this would result in a £7.1m deficit, which would not meet the covenant position and at least £1.2m of further savings would be required to do so.
 - An additional £5.2m of income or savings were required to meet the £1.9m original deficit budget target for the year.
 - The key actions being undertaken to date to achieve the agreed £1.9m deficit, with more under consideration.
 - Further material forecast movements had arisen since the original forecast which amounted to a net adverse figure of £3.3m. These had been included within the forecast deficit of £7.1m noted above.
 - A further financial risk to the University's operating position that could worsen the deficit position by £1.6m (from £7.1m to £8.7m) this being due to the latest Universities & Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) pay award offer, the cost of which was estimated to be an additional £1.58m. An £8.7m deficit would breach covenant by an estimated £2.8m without additional income or savings being identified and in this event, a total of £6.8m of savings would be required to bring the University back to a £1.9m deficit. It was also noted that to accommodate working capital cash movements an additional £1m of savings was recommended in order to provide covenant headroom (as the covenant was based on

operating cash flow which includes working capital debtor and creditor movements).

109 In discussion, the following key points were recorded:

- In addition to the selective recruitment pause noted earlier in the meeting, work was ongoing to identify areas of discretionary spend that were either not essential or could be paused. The Court was assured that if necessary, other priorities would not be taken forward in order to protect REF investment. In response to a question regarding protecting the IT budget, the Principal recognised the importance of that area but could not, given the financial context, guarantee that no savings might be required from that budget line.
- A standard provision for bad debt was included in the forecast.
- While noting the Senior Management Team's commitment to achieving the £1.9m agreed budget deficit position, some members noted that the Court should be prepared to consider, if necessary and if appropriately justified, a higher deficit in 2022/23 or running a small deficit in 2023/24, in order to avoid any short-term savings that impacted on the longer-term success of the University. It was also noted, however, that for the current financial year, action was required at this point in order to have effect and the focus was on identifying actions that would not have that longer-term impact.
- It was noted that it might be necessary to revisit at the Autumn Strategy Day the financial strategy if the current challenges in student recruitment continued into future admissions rounds and reflected a fundamental change in the external competitive environment.
- It was requested that future reports to Court also provide information on any issues with pensions' covenant compliance.
- The CFO assured Court that no other budgetary risks were anticipated, at this stage.

PROJECT PROPOSAL - HILLHEAD HEATING NETWORK

110 The Court received a proposal and business case for a new project to modernise the Hillhead Heating Network (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). The project had been considered by the Finance & Resources Committee by circulation) and recommended to Court by it for approval.

111 The Court noted that the project would upgrade the heat distribution network at the University of Aberdeen's main student residence site (Hillhead Student Village). It would replace the existing heat distribution infrastructure across the site, replacing all existing pipework and upgrading the associated heat centres that serve each of the residential buildings. In so doing, the project would support a core ambition of the Aberdeen 2040 strategy by taking a significant step in the University's net-zero journey.

- 112 The following key elements of the project were noted:
- estimated total costs for the project of £6.5m. This included a 10% contingency, 14% optimism bias and an estimate of inflation.
 - works phased over four financial years with onsite construction works undertaken over two summer periods at a current updated estimated cost of £6.5m (£4m from a loan from the Scottish Funding Council and £2.5m from the University Estates recurrent capital budget).
 - a return on investment of 47% and payback period of 17 years
 - that a mandate to form a Project Board to progress the project, in line with the University's Project Management Methodology, had been approved by the Sustainable Heating Programme Board, Estates Committee and the Senior Management Team.
- 113 In discussion, it was confirmed that under University capital project approval procedures a value assurance review was not required for a project of this size/cost. The Court was assured that the contingency provision around inflation had been scrutinised extensively through the executive committee structure and then at Finance & Resourcing Committee and was considered to be as accurate a project cost proposal as could be anticipated under current market conditions.
- 114 In further discussion, it was suggested that the project board membership might usefully include an external assurance role and it was noted this suggestion would be considered.
- 115 The Court agreed to approve the proposed project and that the capital spend be brought forward in the 10-year capital plan and phased over four financial years (2022/23 £ 0.36m, 2023/24 £ 3.7m, 2024/25 £1.5m. 2025/26 £ 0.9m).

REPORT ON CUBANE/UNIFORM SERVICES EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

- 116 The Court received a paper which outlined the results of a recent Service Effectiveness Assessment of the Professional Services Directorate which had been undertaken by Cubane Consulting (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*).
- 117 The Service Effectiveness Assessment considered approximately half of the services provided within the University, with services from every Directorate included. The survey sought responses from staff in team leadership and academic roles and secured an overall response rate of 36% which was in the expected response range. It looked at the extent to which:
- the respondent was satisfied that each service was effective in supporting them to carry out their role; and
 - the user experience of services, focusing on the frequency with which users experience certain service attributes.
- 118 The Court noted that, overall, in comparison with other Universities the results were very positive. At the aggregate level, the University was near to the top of the benchmark group (4th) and second in the UK. Next steps were in two phases, the first being to respond to any areas where improvements might be

made, and to understand variations in assessment of effectiveness between schools. The second, would be to extend the assessment to a further benchmarking exercise that would inform any redesign of processes and service transformation, and help to understand where service effectiveness was the result of resource input rather than change to processes and systems.

- 119 In discussion, it was confirmed that the University's growth in student numbers was one reason that the proposed next steps would seek to consider if demand for services was being met and where processes may need to change in the context of that growth going forward.

RESULTS OF 2022 STAFF SURVEY

- 120 The Court received a presentation and links to supporting further information on the results of the 2022 staff survey. The Court noted that the results broadly indicated sustained high levels of satisfaction compared with the 2020 survey. Areas that had scored particularly highly were job satisfaction; leadership; feeling valued/supported, health and safety, and equality, diversity and inclusion. Areas that had scored less positively were: workload, pay, communication/staff involvement; and interdisciplinary spaces.
- 121 The presentation explored the University's further analysis and interpretation of the results and how it was responding to the points arising from the survey, with a particular focus on the survey's findings around workload levels. In discussion, it was noted that 91% of teaching and research staff were working longer than their contracted hours and this posed a risk to the University's future success. The University was exploring the greater use of teaching only positions to free up more staff time for research, greater use of research leave and would be undertaking a 'walk in my shoes' exercise to identify day to day demands on academic staff that could be removed or undertaken by other staff.

PEOPLE AND INCLUSION

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY REPORT

- 122 The Court received a paper on the University's interim Public Sector Equality Duty Report which was a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). This reported on the progress made on mainstreaming Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the University and on delivering against the University's Equality Outcomes in the period 2021 – 2023.
- 123 In discussion, anecdotal examples of racist behaviours towards members of the University community were noted by Court with concern. This underlined that initiatives such as the Anti-Racism Strategy were necessary, but that there remained significant work still to do to change the culture and behaviours of some members of the University community and of the wider community of Aberdeen. In this context, it was suggested that the University should continue to look to be proactive in the steps it was taking to prevent incidents and that working in collaboration with wider partners in the City was essential.

- 124 In further discussion, it was confirmed that the use of the phrase “refused to share” in the report would be reviewed to ensure it was appropriate. The reporting of data by School/Directorate would also be checked to ensure it could not inadvertently identify anyone. It was also suggested that going forward it would be helpful for Court to understand what impact the University’s actions were having in the context of equality, diversity and inclusion. Subject to these comments being considered further, the Court approved the report for publication by the external deadline of 30 April 2023.

INTERNATIONAL

UPDATE ON AFG COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN PARTNERSHIP QATAR

- 125 University’s partnership with AFG College in Qatar (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). This covered the development of a new academic cooperation agreement, the process for relicensing with the Qatari Ministry of Education and Higher Education as a higher education provider, the development of new programmes and student number planning, human rights and equalities, the potential development of a phase 2 campus, and discussions on the future business model for the partnership.
- 126 In discussion, it was noted that representatives of the Students’ Association had visited the Qatar Campus to discuss with AFG partners and students how it could enhance its relationship and services to them. The Court was also updated on the current status of discussions with AFG on the future business model for the partnership. The Court was also assured that where issues that were within the remit of Senate arose as the partnership moved forward, it would be engaged on those.
- 127 The Principal recorded his appreciation of the work that the Vice-Principal for Global Engagement was leading.

PEOPLE AND INCLUSION

APPROACH TO SUPPORTING THE VICTIMS OF CONFLICT

- 128 The Court received a paper which outlined the support which was available to at-risk scholars (staff and students) who were the victims of conflict from around the world (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). The Court discussed the role of the Council for At-Risk Academics noting that it also supported students. It was also noted that support was offered to Russian nationals who were at risk and to victims of conflict from around the world. The University and the Students’ Association were also working effectively in partnership to support affected students.

COST OF LIVING - SUPPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

- 129 The Court received a paper summarising the work being done to support both students and staff in navigating their way through the challenges linked to the increasing cost of living (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). The Court noted that the University was working closely with the Students' Association to identify the issues and specific types of support that students most required.
- 130 In discussion, it was noted that the Students' Association had a concern that for international students, visa compliance rules made accessing hardship funds complicated and more difficult than for home students. It was added that while it would be difficult for the University to replicate the level of hardship funding available to home students from the Scottish Government, it did have funding support dedicated to international students, as well as emergency financial support available to any student. The University also gathered data on the levels of applications for support to such funds which was available if of further interest to members.

GOVERNANCE & REGULATORY

DELEGATED AUTHORITY SCHEDULE

- 131 The Court received a proposed Delegated Authority Schedule (DAS), together with related amendments to the Financial Regulations (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). An initial draft had been presented to Court in June 2022 and the revised draft had been developed further to take account of further changes to the governance and executive committee structures.
- 132 The Court noted that the development of the DAS had been undertaken in response to recommendations from the Externally Facilitated Review of Governance. It largely codified existing agreed authorities and delegations from committee remits, policies and procedures into one document, but building upon these where any gaps had been identified. The DAS would be a live document subject to regular review, additions and amendment on an ongoing basis and in response to internal changes.
- 133 In discussion, a member expressed reservations regarding the clarity of the document and its articulation of the respective powers and roles of the Court and Senate relative to each other. The Court was assured that the document reflected the powers assigned to the Court and Senate in statute and that it brought together current practice, policy and procedure into one document. The Court recorded that the member was not content to approve the document as drafted and considered that it required further amendments before being adopted. The member was invited to share detailed comments with the Secretary for further consideration.
- 134 Some further suggestions from members regarding setting an upper percentage limit rather than using the Retail Price Index for tuition fees and referencing of pensions covenants were noted and would be incorporated into

the document. Subject to those amendments, the Court approved the Schedule and changes to the Financial Regulations.

UPDATE ON CHANGES TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

- 135 The Court received and noted a paper which, following amendments to the Court Committee structure arising from the Externally Facilitated Review of Governance, outlined changes that were being made to the Executive Committee Structure (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*).

REPORTS FROM THE SENATE AND FROM COURT SUB-COMMITTEES

SENATE REPORT

- 136 The Court received and noted a report on the main items of business considered by Senate at its February 2023 meeting (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). The report included a recommendation to Court to approve two draft resolutions: (i) the Omnibus Resolution Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees; and (ii) the Additional Degrees Available to Senate for Award *honoris causa tantum*.
- 137 The Court discussed the Senate's decision to approve a timeline for the Decolonising the Curriculum project. In regard to that Senate discussion, it was clarified by Senators present, in response to comments raised by the Students' Association, that the Senate's primary concern had been regarding the timeframe to deliver the project effectively in the context of workloads, rather than the validity of the project itself.
- 138 The Court approved the two draft resolutions subject to the further consultation required by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 being undertaken (through the Business Committee of the General Council and making publicly available for comment). The draft Resolutions would return to Court for final approval following the conclusion of those processes.

Court Sub-Committee Reports

AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

- 139 The Court received a report on the key items of business considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 14 February 2023 (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*).
- 140 The Court on the recommendation of the Committee approved the appointment of Ernst & Young as the University's new external auditor for an initial period of three years from 1 April 2023, with the potential for two additional one-year extensions. This followed a tender process and scrutiny of the one bid that had been received by a panel of two Audit and Risk Committee members and the Chief Financial Officer, and subsequent endorsement of their recommendation by the full Committee.

- 141 The Court also noted that the Committee had undertaken an extended discussion on financial sustainability and that arising from that, it had identified that it would be timely to review the approach to minimum cash holdings to confirm if this remained appropriate given the significant change in the external economy since the pandemic.

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

- 142 The Court received a report on the key items of business considered by the Governance and Nominations Committee at its meeting on 7 February 2023 (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*).
- 143 The Committee's report outlined the proposed approach to the prospective recruitment of independent members of Court including the preferred skills and experience to be prioritised in the recruitment of new members, the composition of the shortlisting/interview panel, and the proposed use of 'in-house' recruitment expertise and University networks in the first instance rather than external recruitment consultants. The Court approved the proposed approach outlined in the paper.
- 144 In discussion, it was confirmed by the Senior Governor that while periods of office of three terms of three years was permitted under the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance, this was not automatic and the intention was to ensure that the Court's independent membership was regularly reviewed to support the strategic priorities of the University and ensure appropriate continuity.
- 145 The Court approved a proposed change to the rules for the election of staff members of Court which implemented its earlier decision in March 2021 that the system of voting should be changed to adopt the Alternative Vote system rather than 'First Past the Post'.
- 146 The Court approved a recommendation from the Committee to "re-set" and regularise the period of appointment of the academic and non-academic elected staff members and trade union nominated members of Court, so that their tenures conclude in future in July rather than in October, thereby allowing any future appointments to take up post before the start of an academic year. This required the forthcoming period of office of three of the positions to be shortened from three years to 2 years and nine months these being:
- Academic and Non-Academic Staff Elected Members: appoint from 1 November 2023 to 31 July 2026;
 - UCU Nominated Member: appoint from 1 November 2023 to 31 July 2026;
 - UNISON/UNITE Nominated Member – no change: appoint from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2026
- 147 The Court approved, on the recommendation of the Committee, a revised approach to the role of Court Race Champion which it had previously agreed should be reconsidered. This was detailed in the paper and would now be undertaken on a time limited basis for twelve to eighteen months and rotated

around Court members. Expressions of interest from members in the role were invited.

FINANCE AND RESOURCING COMMITTEE REPORT

- 148 The Court received and noted a report on the key items of business considered by the Finance and Resourcing Committee at its meeting on 7 February 2023 (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*).

COMMERCIALISATION COMMITTEE REPORT

- 149 The Court received and noted an overview of the business considered by the Commercialisation Committee at its meeting on 6 February 2023 (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*). In discussion, it was noted that the Business Committee of the General Council was to give consideration as to how it could support the University in the context of commercialisation.

FURTHER REPORTS FOR NOTE OR REFERENCE AVAILABLE IN RESOURCES AREA OF DECISION TIME

REPORT FROM THE PARTNERSHIP, NEGOTIATING & CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

- 150 The Court received for information and reference the report from the meeting of 31 January 2023 of the Partnership, Negotiating and Consultative Committee (*copy filed with the principal copy of the Minutes*).

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 151 The Court noted that its next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 26 April 2023 at 9am to 3pm.
- 152 The Court was also advised that it was expected that a joint seminar with the board members of The Robert Gordon University and the North East Scotland College would be held following the meeting of Court on Wednesday 21 June 2023 with a provisional timing of 4pm to 6pm.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

1.1 This paper provides Court with a copy for information of the current Court Action Log (**Appendix 1**).

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered or approved by	n/a	
Further consideration/approval required by	n/a	n/a

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

3.1 The Court is invited to:
(i) Note the action log (Appendix 1).

4. FURTHER INFORMATION

4.1 Further information is available from Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Court, email b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk.

18 April 2023 **Confidentiality Status:** Open

UNIVERSITY COURT: LOG OF FOLLOW UP ACTIONS FROM COURT MEETINGS

Appendix 1

Court Date	Minute Ref	Action Arising	Action By:-	Status
Mar 2022	170	<p>FUTURE BUSINESS</p> <p>It was agreed the Court should receive at a future meeting a paper on the strategy for developing courses and the infrastructure required to deliver these.</p>	VP Education/VP Global Student Recruitment	<p>Pending: To be scheduled for 2022/23 as part of April People Deep Dive with an overview of the process by which programmes are approved. Deferred to a future meeting to prioritise the extended discussion on today's agenda.</p>
June 2022	200	<p>GOVERNANCE REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION</p> <p><i>Committee Structure</i></p> <p>The Court approved Option B as the proposed structure of Court Committees for 2022/23 and noted that the operation of the structure would be reviewed after one year.</p>	University Secretary	<p>Pending: Scheduled for Autumn 2023</p>
Oct 2022	11	<p>REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL & HE SECTOR/UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTS</p> <p>It was noted that members would welcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a discussion at a future meeting of the longer term plan for the physical and digital estate; 	Senior Vice-Principal and Vice-Principal Regional Engagement	<p>Pending: Scheduled for June 2023 Meeting</p>

Nov 22	89	<p>PENSIONS ADVISORY GROUP</p> <p>In discussion, it was noted that training on pensions issues was being arranged and that this would be made available for all members of Court.</p>	University Secretary/Chief Financial Officer	Complete: Arranged for 5 May 2023.
Mar 23	109	<p>2022/23 UPDATED FINANCIAL PROJECTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was requested that future reports to Court also provide information on any issues with pensions' covenant compliance. 	Chief Financial Officer	Complete: Noted for future reports

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

REPORT FROM THE SENIOR GOVERNOR

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

- 1.1 This paper provides Court with a report from the Senior Governor on activities since the last meeting of Court on 1 March.
- 1.2 This paper is for **information**.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 The paper is for **information** and no action is required.

3. REPORT FROM SENIOR GOVERNOR

Internal Activities

- 3.1 In March, I joined the delegation representing the University for the Loyal Address to His Majesty The King, in which a number of other ancient universities and other distinguished institutions were present. It was a striking reminder of the University's distinctive status as one of the UK's oldest universities.
- 3.2 I continue to have my regular round of internal meetings with Court and SMT members and I've also met recently with the Chair of the Business Committee of the General Council which is helpful in maintaining the link between Court and the General Council which of course represents alumni in the University's formal governance structure.

External Activities

- 3.3 The Committee of Scottish Chairs held its Spring meeting on 8 March. The key topics on the agenda were higher education funding and the Scottish budget, the final draft of the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance and a discussion with the Chair of the Scottish Funding Council. I separately had a meeting with Jenny Gilruth, the new Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.
- 3.4 Regionally, I am meeting with the City's Lord Provost and I continue to meet regularly with the Chairs of the North East Scotland College and The Robert Gordon University, which is proving helpful to maintain governor level links with the two institutions. We look forward to the joint seminar for the members of all three boards that will take place on 21 June at 4pm hosted by North East Scotland College following our Court meeting that same day. The theme for this

will be around student and staff wellbeing. Connected to that, I also had an insightful discussion recently at Forth Valley College on the subject of inclusion.

- 3.5 Finally, I am due to meet with Alison Johns, Chief Executive of Advance HE, to discuss key issues for university boards in the UK and on board development, which I am sure will provide some insights that will be helpful to us here at Aberdeen.

4. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 4.1 Further information is available from the Senior Governor, julie.ashworth@abdn.ac.uk.

11 April 2023

Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

UPDATE ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR AND UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

1.1 This paper provides Court with a brief overview of policy developments relating to higher education between January and April 2023, which are of particular relevance for the University of Aberdeen.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Senior Management Team Audit & Risk Committee Finance & Resourcing Committee Senate	23 March 2023 4 April 13 April 19 April
Further consideration/ approval required by	n/a	

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

3.1 Court is invited to note the update.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 The following sections highlight key policy developments of relevance to the University and the higher education sector between January and April 2023.

UK DEVELOPMENTS

5. UK GOVERNMENT SPRING BUDGET

5.1 The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented his [Spring Budget](#) on 15 March 2023. The budget launches a revamped Investment Zones programme, with four of 12 knowledge-intensive growth clusters to be located in the devolved nations, including at least one in Scotland, to drive growth in key future sectors and bring investment to local areas. The focus is on five thematic areas: green industries, digital technologies, life sciences, creative industries, and advanced manufacturing. Universities are expected to play a pivotal role in the future zones, with a proportion of government funding being used to build knowledge networks, drive research commercialisation, and supporting scaleup and adoption of innovations. In England, Mayoral Combined Authorities are expected to work in partnership with local universities, councils and business

and central government to develop proposals setting out plans for how they would propel growth in priority sectors, identify private sector match funding, and use the local planning system to support growth. While it is as yet unclear exactly how the Investment Zone model will be deployed in Scotland, the Vice-Principal Regional Engagement has already commenced discussions on behalf of the University with key partners to make a strong case for an investment zone in the North East of Scotland.

- 5.2 In terms of labour force participation, the budget announced the introduction of Returnerships, which is a new offer focused on the over-50s. This will be realised through investment in Skills Bootcamps in England and 40,000 new sector-based Work Academy Programme placements in England and Scotland. However, the budget provides limited detail on this initiative and whether or how Returnerships will align with other skills-focused initiatives in the HE sector, including the new Lifelong Loan Entitlement (section 8 below) or current Upskilling initiatives in Scotland.
- 5.3 The budget also announced enhanced research and development tax credit which may benefit university spin-outs.

6. PAY AND PENSIONS

- 6.1 On 17 April, [the UCU announced the results](#) of its latest ballot on the proposals made by employers, after having renewed its strike mandate in late March for a further six months in a dispute over pay and conditions and the USS pension.
- 6.2 In the pay and conditions dispute, 56% of members rejected proposals agreed at ACAS between union national negotiators and employers, which included fresh talks on pay gaps, ending zero-hours contracts and reducing workloads. A marking and assessment boycott will therefore begin on 20 April. Staff taking part in the marking boycott will not carry out summative marking and assessment activities, including exam invigilation, which could lead to a delay in graduations. Universities have plans in place to mitigate the impact of the marking and assessment boycott.
- 6.3 [UCEA has noted](#) its disappointment as the pay award is comparable to settlements in the wider economy, and has pointed out that under a third of UCU's membership voted to reject the offer. Employers began implementing the pay award of between 5-8% earlier in the year.
- 6.4 In relation to the USS pension dispute, 85% of UCU members voted to move forward with pension proposals agreed with employers aimed at restoring benefits. Action in this dispute has therefore been paused.
- 6.5 Unison has recently announced that it will ballot over pay at 14 institutions for potential industrial action in June with 40 more branches to follow at the beginning of the next academic year.

7. IMMIGRATION

- 7.1 It has been widely reported in the media in recent months that the government may be drawing up plans to curb the post-study work visa or limit the number of international students bringing dependants to the UK. Options under consideration are rumoured to include that only students on "high value" courses can bring families, or a complete ban on dependants for all international

students except at PhD level. This news follows the release of the latest immigration figures from the Home Office in February which showed that the number of sponsored study visas is rapidly increasing and that 22% of all sponsored study-related visas granted were to dependants of students.

- 7.2 Universities UK (UUK) and Universities Scotland are exerting pressure on the UK government, noting the enormous contribution that international students make to the UK's economy, institutions and research outputs. UUK published on 9 March the [results of a public polling](#) on perceptions of immigration related to international students. The polling shows that the UK public recognise that international students give more to the economy than they take out and are not in favour of cutting the number of international students. Furthermore, the results indicate that the public does not see a reduction in legal migration as a priority compared to other pressing issues such as the cost of living, pressures on the NHS and ambulance wait times.

8. LIFELONG LOAN ENTITLEMENT (LLE)

- 8.1 The UK government published the [outcome of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement consultation](#) (LLE) on 7 March which confirms that from AY 2025/26, adults in England up to the age of 60 will have access to fee loans through their working lives to support education ranging from short vocational courses to undergraduate degrees, although not including online provision. The move to the new system will be phased, with all higher education provision expected to enter the system by 2027.
- 8.2 This is a radical overhaul of student finance in England which may have implications for Scotland in future. The lifetime allocation is for the equivalent of four years of full-time undergraduate study and student finance will be available for any module that is part of a designated full course with finance harmonised for all level four to six courses across HE and FE. Funding will be offered through a Student Loans Company personal account, and all LLE providers will need to register with the Office for Students.
- 8.3 Further detail on definitions and eligibility is still to follow for full understanding of how the LLE will work in practice. The four-year limit has caused some concern in Scotland given that some undergraduate degrees exceed this limit, and because of the differences in the qualification frameworks between England and Scotland. The UK government has pledged to work closely with partners in the devolved administrations in advance of roll-out of the LLE “to ensure policy continues to operate coherently across the UK.” However, in the absence of further clarification, Universities Scotland is increasing its pressure on the UK government to get specific assurance that the LLE will support English students to study wherever they choose in the UK.

9. HORIZON EUROPE

- 9.1 Uncertainty around association with Horizon Europe continues. There was a sense of optimism and relief in the sector in late February when the President of the European Commission announced that as soon as the Windsor Framework – which is replacing the Northern Ireland Protocol – had been signed, then negotiations could recommence on Horizon Europe. However, that optimism was dampened when it was reported that £1.6bn of funding originally allocated by the UK government to facilitate association to Horizon

Europe had been claimed back by the Treasury, with speculation that the Prime Minister may favour the UK's own Plan B to full association.

- 9.2 The UK Government announced on 6 March an [extension to the Horizon Europe treasury guarantee](#) which will cover all Horizon Europe calls that close on or before 30 June 2023. This means that successful applicants will receive the full value of their funding at their UK host institution for the lifetime of the grant.
- 9.3 Scottish Minister for Higher Education and Further Education Youth Employment and Training, Jamie Hepburn, recently [wrote](#) to Michelle Donelan, Secretary of State for the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, calling for the UK to formalise access to Horizon Europe. Universities Scotland has also been lobbying for early conclusion of an association agreement to Horizon Europe, with an [opinion piece](#) appearing in The Herald on 17 April.

10. ARIA (ADVANCED RESEARCH AND INVENTION AGENCY)

- 10.1 The ARIA Framework Agreement was published on 17 February, setting out the governance framework within which the Agency operates. The framework was agreed between the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and aims to cut bureaucracy so as to allow ARIA to pursue high-risk, long-term R&D. ARIA will have “maximum autonomy” over its research and project choice, its procedures, and its institutional culture, and decisions on the programme portfolio will be set by ARIA and not ministers. The Agency will not be subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

11. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FRAMEWORK

- 11.1 On 6 March the UK government published a [new Science and Technology Framework](#), setting out plans for investment to make the UK a science superpower by 2030. The plan is backed by over £370 million in funding to support infrastructure, investment and skills for the “UK's most exciting growing technologies, from quantum and supercomputing through to AI.”
- 11.2 This is the first major launch from the newly created Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. A broader deliver plan is due to be published in summer 2023.
- 11.3 Alongside the new Science and Technology Framework, the findings of the [independent review led by Sir Paul Nurse](#), Chief Executive and Director of the Francis Crick Institute, were published on 7 March 2023. The review, which commenced in 2021, aimed to understand the existing ecosystem of the research, development and innovation (RDI) landscape, identify improvements to the organisational research landscape to deliver the government's objective for the UK to be a science superpower, and futureproof the UK landscape of organisations.
- 11.4 The report notes that a significant increase in investment and ensuring a high-performing RDI landscape is crucial for success. Nurse puts forward 29 recommendations which should be adopted in full to ensure success. A key message relates to the need for a clear government framework for RDI with a scientific infrastructure, protected end-to-end funding streams covering all costs, along with strong governance frameworks. Funding should also encourage different kinds of research organisations to flourish with much greater administrative independence. With regard to universities, Nurse calls

for the financial sustainability of the public research funding for universities to be urgently addressed and recommends that universities should optimise their operations in support of research.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SCOTLAND

12. INTERIM PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

- 12.1 The Scottish government has been meeting with stakeholders to discuss the [Interim Purpose and Principles for Post-School Education, Research and Skills](#), published in December 2022. The University co-hosted a roundtable consultation event with the Scottish Government on 15 March attended by various stakeholders in the north-east, including RGU, NESCol, various business partners and public sector bodies. The University also submitted a written response to the consultation.
- 12.2 The Interim Purpose and Principles, developed as part of the recommendations made in the SFC Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability, sets out current thinking on the priorities which should guide government policy on the post-school education research and skills ecosystem in Scotland and is underpinned by five key principles: High quality opportunities; Supportive and equitable learning journey; Globally respected research, teaching, innovation and knowledge exchange; Agile and responsive ecosystem which responds to global and domestic drivers; and Transparent, resilient and trusted ecosystem. The University roundtable event focused on Principle 4: Agile and Responsive.
- 12.3 The consultation closed on 24 March with a view to publishing the final version of the Purpose and Principles in spring 2023.

13. STUDENT SUPPORT

- 13.1 The Scottish Government [announced](#) on 14 March that the maintenance package for Scottish undergraduate higher education students receiving SAAS funding would be increased by £900, from £8,100 to £9,000. The annual Care Experienced Bursary, which is non-repayable, will also be increased by £900. NUS Scotland has [welcomed](#) the support package.

14. COMMISSIONER FOR FAIR ACCESS

- 14.1 Professor John McKendrick, who took up his new role as the Commissioner for Fair Access to Higher Education in Scotland in January, has been having discussions with sector stakeholders and visited the University of Aberdeen on 24 February to learn more about the University's work to widen access and the specific geographical challenges which affect performance against SIMD-focused targets (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation).
- 14.2 Professor McKendrick has indicated that, as SIMD is still the best available metric for deprivation, it will be important to maintain progress towards CoWA (Commission on Widening Access) targets. Currently, the Scottish Government target for 2030 is that students from the 20% most deprived communities will represent 20% of entrants to Scottish universities by 2030, with the sector having exceeded the first interim target set for 2020 of 16%. However, Professor McKendrick has also acknowledged that SIMD as a measure of social disadvantage has shortcomings, e.g. in the North-East of Scotland, and that it is therefore important to look at the potential for a more diverse set of metrics alongside SIMD.

15. ALLIANCE FOR RESEARCH CHALLENGES (ARC)

- 15.1 The SFC has provided further information about the [Alliances for Research Challenges](#), an initiative which arose out of the SFC's Review of Tertiary Education and Research and aims to connect research excellence to Scotland's national challenges.
- 15.2 SFC is currently providing funding for three ARCs which are all collaborative initiatives: Scottish Alliance for Food: Health Equity and Sustainability; Scottish Research Alliance for Energy, Homes and Livelihoods; and the Brain Health Challenge. A fourth challenge focusing on Quantum Technologies is under development with further details expected in spring 2023.
- 15.3 The University of Aberdeen is participating in two of the three areas: the Scottish Alliance for Food along with nine other universities, and the Brain Health Challenge, with nine other institutions.

UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTS

16. RECENT STAFF GRANTS

- 16.1 Between January and March 2023, £10,438K of new awards for research were granted to the University, with each of the Aberdeen 2040 Interdisciplinary Challenge areas securing support.
 - New awards with a total value of £2,047K were received from the UK Research Councils/UKRI across six different Schools, including:
 - Dr David Toke, Politics, Dr Paula Duffy, Geography and Environment, Dr Kathrin Thomas, Politics and Dr Jo Vergunst, Anthropology, have been awarded a £614K ESRC grant for a project entitled "Solar Power in the UK – Planning for a Sustainable Future", a project which links with the University's **Energy Transition** interdisciplinary challenge.
 - Dr Beatriz Goulao in the Health Services Research Unit, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, has been awarded an MRC Fellowship, totalling £434k for a project entitled "Patient and Public INvolvement in Target DiffereNces in Trials (the PINpoINT Study) (**Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing** Interdisciplinary Challenge).
 - The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has awarded £3,072K to the University for clinical and health-related studies, including:
 - Dr Miriam Brazzelli, in the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, along with colleagues, has received a £1.9M grant from the NIHR National Institute for health Research for an Evidence Synthesis Centre project.
 - *Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Collaborative*, led by Aberdeen City Council (its first major research grant), is a £5M collaborative project with University of Aberdeen, NHS Grampian and RGU. Professor Corrinna Black in the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, and colleagues, have been awarded a £950k grant from NIHR for the Research Collaborative.

- Dr Jessica Butler and Professor Corrinna Black, in the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, along with Katie Wilde, Technical Director in the Aberdeen Centre for Health Data Science, have received renewal funding totalling £500k from the Health Foundation for the *Networked Data Lab project*. This is a partnership with NHS Grampian and five other sites across the UK to understand key health and policy issues, using linked health and care data, aligning with both the **Data and AI**, and the **Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing** interdisciplinary challenges within Aberdeen 2040.
- Industry supported projects within the University received £886K in this period, including:
 - Kheiron Medical technologies Ltd have awarded a grant totalling £211K to a project led by Professor Lesley Anderson and Dr Gerald Lip in the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, called “GEMINI – Grampian’s Evaluation of Mia – an innovative National Breast Screening Digital Inspection System” (**Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing** theme).
 - Dr Andrew Starkey and Dr Sumeet Aphale in the School of Engineering have received KTP funding totalling £201K from Test Incorporated Ltd (Innovate UK) for a Digital Inspection System (**Energy Transition**).
 - Professor Richard Neilson has received £175k from the Net Zero Technology Centre Ltd for a follow-on study of underwater laser cutting (**Energy Transition**).
- Professor Eleonora Belfiore, Director of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity, has received £16k from the Scottish Universities Insight Institute to facilitate the creation of a new research network for Scottish Cultural Policy. (**Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity** interdisciplinary theme).
- Professor Paul Fowler, the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, has been awarded £390k from Innovate UK (EU funding) for a project entitled “INITIALISE: Targeting inflammation in human early life”. This is part of an international research project supported by more than £6M in funding from Horizon Europe including eight prospective and longitudinal birth cohort studies, following groups of children to observe the development of immune-mediated diseases (**Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing** theme).

16.2 Research-related awards and recognition:

- The University won two awards in the Scottish Knowledge Exchange Awards which took place on 23 March to celebrate high impact collaborations between academia, business and policymakers. Ed Blissitt, who works for Motive Offshore Group Ltd, and Dr Andy Starkey in the School of Engineering, won the *Innovator of the Future Award*. The iCAIRD project, of which the University is a partner institution, won the *Multiparty Collaboration Award* for its work in improving outcomes for patients through artificial intelligence. Additionally, Professor Pete Smith in the School of Biological Sciences was nominated in the *Knowledge Exchange Champion* category,

- Professor Paul Mealor, School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture, has been selected to write music for the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III on 6 May at Westminster Abbey.
- Dr Jenna Ross, Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Biological Sciences, has received an OBE from The Princess Royal for her contribution to science and agriculture.
- Four academics from the University are amongst 91 individuals elected to become Fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) this year: Professor George Boyne, Principal, Professor Clare Bond, School of Geosciences (Geology), Professor Alison Lumsden, School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture (English), and Professor Javier Martin-Torres, School of Geosciences (Planetary Sciences).
- Dr Georgios Leontidis, Director of the University's Interdisciplinary Centre for Data and AI, has been appointed as a member of the Scottish AI Alliance Leadership Group. The Alliance is a partnership between The Data Lab and the Scottish Government, led by a Minister-appointed Chair, with responsibility for delivering the actions laid out in the national AI Strategy.
- The University is a finalist in the Green Innovation category of the Humber Renewables Awards 2023, for modelling a new semi-submersible floating concept for offshore wind turbines. The winners will be announced on 4 May.

17 EDUCATION-RELATED ACHIEVEMENTS

17.1 Key education-related achievements since late January include:

- The first visit from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) as part of the interim approach to ensuring quality standards for our Education took place in February. The QESR review team reached the following conclusion:

“From the evidence presented, the review team is confident that the institution is making effective progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision to enable effective arrangements to be in place for managing academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience.”

The team found four features of good practice: Effective implementation of University strategies; Engagement with the Enhancement Themes; An Inclusive Approach to Blended Education/Learning and Teaching; and Student Partnership. Two recommendations for action were made, both of which the review team know are in progress (Student access to external examiner reports; Personal tutoring). See separate report on today's agenda.

- The annual education symposium ‘From Surviving to Thriving: Building Resilient Learners Through Assessment and Feedback’, takes place in May and brings together academics and students from across the University to share research and good practice in Education. The symposium focuses on assessment and feedback (an institutional theme for our National Student Survey) as well as drawing together the excellent work that has taken place as part of our Enhancement Theme work, led

by Professor Steve Tucker, Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

- Advance HE recently accredited the University's newly validated PGCert in Higher Education Teaching & Learning programme which is a vital staff development qualification.
- The University contributed to the [Thematic Peer Group Report on Collaborative Teaching Practice](#), published within the framework of the European University Association-led DIGI-HE project. Aberdeen 2040 is highlighted as an example of good practice on "Validating collaborative teaching practice by including it in institutional policies, frameworks and guidelines."
- Law student, Syed Adil, has achieved second place in the 6KBW College Hill Essay Competition. Syed said the competition stood out to him because of the intellectual challenge posed by its question, whether anyone should ever be exempt from criminal law.
- The Order of the Scottish Samurai honoured the University with its Centre of Academic Excellence award. Professor George Boyne, Tracey Slaven, University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, and Dr Robert Traynham, member of University Court were presented awards for services to academic excellence and the University.
- The University has 21 active Learning and Teaching Enhancement Projects across the three years of the Enhancement Theme, with ten of these having been accepted to contribute to the University's International HETL conference. We are also completing a submission to add to the Evaluation of 20 Years of the Enhancement Theme work, a national publication, which measures the impact that the Themes have had at institutional and sector level over the last 20 years.
- A whole range of education training and support is available for staff, including a novel micro-credential CPD teaching course. A current focus is on Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT, and how to manage the opportunities and challenges they present in higher education. These issues have been explored through discussion panels, presentations, and sharing resources. Dr Sara Preston has been invited to join a non-academic panel at the SCOTLIN 2023 Conference, to discuss Artificial Intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, and the opportunities and challenges it presents to Education.
- Professor John Barrow, Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship, has an accepted application for the upcoming HETL 2023 conference in Aberdeen, to run a workshop showcasing our ongoing work on the Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills.
- The University was invited to submit a case study and blog for an upcoming employability themed campaign being run by the Quality Assurance Agency. This will also showcase the work on Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and skills and our wider employability agenda.
- All School representatives on the University Employability & Entrepreneurship Committee (EEC) have the defined role of being Employability & Skills Champions, a role aimed at enhancing the reach of employability data within Schools and helping drive forward changes linked to employability, skills development, and work-based learning.

- The University has been shortlisted for the *What Uni: Student Choice Awards 2023*, in the Student Support category. Winners will be announced on 26 April.
- University of Aberdeen law students Sulaiman Yusuf and Lilac Cabbad have won the Scottish finals of an international competition that pits the country's best negotiators against each other.
- Hamza Afzal, a law student at the University, is one of 10 finalists in the prestigious Undergraduate Future Lawyer of the Year Awards 2023. Hamza was one of more than 5000 entrants to the competition, which seeks to identify high achievers with ambition and entrepreneurial spirit, and the only Scottish student reaching the finals. The winner will be announced on 21 April.

18 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 18.1 Further information is available from George Boyne, Principal and Vice-Chancellor (boyne@abdn.ac.uk) and Hulda Sveinsdottir, Director of Planning (hulda.sveinsdottir@abdn.ac.uk).

17 April 2023

Confidentiality Status: *Open*

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

2022/23 UPDATED FINANCIAL PROJECTION**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the 2022/23 financial position based on the February 2023 forecast.
- 1.2 This is an updated forecast prepared by Finance based on savings discussions with Schools and Directorates in the early part of March 2023 and incorporated into the February 2023 Monthly Management Report (MMR) forecast. These meetings were held to identify improvements to the University position following the shortfall in the January 2023 PGT (Postgraduate Taught) International intake.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Senior Management Team and Finance & Resources Committee	13 April 2023
Further consideration/ approval required by	University Court	26 April 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 3.1 The **University Court** is invited to note that:
- The current forecast position is a £3.4m year-end deficit, as compared to the agreed budget of a £1.9m deficit. This would achieve covenant compliance.
 - The previous paper discussed by Court on 1 March 2023 projected a deficit of £8.7m if no further savings were achieved. The University is currently projecting savings/additional income since this meeting amounting to £5.3m (following savings meetings held with Directorates and Schools).
 - The latest UCEA (Universities & Colleges Employers Association) pay award offer is not yet agreed with UCU (University and College Union), but the latest pay offer has been included within the University forecast and is expected to cost £1.7m this year (from February to July 2023).
 - The University will continue to work with Schools and Directorates to bring the University closer to the original £1.9m budget target. Savings identified in the February 2023 forecast, which include both staffing and operating savings (amounting to £5.3m) do not have a material impact on the Institution's future REF (Research Excellence Framework) planning.

- The current forecast assumes that an additional £1m will be drawn down from the Development Trust. This has not been fully identified at this stage. Schools will be asked to complete a further review of Development Trust funding to identify eligible funds of this value.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. The Revised Financial Forecast shows that the Institution is currently projecting an underlying deficit of £3.4m for the year to 31 July 2023. The summary of the forecast is included at **Appendix 1**. This forecast incorporates the full gross tuition fee shortfall including the January 2023 intake shortfall (offset by tuition fee discount savings). It also includes all staffing and operating savings identified to date.
- 4.2. In order to improve the University financial position following the January 2023 intake, savings meetings were held with all Schools and Directorates in the early part of March 2023 and Heads of Schools and Directors identified further savings for core staffing and operating costs, and additional income. In addition, Finance reviewed all the University's central costs and income for any further adjustments.
- 4.3. The University has projected the following material additional savings since the last Court report following meetings with Schools and Directorates, and a review of depreciation charges:-
 - £2m of Operating costs
 - £1m of Staff vacancy savings
 - £1m of Development Trust income
 - £0.25m of additional SFC (Scottish Funding Council) research funding
 - £0.2m of Depreciation charges
- 4.4. Depreciation charges forecast will continue to be reviewed up to year end. Any underspends on both IT and Estates capital spend during 2022/23 will be more evident in the next few months and this is likely to result in reduced charges.
- 4.5. Provisions will also be reviewed in July 2023 prior to year-end for potential amendment. For example, the Bad Debt Provision will be assessed against the level of aged debtors and reassessed at that point.
- 4.6. None of the savings identified have an impact on the Institutional future REF planning.

5. CURRENT POSITION – FORECAST

- 5.1. The revised forecast assumes the following:
- 5.2. The forecast is now based on 630 January PGT international entrants. This will result in an estimated £14.1m shortfall in gross fees and £12.9m net of fee waivers. Items of note in the forecast are:-

- The UCEA final pay award will be paid at an estimated additional cost of £1.7m during 2022/23, paid from March, but backdated to February.
- The sale of Don Street property (which was forecast at £0.85m) will not be sold in this financial year but will be sold during 2023/24. A contract for sale is in the process of being signed with a confirmed buyer (subject to planning permission). Planning permission is expected within the next 12 months and therefore this property is likely to be sold in next financial year.
- Core funded staffing will need careful management and Schools and Directorates should achieve savings of £3.2m above the gap target for the year. The staffing forecast assumes that there will be a National Insurance saving of 1.25% from November 2022.
- A clawback repayment to SFC has been estimated at £1.2m for non-achievement of non-controlled places. This has yet to be confirmed by SFC.
- Interest receivable will be above budget by £1.2m. This is based on increased interest rates for the bond receipts which are being put on deposit in £10m or £15m tranches for 12 months at a time. The most recent deposit will accrue fixed interest at 4.8%.
- Core operating savings will accrue at £3.2m. The contingency budget of £1.6m will be utilised to improve the University position. This is included within the operating savings.
- The additional research grant received from SFC amounting to £1.6m will be spent on research projects and costs which are in train as these are required to be spent by 31 March 2023 (announced December 2022 and February 2023).
- Assumes that Development Trust funding amounting to £1.365m above the budgeted level will be received. This includes an additional £1m assumed, and still to be fully identified.
- Research grant overheads (indirect cost contribution) will exceed budget by £1m.
- Endowments are showing an adverse forecast variance of £1.5m overall due to the unrealised loss on investments amounting to £2.2m.

6. COVENANT POSITION

- 6.1. The current forecast position would meet covenant compliance at an underlying deficit of £3.4m compared to the agreed budget of £1.9m.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

7.1. Further information is available from Mark White, Chief Financial Officer (mark.white@abdn.ac.uk).

Confidentiality Status: Closed

APPENDIX 1 – LATESTMONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

FULL YEAR FORECAST	Full year Budget £'000	Full year Forecast £'000	Variance £'000
Tuition fees and education contracts	109,054	96,165	(12,889)
Funding body grants	77,296	77,547	251
Research Grants and Contracts	53,475	53,475	(0)
Other income	35,604	36,218	615
Total	275,428	263,405	(12,023)
Staff Costs	(176,513)	(169,899)	6,614
Operating Costs	(79,912)	(77,561)	2,351
Interest & Finance Costs (including taxation)	(5,063)	(5,151)	(88)
Contingency	(1,656)	(0)	1,656
Total	(263,143)	(252,611)	10,532
TOTAL SURPLUS GENERATED FROM NORMAL OPERATING ACTIVITIES	12,285	10,794	(1,491)
NON CASH ITEMS			
DCG Release	4,984	4,984	(0)
Depreciation	(19,169)	(19,195)	(26)
Total	(14,185)	(14,211)	(26)
TOTAL UNDERLYING OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) PRIOR TO RISK ASSESSED ITEMS BELOW	(1,900)	(3,417)	(1,517)
COVENANT MET			
FRS102 & OTHER MOVEMENTS			
Pension Scheme movements	0	0	0
Gain/(Loss) on investments	0	(2,140)	(2,140)
Gain/(Loss) on disposal of fixed assets	0	0	0
Voluntary Severance & Early Retirement	0	(150)	(150)
Impairment	0	(550)	(550)
Unrealised gain/(loss) on revaluation of land and buildings	0	0	0
Financial Adjustments	0	0	0
Total	0	(2,840)	(2,840)
FRS102 REPORTED SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(1,900)	(6,257)	(4,357)

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

**UNIVERSITIES SUPERANNUATION SCHEME (USS) DEBT MONITORING
2021/22**

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

1.1 This paper provides an update on the USS debt monitoring results for financial year 2021/22. The paper is for **information**.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Senior Management Team Audit & Risk Committee Finance & Resourcing Committee	23 March 2023 4 April 2023 13 April 2023
Further consideration/ approval required by	Court	26 April 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

3.1 The Court is invited to note the results of the USS metric calculations for financial year 2021/22.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) is a UK wide pension scheme for academic and academic related (Grade 5 – 9) staff members. The Scheme provides benefits on a hybrid basis, with a defined benefit element to a cap of approximately £40,000 and a defined contribution element thereafter.

4.2 Scheme rules mean, that as an employer belonging to the Scheme, the University cannot offer an alternative pension provision to academic or academic related staff members.

4.3 Following the 2020 valuation exercise, in addition to benefit changes, USS employers agreed to the USS Trustee's request that additional covenant support was necessary to ensure that Scheme contributions remained affordable for both employers and members.

4.4 The USS Trustee was seeking covenant support from employers to assist with reducing the contribution levels. The additional support covered:

- Debt monitoring – USS would collect data annually from employers to monitor the sector and take action against individual institutions as necessary,
- USS would require *pari passu* security on any new secured borrowing undertaken by employers,
- A moratorium on employer exits from the Scheme

4.5 Whilst there was some concern regarding the levels of covenant support requested by the USS Trustee, it was agreed that this was required to ensure that progress could be achieved.

The tests as set by USS are as follows:

Metric A Gross debt to net assets should not exceed 50%

Metric B Gross debt to total income should be below 50%

Metric C Gross debt to net cash flow from operations should be lower than 5 times

Metric D Interest cover should be greater than 4 times

Metric E Total secured borrowing should not exceed 10% of total net assets (excluding pensions liabilities)

and

Total assets over which security is held should not exceed 10% of gross assets

4.6 The USS Trustee will determine that there is a trigger point for further engagement should:

- All four of the Metrics A to D be exceeded (or expected to be exceeded) in one financial year.
- Any three of Metrics A to D be exceeded (or expected to be exceeded) in two consecutive consultive years (note, it does not need to be the same metrics that have been exceeded).
- Metric E is exceeded in any financial year.

4.7 Where further engagement is required, the Trustee will notify the Employer that further discussions are necessary. Further details of the metrics, further engagement and likely outcomes and included within **Appendix A**.

5. UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN RESULTS 2021/22

- 5.1 Whilst USS have yet to request the information for financial year 2021/22, we do not anticipate that the metrics will be amended from those that have already been agreed.
- 5.2 The reporting metrics are not onerous with most of the required information already available from the University's annual accounts and our Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Finance Return based on the accounts. Both documents have been approved and submitted for the year ended 31 July 2022.
- 5.3 Management have calculated the various metrics for financial year 2021/22 based on the workings provided by USS for financial year 2020/21. The metrics for previous financial year have also been provided:

Metric	2021/22		2020/21	
	Result	Met	Result	Met
A Gross debt to net assets	26%	Y	28%	Y
B Gross debt to total income	45%	Y	54%	N
C Gross debt to net cash flow from operations	8.2 times	N	3.6 times	Y
D Interest cover	3 times	N	7.2 times	Y
E Secured borrowing/Net Assets	-	Y	-	Y
E Assets with security/Gross Assets	-	Y	-	Y

Note : As the University does not have secured borrowing, the results for Metric E are 0%.

- 5.4 Although the University has exceeded 2 of the metrics in 2021/22 there is no requirement for the university to enter into further engagement with the USS Trustee (all four of metrics A – D must be exceeded in any year or any three of these metric in consecutive years. The forecast metrics for the current financial year will be calculated as part of the budget process.
- 5.5 Note there are no reporting requirements for the University of Aberdeen Superannuation and Life Assurance Scheme, the Scheme for the University's administrative staff on grades 1 to 4.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

6.1 Further information is available from Mark White, Chief Financial Officer (mark.white@abdn.ac.uk) or Craig Sherrit, Assistant Director, Financial Accounting (c.a.sherrit@abdn.ac.uk)

3 March 2023

Confidentiality Status: Open

BI-ANNUAL STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**1 PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

This report provides Court with a bi-annual update on risk management at an institutional level. The report includes:

- A summary of proposals for establishing a new Risk Management Committee, with the proposed remit and composition attached (Appendix 1).
- An updated version of the University's Risk Management Framework, noting this has been amended to include the University's new Risk Appetite Statement, agreed with Court when it met in November 2022 (see Appendix 2).
- An updated version of the University's Strategic Risk Register (SRR, attached as Appendix 3). This has been reviewed and revised by Risk Owners and Managers in advance of this meeting.

Please note that further changes to the University's Risk Management Framework will follow, pending formal establishment of the new Risk Management Committee, and agreement of recommendations made via the current PwC audit into the University's risk management arrangements. The recent PwC report on risk management within the HE sector is also being reviewed, to ensure that the University continues to align with sector norms.

2 PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Senior Management Team (SMT) Audit & Risk Committee (ARC)	23.03.23 04.04.23
Further consideration/approval required by	n/a	n/a

3 RECOMMENDED ACTION

Court is invited to:

- **Note** that the new Risk Management Committee previously proposed as part of the governance review is being finalised, with a remit and composition now established, and a first meeting due to take place in the coming weeks.
- **Note** updates made to the University Risk Management Framework.
- **Consider and discuss** the summary analysis provided below, taking account of the latest iteration of the Strategic Risk Register, attached.

4. NEW RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 4.1 Proposals for a new Risk Management Committee have been approved by SMT, with a remit and composition agreed; attached as Appendix 1. In short, the overarching remit of the Committee will be to maintain, develop and oversee implementation of the University's Risk Management Framework, informed by a membership that includes representation from key stakeholder groups across the University.
- 4.2 The formation of this committee has been approved by SMT and an initial meeting will be arranged, expected to take place in April or May 2023. The Committee will meet three times per year, with complementary workshops held twice per year to review the SRR in advance of reporting into ARC and Court.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK UPDATE - RISK APPETITE

- 5.1 The University's Risk Management Framework has been updated, to include the new University Risk Appetite Statement approved by Court when it met in November 2022. The new statement was informed by a workshop on risk appetite held for Court members in March last year. An updated copy of the Framework is attached as Appendix 2. Sections 4.2 and 5.2.1 have been updated; please see Appendix 2.
- 5.2 It should be noted that further updates to the Framework will follow completion of the current PwC audit into risk management. A key finding from the audit is that target risks scores should be applied to each risk, informed by risk appetite and the University's tolerance for risk across different areas of activity. This will help to inform decision making when considering the pursuit of activities that incur risk, or when taking mitigating actions to reduce risk; for example, where there is a lower risk appetite, Risk Owners and Managers should ensure that any risk exposure that may result stays in line with the appetite rating. This development will necessitate changes to the Framework and the need for guidance on how to apply risk appetite; development of staff guidance has already started.

6. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER – CONTEXTUAL POINTS TO NOTE AND SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Contextual Points

- 6.1 The following provides a short summary of key points to note with the latest iteration of the Strategic Risk Register (SRR).
- 6.2 The enclosed SRR includes the 14 risk areas previously approved by Court; no additions have been made since the previous reporting round, nor any changes to the title of any of the risk areas included.
- 6.3 The SRR has been revised and refined relative to the previous iteration which was taken to ARC in October 2022; each risk area is reviewed throughout the year as a matter of course, with consideration also given to specific risk areas at the relevant committees. A further review of the full register also took place at a workshop held on 14 March 2023, which included Risk Owners and Managers.
- 6.4 As part of the workshop, Risk Owners and Managers were asked to streamline their risk areas, with a particular focus on removing risks which were consistently low scoring (gross), along with any legacy risks which have a very specific focus on Brexit or Covid,

which no longer held the same relevance. Efforts have also been made to remove more operational risks and to revisit scoring across all 14 areas to ensure consistency.

6.5 This process was co-ordinated by the Directorate of Planning and Governance, though Risk Owners are accountable for content and scores allocated within their risk areas, in consultation with Risk Managers.

Summary Analysis

TABLE 1: RISK PROFILE MOVEMENT: OCTOBER 2022 - APRIL 2023

No	Risk Area	Green			Yellow			Amber			Red			Total		
		Oct-22	Mar-23	+/-	Oct-22	Mar-23	+/-	Oct-22	Mar-23	+/-	Oct-22	Mar-23	+/-	Oct-22	Mar-23	+/-
1	Financial Sustainability	0	0	-	9	2	-7	6	9	3	0	1	1	15	13	-2
2	Estates and Facilities	0	0	-	1	3	2	6	5	-1	1	1	-	8	9	1
3	Student Recruitment	2	0	-2	8	2	-6	5	5	-	2	2	-	17	9	-8
4	Education (UG and PGT)	2	0	-2	7	7	-	1	1	-	0	1	1	10	8	-2
5	Research and PGR	0	0	-	8	7	-	1	1	-	0	0	-	9	9	-
6	Digital & Information Services	0	0	-	6	7	1	5	3	-2	1	1	-	12	11	-1
7	People	1	1	-	6	3	-3	0	2	2	0	1	1	7	7	-
8	Health, Safety & Wellbeing	0	0	-	5	5	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	5	5	-
9	International Partnerships	2	1	-1	3	3	-	5	5	-	0	0	-	10	10	-
10	Reputation	3	3	-	5	7	2	2	1	-1	0	0	-	10	11	1
11	External Environment	0	0	-	2	3	1	1	1	-	1	0	-1	4	5	1
12	Environmental Sustainability	0	0	-	4	4	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	6	6	-
13	Leadership and Governance	0	0	-	4	2	-2	1	1	-	0	0	-	5	4	-1
14	AUSA and Other Third Parties	0	1	1	2	2	-	2	0	-2	0	1	1	4	4	-
	Total	10	6	-4	70	57	-13	36	35	-1	6	9	3	122	107	-15
	Percentage of Total	8%	6%	-	57%	53%	-5	30%	33%	-3	5%	8%	3	100%	100%	/

6.6 As shown above, the SRR now includes 107 individual risks in total, spread across the 14 areas: a decrease of 15 risks since the last reporting round.

6.7 The number of risks rated Critical (red) in the current iteration is nine, an increase of three relative to October. This equates to 8% of the total, compared to 5% in the previous round. One new risk was added as Critical under Education, relating to the potential consequences of industrial action on students, while three risks were upgraded to Critical; from Financial Sustainability, People, and AUSA and Other Third Parties. One risk under External Environment has been downgraded to amber; relating to issues arising University's-wide as a consequence of geopolitical or public health events. More information on risks rated as critical is given under Section 7 below.

6.8 A total of 35 risks are rated as High (amber) across all risk areas, equating to 33% of the total, meaning a three percent point increase in proportional terms. The areas with the most risk rated as High are Financial Sustainability with nine, and Estates and Facilities, Student Recruitment, and International Partnerships which all have five apiece. Digital and Information Services has three and People has two, having had none at the point of last reporting. In total, 41% of all risks within the SRR are rated in the two highest categories of either High risk or Critical, an increase of 3% over the period.

6.9 Of the remaining risks, 57 are rated Moderate (yellow), down from 70, and equating to 53% of the total. This means that more risks are scored within this category than in any other. Of these Education (UG and PGT), Research and PGR, Digital and Information Services, and Reputation all have seven risks apiece. Health, Safety and Wellbeing has five, and Environmental Sustainability has four risks. Estates and Facilities, People, and International Partnerships all have three.

6.10 The remaining six risks are rated as Low, equating to 6%, with four risks less than in the previous round. These are spread across four risk areas. Reputation has three; People, International Partnerships and AUSA and Other Third Parties all have one.

7. CRITICAL RISKS – KEY POINTS TO NOTE

7.1 As noted above, the number of risks rated Critical within the SRR has increased from 6 to 9 with new and emerging risks factored in. These are listed in the table below, with a summary thereafter.

Table 2: Critical Strategic Risks – March 2023

Risk Area	Critical Risks ●
Financial Sustainability	Risk 7: Failure to generate sufficient surpluses to fund strategic ambition (inability to fund the 2040 plan and commitments).
Estates and Facilities	Risk 2: Multiple impacts of geopolitical unrest, Covid and Brexit continue to magnify problems within the supply chain (both cost and availability); a particular issue for major capital projects.
Student Recruitment	Risk 1: Prospective student journey: Our systems, processes, and staffing capacity do not keep pace with increased enquiry and application volumes; changing market expectations; and increasing compliance issues with particular markets. This results in delays in applications processing and responses to prospective student enquiries as well as potential UKVI concerns around compliance.
	Risk 2: Postgraduate research student recruitment levels continue to be out of line with competitor benchmark group.
Education	Risk 1: Marking and assessment boycott (MAB) by UCU.
Digital and Information Services	Risk 1: A failure, absence or compromise of IT Security procedures or controls results in loss, destruction or unauthorised access or modification of data and / or significant business interruption.
People	Risk 1: Inability to recruit staff required to meet strategic priorities in Aberdeen 2040 and to deliver a positive staff and student experience, potentially exacerbated by skills shortages locally.
Environmental Sustainability	Risk 1: Funding and Finance: Failure to make adequate capital and recurrent funding provision in long-term financial planning to support delivery of institutional net-zero and targets, including failure to mitigate financial impact of the eventual cost of offsetting hard to tackle emissions e.g., procurement, business travel, and student travel to study.
AUSA and Other Third Parties	Risk 2: ASV financial sustainability challenged following a prolonged period of lockdown and actions already taken e.g., restricted opening, reduced staffing, and other adaptations to recover from initial period of closure.

7.2 Risk 7 under Financial Sustainability has been escalated to Critical, reflecting the University's current financial position; part consequence of a decline in student numbers and failure to achieve the targeted level of tuition fee income, but also impacts arising from the REF results.

7.3 Under Estates and Facilities, one risk is rated critical, linked to supply chain issues and rising costs. This continues to pose a significant risk to the ongoing viability of major strategic projects, notably the Johnston Business School and King's Quarter.

7.4 Under Student Recruitment, Risk 1 has been expanded to refer to systems, processes and staffing capacity, and is rated critical following issues with converting student applications to offers and acceptances. The other two risks rated critical in this area relate to PGR recruitment and growth in international student numbers; again, reflecting current position, and the potential financial impacts resulting when targets are not met.

7.5 For Education, the critical risk added relates to potential industrial action, the subsequent impact on marking and assessment, and how that will affect students. While this may be considered a short-term risk, the resultant impacts will be high if the risk materialises, with a small number of students possibly unable to graduate. This will not only affect the students concerned, but will also cause reputational damage to the University.

- 7.6 In the Digital and Information Services area Risk 1 remains rated as critical. This refers to IT security, the potential for breaches, and the significant impacts that may subsequently arise.
- 7.7 For the People risk, staff recruitment is a concern across a number of key areas, both within the academic function and across Professional Services. In particular, recruitment of high-quality academic teaching and research staff has and will be challenging forward, thereby posing significant risk to the University's ambitions under research, and driving improvement in future REF performance.
- 7.8 Under the Environmental Sustainability risk area, Risk 1 is still critical, relating to the substantive costs associated with achieving net-zero ambitions, and the need to invest if they are to be realised. This may pose a significant threat to the University's ability to achieve targets, particularly within the current financial context.
- 7.9 Under the AUSA and Other Third Parties risk area, Risk 2 has been escalated to critical. This risk refers to the financial sustainability challenges faced by Aberdeen Sports Village and the increased funding requirements on the joint venture partners (the University and Aberdeen City Council).

8. EMERGING RISKS

- 8.1 The University continues to proactively horizon scan for new or emerging risks which may have a significant and adverse impact at a strategic level. This includes routine assessment of risks already captured, which have - or which have the potential - to increase significantly in terms of both likelihood and impact. In this reporting round, this includes various risks under Financial Sustainability, linked to actual tuition fee income versus budgeted targets. In particular, risks specific to tuition fee income focus on international PGT recruitment, and filling the University's quota of SFC funded places. More detail is available on this under a separate agenda item for this meeting (*2022/23 Updated Financial Projection*). There are also increasing risks related to inflationary pressures, particularly around staff pay and operating costs more broadly; also covered in that paper.
- 8.2 Under research, there is continued uncertainty around association with Horizon Europe and access thereto. At the current time, there is speculation that the UK Government is exploring different options to full association, with a mooted 'Plan B' under consideration. If a different approach is taken, it may give rise to a number of risks, including limiting access to funding, the attractiveness of the UK HE sector for international researchers, and international competitiveness more generally. More detail on this is given in the *HE Sector Update*, (see separate item on today's agenda). Other potentially emergent risks include changes to immigration policy which ban dependants entering the UK, which likewise may adversely impact international student recruitment and the University's financial position.
- 8.3 Beyond that, at a macro level, other emerging risks are diverse; for example, risks associated with a Chinese military attack on Taiwan have not decreased with time, even if not acute at this point. This would likely have a major impact on student recruitment from the region, leading to a major drop in tuition fee income, thereby posing a marked threat to the University's financial sustainability. Risks like this mean the need to diversify international student recruitment markets, to reduce reliance on any one area, are a priority for the University.

9. STRATEGIC RISK OVERLAY

9.1 Please note that work will be carried out to develop an overlay register which draws out eight to twelve risks which pose a particular strategic risk to the University; in line with best practice and with previous recommendations made by PwC. This will give major risks which are pertinent within a strategic context more visibility, adding clarity, and enhancing ease of management and reporting.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

10.1 Further information is available from Tracey Slaven, University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, tracey.slaven@abdn.ac.uk and Hulda Sveinsdottir, Director of Planning and Governance, hulda.sveinsdottir@abdn.ac.uk, Iain Grant, Head of Strategic Planning & Project Management Office, i.grant@abdn.ac.uk or Chris Sojka, Strategic Planning Officer, c.sojka@abdn.ac.uk.

18 April 2023, Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open

DRAFT

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose and Delegation

- 1.1 The Risk Management Committee is responsible to the Senior Management Team (SMT) for discharging its responsibilities with respect to risk management.
- 1.2 SMT has established a committee to be known as the Risk Management Committee, under powers set out in the Delegated Authority Scheme (DAS) and Financial Instruments (FI).
- 1.3 The Committee is authorised to act within these terms of reference, in accordance with the University's agreed DAS and FIs.

2. Remit, Duties and Reporting Requirements

The Committee has delegated authority for considering and recommending to SMT approaches and activities for the implementation of risk management within the University.

- 2.1 The remit of the Committee is to oversee, maintain and develop the University's Risk Management Framework.
- 2.2 Ensure that the identification and evaluation of key strategic risks that threaten the University's objects and objectives is carried out, and that a strategic register of risks is maintained.
- 2.3 To support Court in the articulation of the University's approach to risk appetite.
- 2.4 Contribute to raising awareness generally of risk management across the university and to maintaining the profile of risk management.
- 2.5 Provide oversight of the outcomes of internal risk audit reviews.
- 2.6 Be satisfied that operational risks are being actively managed at a School and Directorate level, monitor processes for the escalation of risk and ensure that the arrangements in place are working effectively.
- 2.7 The remit of the Committee is to oversee implementation of risk management arrangements on all strategic projects within the University, in line with the risk management framework and the University's project management methodology and provide assurance to Audit and Risk Committee.
- 2.8 Approve actions relating to risk management within the University or endorse action to SMT for their approval where the Committee does not have the delegated authority to make a decision.

- 2.9 Work and liaise as necessary with other SMT committees, ensuring the interaction between committees and with SMT is reviewed regularly.
- 2.10 Make whatever recommendations to SMT it deems appropriate on any area within its remit where action or improvement is needed, and adequate time should be available for SMT discussion when necessary.
- 2.11 Produce an annual report setting out the activities of the Committee and a statement on the adequacy of the management of risk will be prepared in accordance with the annual financial accounting schedule and submitted for consideration to SMT and thereafter to the Audit and Risk Committee before being submitted to Court as part of the assurance provision in respect of the annual accounts.

3. Composition

- 3.1 The Committee membership shall be revisited on an annual basis with formal appointment by the Committee chair, and approval from SMT. When deciding on membership there will be due regard to the specific skills, knowledge or expertise required to fulfil the purpose of the Committee in an effective manner. The Committee shall be made up of staff members of the University drawn from:
 - University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (Chair)
 - Chief Financial Officer
 - Vice-Principal Regional Engagement
 - 2 x Deans in Research / Education / Recruitment areas
 - 3 x School Representative (Head of School or delegated authority)
 - Director of Planning & Governance (or delegated authority)
 - Director of Digital & Information Services (or delegated authority)
 - Head of Health, Safety and Resilience
 - 1 x School Administration Manager
 - Strategic Planning & Risk Officer (Clerk)
 - Head of Strategic Planning & Head of Project Management Office (in attendance)

University of Aberdeen: Strategic Risk Register (SRR)

	Risk Areas	Count of Risks				Total	% of Total
		Green	Yellow	Amber	Red		
1	Financial Sustainability	0	2	9	1	12	11%
2	Estates and Facilities	0	3	5	1	9	8%
3	Student Recruitment	0	2	5	2	9	8%
4	Education (UG and PGT)	0	7	1	1	9	8%
5	Research and PGR	0	7	1	0	8	7%
6	Digital & Information Services	0	7	3	1	11	10%
7	People	1	3	2	1	7	7%
8	Health, Safety, Wellbeing & Res	0	5	0	0	5	5%
9	International Partnerships	1	3	5	0	9	8%
10	Reputation	3	7	1	0	11	10%
11	External Environment	0	3	1	0	4	4%
12	Environmental Sustainability	0	4	1	1	6	6%
13	Leadership and Governance	0	2	1	0	3	3%
14	AUSA and Other Third Parties	1	2	0	1	4	4%

Total	6	57	35	9	107
% of Total	6%	53%	33%	8%	100%

		Impact			
		Low (1)	Moderate (2)	High (3)	Critical (4)
L i k e l i h o o d	Highly Likely (4)	4	8	12	16
	Likely (3)	3	6	9	12
	Feasible (2)	2	4	6	8
	Unlikely (1)	1	2	3	4

Risk Owners and Managers: abbreviations

SVP	Senior Vice-Principal
US & COO	University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
DD ER	Deputy Director External Relations
DoAS & OE	Director of Academic Services & Online Education
DoDDIS	Director of Digital and Information Services
DoDAR	Director of Development and Alumni Relations
DoEF	Director of Estates and Facilities
DoER	Director of External Relations
DoPlanning	Director of Planning
DoR&I	Director of Research & Innovation
HoSD	Head of Sustainable Development
VP E	Vice-Principal Education
VP R	Vice-Principal Research
VP RR	Vice-Principal Regional Engagement
VP GR	Vice-Principal Global Recruitment
DDER (TNE IP)	Deputy Director External Relations (TNE and International Partnerships)

Strategic Risk Area: Financial Sustainability





No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	Failure to meet loan covenants and associated impact on going concern assurance.	SVP	CFO	The University would need to open discussions with loan providers, the SFC and USS if covenant tests were not met. In an extreme situation, lenders may require repayment of loans which would also trigger loan break penalty costs. It is not possible to estimate these costs as each lender / stakeholder will have different responses. Current tuition fee shortfall has meant that debt service covenant is under pressure.	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	Lobbying Universities Scotland (US), UUK, USS The USS members have recently accepted a short term settlement which has capped the Pension contributions by employers for the next three years, subject to the 2023 valuation, thereby reducing the largest recent risk in this area. Finance prepare modelling tests for compliance with covenants at least twice a year. If a breach was anticipated (and so far it has not) from such modelling, we would negotiate with lenders and other stakeholders (eg SFC and USS) to develop solutions. Investment Committee manages asset allocation using fund management experts to achieve a balanced risk profile. SMT have approved an action to plan to generate additional income and additional savings to bring the deficit towards the £1.9m target. This has resulted in the projected year end deficit being circa £8m to £3.5m, thereby ensuring covenant compliance. Whilst achieving the target £1.9m deficit remains challenging, the risk of a covenant breach in 2022/23 is low.	In place	2	4	●	AMBER	8	Up
2	Surging inflation restricts our capacity to invest.	CFO	CFO	Inflation erodes our purchasing power and more resource is consumed with operating the estate (including energy, construction and repair materials). Market pressure pushes up recruitment and staff costs.	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	We are experiencing high levels of inflation on pay, insurance, maintenance and utilities which are well in excess of three year plan levels, so impact has been increased. The higher costs are included within the regular monthly MMR forecasts and savings meetings are being held with Schools and Estates/IT Directorates. We continue to aim to maximise all revenue streams and manage costs to minimise the risk.	In place	2	4	●	AMBER	8	Up
3	Geopolitical disruptions could cut off student income from one or more markets with little warning.	CFO	CFO	Outstanding income could be at risk of non payment (eg as happened with fees due from a government sponsoring agency in Ghana) or students are prevented from attending	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	The student recruitment team are careful to ensure that we have diversity across countries for overseas recruitment. Outstanding debt on Ghana is still of concern to the University during 2022/23. The University as mitigating action has increased the bad debt provision at the end of financial year 2021/22. This is still in place. This is being monitored by Finance and reported regularly to student recruitment.	In place	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Up
4	Land sales (Rowett) unsuccessful or value reduced and asset sales fail to raise planned capital receipts.	SVP	CFO	Financial impact Future capital projects delayed Cash flow worsens	2	4	●	AMBER	8	Treat	Reduced investment in strategic priorities Estates Committee reviewing progression of UOA land sales and monitoring developments in the construction industry. Alternative asset sales identified	In place	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	No Change
5	Brexit leads to loss of funding streams and research income	SVP	CFO	Ability to meet minimum target to break-even and associated impact on investment Concern over loss of non controlled funded places due to not meeting this target for early statistics SFC return in 2022. Concern over high level of clawback of funding possible for 2022/23 and potential removal of funded places in future financial years.	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	EU fee structure agreed with scholarships in place Liaison with all areas of UoA re supply chain Research strategy to access Horizon funding Regular dialogue will be required with SFC re clawback of non controlled funded places, or potential removal of future years funded places.	In place	4	2	●	AMBER	8	Up
6	SFC funding declines in the medium to long term due to economic pressures	SVP	CFO	Financial impact Concern over removal of funded places due to pressures on SFC budget. Concern over cutting of Capital Maintenance Budget.	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	Plan to reduce dependence on SFC funding streams through diversification to overseas student markets. Three year plan reviews demonstrate gradual reduction in SFC Income as share of total income. Regular dialogue will be required with SFC re clawback of non controlled funded places, or potential removal of future years funded places.	In place	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
7	Failure to generate sufficient surpluses to fund strategic ambition (Inability to fund the 2040 plan & commitments).	SVP	CFO	Strategic plan implementation is delayed or downgraded. Reputational damage & associated implications for education & research Currently in significant deficit position. Level of income generation in 2023/24 unlikely to be sufficient to fund the original budgeted investment.	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	Improve transparency in the planning process. Increase challenge to budget holders to increase net income and reduce or redeploy cost to increase its positive impact. Review of Schools and service areas in deficit, review of courses and programmes being delivered and rationalising these.	In progress	3	4	●	RED	12	Up
8	Sustained loss of research income above sector average	SVP	CFO	Reduction in REG (b) and (c)	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Greater focus on how Schools can increase Research Income with Directorate support. Increase transparency in regular performance monitoring of leading indicators for research success. Research income projected to increase. Increased staffing complement conducting research.	In progress	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
9	Tuition fee income drops below plans over a sustained period, particularly international students at PGT level	SVP	VP GE	Sustained loss of revenue Loss of new entrant tuition fee income Impact on School strategies and financial position Loss of income for existing students not returning	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	See risk 3.1 and 3.2 under Student Recruitment	See risk 3.1 and 3.2 under Student Recruitment	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Up

10	Business-critical projects not delivered which are required for revenue growth (planned projects or existing project milestones not met e.g. Business School, King's College)	SVP	VPR	Financial impact Reputational damage Student and staff experience Future student recruitment Cash position will become tighter if we generate deficits as less operating cash flow can be reinvested in the capital programme. Future staff recruitment	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	Improved governance and project management is being put in place to manage strategic projects Business plan, timeline and risk register prepared for each project Cash flow plan updated at least annually to advise on whether capital projects can be delivered. Projects to be prioritised to ensure that available funds are earmarked for the most critical projects	In progress In progress	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
11	Supply chain impacted for critical goods and financial stability of suppliers reduces	SVP	CFO	Inability to carry out research or key operational activities Potential for capital works to be significantly impacted by lack of availability of key building materials. This could impact programme and cost	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	APUC reviewing supply chain identification of key framework suppliers Additional credit checks on suppliers Importing and exporting guidelines issued to community following Brexit Identify contingencies for critical supply chains e.g. building materials Provide adequate contingencies in projects for time and cost overruns Selective use of building materials where supply chain is more stable Consideration of procurement methods that reduce the above risks	In progress In progress Complete In progress For future Estates Committee Project Boards to consider Project Boards to consider	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Up
13	Unable to deliver major fundraising campaign	SVP	DoDAR	Could have a significant and adverse impact across a range of areas, including inability to deliver major capital projects, loss of financial support for research projects and for students.	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Ensure fundraising projects and appeals are attractive to donors, develop a case for support Ensure staffing and resource meets the needs of delivering a comprehensive campaign Expansion of prospect pool and diversification of income streams (individuals, corporates, Trusts & foundations, regular giving, legacy) Ensure appropriate marketing and communications including digital and personalised communications Effective leadership and governance Funding of an ongoing programme of alumni engagement and fundraising activity	In progress	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change

Strategic Risk Area: Estates and Facilities

No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	Failure to adequately manage future Estate development including lack of key strategic frameworks e.g. Estate Strategy, Masterplan, and effective Space Management procedures.	SVP	DoEF	Estate unable to support institutional strategy (Aberdeen 2040). Capital project planning and development portfolio disrupted or fails to deliver on time, budget or quality. Estate poorly aligned to support onsite functions e.g. research, teaching, accommodation, greenspace, sport, events, community access. Focus on buildings rather than people and activities Reputational impact, including EDI and H&S impacts Project governance processes not followed Project finance interrupted or lost	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	Estates Committee oversight Consistent project management methodology and governance Effective Space Management processes (to be informed by the Masterplan and Strategy) (fully redeveloped and in place by 2024) Estate Strategy (to be informed by the Masterplan) consultation and development (developed and in place by 2024) Estate Masterplan consultation and development (SMT have agreed consultation plan Feb 23, full Masterplan developed and in place by late 2024) Estate Strategy / Masterplan consultation and development Regular review of capital planning Design Team structure adopted and applied consistently	In place In place In progress Under consideration In progress Under consideration Under consideration In place In place	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
2	Multiple impacts of geopolitical unrest, Covid and Brexit continue to magnify problems within the supply chain (both cost and availability)	SVP	DoEF	Small and medium suppliers fail Key suppliers lost or staffing reduced Extensive re-tendering Delays in critical parts lead to equipment offline e.g. CPH engine Large contractor failure Contractors and supply chains disrupted and/or significant price increases on key materials Interruption to gas supply Specific effects on Aberdeen market given geographical remoteness, including lack of market competition leading to higher prices in both capital and operational activities	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	Government initiatives and mitigation Most operational suppliers are via APUC and as such are large/established entities although not always operating in Aberdeen Re-tendering would normally be by APUC CHP/ District main is a 'risk' but UoA can operate without it (at a cost). Contract in place for maintenance with some critical part help on campus and some held by maintenance company Payments are retrospective to works Parent Company Guarantee Horizon scanning e.g. of construction trade Review by Resilience Advisory Group Explore other procurement routes, including potential expansion of shared services with other large organisations in the area <i>Note: mitigations available to manage the geopolitical aspects of this risk are limited and impact is uncertain given the external variables in place</i>	Under consideration In place In place In place In place In place In place	3	4	●	RED	12	No Change
3	Failure to ensure appropriate Estate utilisation	SVP	DoEF	Assets are under-utilised Space is poorly used Impact on delivery of services e.g. Security, Cleaning, H&S, maintenance, catering Lack of sufficient, accessible storage impacts service delivery and key activities e.g. exams, sport, engagement etc. User satisfaction Reputational Consequences of increased home working Lack of linkage between Estates, Timetabling, Event Management and Occupation by Third Parties	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	Ongoing analysis of impacts of Homeworking Policy Effective Space Management processes (to be informed by the Masterplan and Strategy) (fully redeveloped and in place by 2024) Estate Strategy (to be informed by the Masterplan) consultation and development (developed and in place by 2024) Estate Masterplan consultation and development (SMT have agreed consultation plan Feb 23, full Masterplan developed and in place by late 2024) Space benchmarking data reviewed (ongoing) Recommencement of Space Management Group Development of Space Modelling plans for Schools (ongoing) Development of Space Modelling plans for Professional Services (ongoing) Ongoing monitoring of space requirements and student growth (ongoing) Appointment of Property and Asset Manager Further appointments of specialist staff Co-ordination of systems of space usage	Under consideration In progress In progress Under consideration In progress In place In progress In progress In place Under consideration Under consideration	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change

4	Deterioration in material condition and/or functional obsolescence of the estate (including teaching, research and support functions)	SVP	DoEF	Inability to deliver core services and supporting activities Health & Safety risk Reputational damage Reducing attractiveness to students and staff Repeated failures in key buildings Some buildings in poor state of repair and/or inoperable Loss of relevant licences and permissions to operate Liability to users and adjoining landowners	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	10-year cash flow plan Estates Committee management, with consideration given to research, teaching and support facilities Regular review of capital programme to ensure adequate annual investment is maintained Regular review of maintenance spend and programme Regular review of relative performance against sector IRV metrics Ongoing programme of refurbishment and upgrade works (ongoing) Creation of works programme following condition surveys (ongoing) Increase in resources, including both financial and people Functionality survey of Estate to be scheduled for 2023/2024	In place In place In place In place In place In progress In progress Under consideration Under consideration	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
5	Business continuity systems fail to identify potential risks to assets or to ensure appropriate operational resilience of assets, systems or utilities <i>See also Environmental Sustainability Risks</i>	SVP	DoEF	Reputational impact Significant cost implications (regardless of insurance position) Disruption to aspects of campus activity e.g. teaching, research professional support Loss of an asset / assets resulting in significant business continuity problems e.g. due to fire, flood Loss of key systems e.g. K2, door entry Loss of utilities	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	Business continuity processes Key business continuity risks identified as part of Business Continuity Plans Regular maintenance and servicing of key mitigation systems e.g. fire suppression Appropriate insurance in place Health & Safety practices e.g. lab safety measures Development of appropriate investment programme (including plans for replacement) for critical systems, assets & utilities, including CHP and District Heat Network (ongoing) Maintenance and development schedules for critical infrastructure e.g. CHP Programme Board to review campus heating options Long-term plans for replacement of key infrastructure e.g. CHP, District Heat Network Testing of backup generators and oversight by the Resilience Advisory Group	In place In place In place In place In progress In place In place In progress In progress	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
6	Failure to manage energy consumption and carbon management including lack of structural investment required to drive down emissions baseline leads to uncontrolled energy costs. <i>See also Environmental Sustainability Risks</i>	SVP / US & COO	DoEF	Inability to manage utilities budgets Multiplier effect of cost of carbon Reputational damage Reduces capacity for investment to drive down emissions and costs Increased consumption and costs of ongoing COVID mitigations e.g. air filtration, exacerbate challenge Global energy price rises magnify other impacts Energy security issues affected by ongoing war in Ukraine	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	Net-Zero Strategy (ongoing) Energy efficiency embedded in projects (ongoing) Consideration of micro-renewables (ongoing) Consideration of networked solutions e.g. local heat network (ongoing) Consideration of alternative fuels (ongoing) Controls measures including Monitoring & Targeting Advance purchasing through sector procurement routes Budgetary impacts of volatile global energy markets being monitored Programme Board reviewing campus heating options Effective space management Appropriate and timely collaboration with internal experts, including Dean for Green and other experts	In progress In progress In progress In progress In place In place In place In place In place Under consideration In place	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
7	Failure to achieve targeted income from commercial and residential activities <i>See also Financial Sustainability Risks</i>	US & COO	DoEF	Financial impact Risk to subsidy of other business activity Reduced student numbers impact on residential and catering income Impact on third party and other site support e.g. shop, bus service Changes in legislation governing student tenancies gives ability to leave at short notice and/or University offers rent rebates (both COVID related) Recovery delayed by ongoing Covid restrictions, with reduced footfall/income and limiting scope to mitigate impact Limited/reduced commercial activities undermining revenue generating opportunities	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Scenarios have been prepared under which financial impacts are budgeted Operating costs reviewed (ongoing) Working with other HE / FE providers to generate new accommodation business e.g. SRUC, NESCOL (ongoing) Extensive marketing activity and working with student recruitment to optimise offer e.g. virtual open days with student recruitment, incentives for students staying over summer etc (ongoing) Rolling programme of accommodation upgrades Extensive on-site support for students compared to private sector Plan to recruit to a Business Development Exec post to generate new income Weekly monitoring of transaction levels and income against resource to deliver activity Adequate investment strategy to enable effective facilities	In place In progress In progress In progress In place In place On hold In place Under development	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	No Change

8	Failure to adequately manage the benefits realised by major capital projects and the level of return	SVP	DoEF	<p>Reputational impact</p> <p>Not delivering return on investment</p> <p>Not achieving outputs outlined in the Business Case</p> <p>High market volatility in respect of price increases in tender returns results in projects being put on hold</p>	3	3	 AMBER	9	Treat	<p>Management of benefits is considered at each Project Board through Project Risk Register</p> <p>New Benefits Management Process under development, which will span full project lifecycle and benefits realisation post-project delivery.</p> <p>Early modelling of the Business Case to evaluate any changes in ROI calculation and benefits potentially impacting project viability</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>Under development via PMO</p> <p>Under consideration - this item directly influences the change in score after mitigation until resolved</p>	2	3	 YELLOW	6	New Risk
9	Staffing capacity insufficient to deliver strategic functions of the Directorate	SVP	DoEF	<p>Failure to implement recommendations of E&F Review</p> <p>Single points of failure</p> <p>Staff wellbeing and stress related issues for existing staff due to increased workloads</p> <p>Reduced capacity to support campus activity / events (one-off and routine) e.g. cleaning rosters</p> <p>Inability to maintain statutory compliance which allows the University to operate</p> <p>Harmonisation of terms and conditions leads to inability to deliver key functions</p>	3	4	 RED	12	Treat	<p>All required posts put forward for approval</p> <p>Review of structures following appointment of Director of Estates and Facilities</p> <p>Recruitment into key pinch-point areas</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>Under consideration</p> <p>Under consideration</p>	2	3	 YELLOW	6	New Risk

No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	Prospective student journey: Our systems, processes, and staffing capacity do not keep pace with increased enquiry and application volumes; changing market expectations; and increasing compliance issues with particular markets. This results in delays in applications processing and responses to prospective student enquiries as well as potential UKVI concerns around compliance.	VP GE	DD ER	<p>Applicant expectations not met resulting in a poor prospective student experience.</p> <p>Loss of new entrant international and home tuition fee income</p> <p>Impact on staff workload and resulting wellbeing</p> <p>Risk of issuing CAS to non-credible applicants resulting in a risk to our UKVI Licence, including the risk to sponsor licence from visa refusal or non-completion of ICAS relating to Study Group students</p> <p>Loss of our status as a UKVI trusted sponsor and resulting in us being unable to recruit international students.</p> <p>Insufficient market knowledge to scrutinise and understand complex documentation</p>	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	<p>Review staffing requirements to match applicant volumes</p> <p>Admissions statistics regularly monitored to identify and address areas of lag and flex resources accordingly</p> <p>Staff from other areas drafted in to support Admissions function during peak pressure period</p> <p>Enquiry statistics monitored to identify and address areas of lag</p> <p>Other Directorate staff trained and moved into enquiry support as and when required during peak pressure periods</p> <p>Continuously seek for opportunities to enhance processes through continual monitoring of workload pressures and seeking feedback from staff for improvement</p> <p>Implement new admissions system to increase the efficiency of processing and applicant experience</p> <p>Explore means of Augmenting capacity using a third party provider</p> <p>Team-led project facilitated by external consultants to review the prospective student journey</p> <p>Active monitoring by the Student Recruitment Committee of our compliance with the requirements of our UKVI sponsor licence, and monitoring of market behaviours that may impact on compliance.</p> <p>Ensure staff receive appropriate training</p> <p>Agree and transparently set out clear deadlines for University and applicant decision-making</p> <p>Close working between University's Admissions and Immigration Compliance Teams</p> <p>Consider third-party solution to manage CAS process</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>Under consideration</p>	3	4	●	RED	12	No Change
2	Postgraduate research student recruitment levels continue to be out of line with competitor benchmark group	VP GE	Dean for Postgraduate Research	<p>Adverse impact on research capacity</p> <p>Adverse impact on the research culture and environment and resulting student experiences</p> <p>Impact on PGR metrics used to drive SFC research funding</p> <p>Continued loss of market share which is challenging to rebuild</p> <p>Impact on gross tuition fee income</p>	4	4	●	RED	16		<p>Establishment of sector benchmarks to inform intake targets and allow performance to be monitored.</p> <p>Implementation of enhancements to PGR selection and admissions processes.</p> <p>Enhancement of staff research profiles and promotion of specific research topics on web pages</p> <p>Enhancement to PGR marketing campaigns and applicant conversion activity.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p>	3	4	●	RED	12	No Change
3	UK Postgraduate taught recruitment levels continue to be out of line with competitor set.	VP GE	Dean of Portfolio Development & Programme Engagement	<p>Negative impact on fee income</p> <p>Potential adverse impact on the student experience of international students seeking a UK university experience</p> <p>Loss of contribution to economic regeneration and upskilling</p> <p>Adverse impact on the balance of UG to PG numbers in the population</p> <p>Continued loss of market share which is challenging to rebuild.</p> <p>Potential loss of throughput to PGR study in those disciplines where this is the recognised progression path.</p>	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	<p>Establishment of sector benchmarks to inform intake targets and allow performance to be monitored.</p> <p>Launch of a new UK PGT campaign informed by latest market insights.</p> <p>New campaign to promote PGT study to existing undergraduates</p> <p>Promotion of scholarships targeted at UK PGT including alumni discount, and community discount</p>	<p>Under consideration</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p>	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
4	Failure to meet growth targets for international PGT and international UG student numbers, possibly as a result of changes in the external environment obstructing/interrupting recruitment of international students (geopolitics, international travel, changes to immigration policy global health)	VP GE	Dean for International Stakeholder Engagement	<p>Loss of tuition fee income and income shortfalls against budgets</p> <p>Adverse impact on the net fee income per student FTE</p> <p>Reduced ability to sustain other areas of activity that do not recover their full cost.</p> <p>In respect of PGT, adverse impact on the balance of UG to PG numbers in the population</p> <p>Loss of market share which is challenging to rebuild</p> <p>Over-reliance on a small number of key markets</p>	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	<p>Full review of conversion journey, identifying areas for enhancement, with an early priority being the conversion of acceptance to Student Visa</p> <p>Use of market intelligence to drive awareness of market positional and applicant motivations.</p> <p>Brand review project, which will include messaging appropriate to each market in support of student recruitment.</p> <p>Targeted incentives and scholarships in response to the price-sensitivity of the individual market.</p> <p>Implementation of plan to enhance conversion rates in key markets.</p> <p>Ensuring brand promotion fully optimises ranking credentials in rank-sensitive markets.</p> <p>Task and finish groups established to review strategic approaches for international recruitment and market diversification</p> <p>Development of new programmes and employability focus to meet market demand</p> <p>Continue to deliver programme of in-person and virtual recruitment events for prospective students. targeted at key audiences and attending recruitment fairs domestically and internationally to support lead generation and to nurture potential applicants</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p>	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Up

5	Failure to meet growth targets for RUK UG student numbers	VP GE	DD ER	Loss of tuition fee income and income shortfalls against budgets Adverse impact on the net fee income per student FTE Reduced ability to sustain other areas of activity that do not recover their full cost. Loss of market share which is challenging to rebuild	3	3	● AMBER	9		Use of market intelligence to drive awareness of market positional and applicant motivations. Brand review project, which will include messaging appropriate to each market in support of student recruitment. Targeted incentives and scholarships Implementation of plan to enhance conversion rates Continue to deliver programme of in-person and virtual recruitment events for prospective students. For RUK UG planning our approach to Clearing and Confirmation, overseen by the Clearing and Confirmation TFG, to support growth in this area Maintain awareness of UK-wide discussions in relation to post qualification admissions for the undergraduate market, and the potential impact this could have on undergraduate recruitment.	In place In progress In place In place In place In progress In place	3	2	● YELLOW	6	No Change
6	Over-reliance on key markets increases exposure to international student recruitment risk.	VP GE	Head of International Recruitment	Exposure to the impact of geopolitical tensions, conflict, economic downturn and other global events. Loss of tuition fee income and income shortfalls against budgets Reduced ability to sustain other areas of activity which do not recover their full-costs Inability to respond to changing prioritisations of rank sensitive and price sensitive markets. Exposure to changes in market sentiment or affordability in individual markets. Adverse impact on the net fee income per student FTE Reduced ability to sustain other areas of activity that do not recover their full cost. Adverse impact on the balance of UG to PG numbers in the population Loss of market share which is challenging to rebuild Over-reliance on a small number of key markets	4	4	● RED	16		Use of market intelligence to drive awareness of market positional and applicant motivations. Targeted incentives and scholarships in response to the price-sensitivity of the individual market. Implementation of plan to enhance conversion rates in key markets. Ensuring brand promotion fully optimises ranking credentials in rank-sensitive markets. Task and finish groups established to review strategic approaches for international recruitment and market diversification Development of new programmes and employability focus to meet market demand Enhance in-country presence in key markets Continue to deliver programme of in-person and virtual recruitment events for prospective students.	In place In place In place In place In progress In place In place	3	3	● AMBER	9	No Change
7	Failure to satisfy SFC student number controls and Scottish Government priorities (widening access, STEM) in relation to the home fees population	VP GE	DD ER	Financial penalties for over-recruiting or under-recruiting against SFC thresholds for the student population including: I) permanent lost of funded places result of under-recruitment in a) non-controlled subjects and/or b) against the specific allocations for the controlled subjects (Medicine, Dentistry, Initial Teacher Education; and/or II) a financial penalty for over recruitment against SFC consolidation thresholds Loss of market share which is challenging to rebuild Increase in intake required to fill funded places) increases the challenge of achieving those SFC targets expressed in percentage terms, such as SIMD20, or STEM. SFC Outcome & Impact Framework targets relating to access, articulation and STEM are not met impacting on relationship with SFC and possible SFC sanctions and financial penalties. Reputational damage as a result of perceived failure to offer widening access opportunities. Inability to meet Aberdeen 2040 commitments on Inclusivity.	4	3	● RED	12	Treat	Development of a portfolio of programmes appropriate to the market. Brand re-positioning project, which includes a focus on support for student recruitment. Continued engagement with prospective students at events (virtual and face-to-face) both on-campus and in school. Implementation of a comprehensive conversion plan Provision of materials for applicants and their influencers (guidance teachers, parents/guardians). Planning our approach to Clearing and Confirmation, overseen by the Clearing and Confirmation TFG, to support growth in this area Review budget assumptions for offset of any clawback anticipated to ensure it remains adequate for challenged recruitment areas e.g. PGDE Secondary. Model the intake required to achieve populations thresholds at an early point in the admissions cycle. Establishment of a comprehensive framework of metrics for widening access. Working with SFC and Commissioner for Fair Access to ensure that we can implement metrics appropriate to our regional context. Implement a transparent contextualised admissions policy. Continue to review entry qualifications to ensure these are attractive to prospective students but do not impact on overall standards Targeted incentives and scholarships, such as widening access scholarships in partnership with the Development Trust, and free accommodation offering for SIMD20 students Maintaining existing FE College partnerships and seeking opportunities for new articulation pathways.	In place In progress In place In place In place In progress In place In place In place In place In place	4	2	● AMBER	8	No Change
8	Potential growth opportunities for online student recruitment are not identified and/or fully realised.	VP GE	DoAS & OE	Growth opportunities are not realised Recruitment diversification opportunities are not realised. Market share remains below potential. Restricted ability to address upskilling and economic regeneration needs.	3	3	● AMBER	9	Treat	Develop clear strategy for developing online portfolio of courses and programmes. Enhancement to the Online Education Management System to improve the purchase of online courses and the learner experience Review opportunities to work with third party providers to help grow online student numbers Develop in-house capacity to further broaden the On-Demand platform provision of short courses and programmes. Respond proactively to upskilling/reskilling opportunities and identify potential for growth	In progress In place progress In place In progress In place	3	2	● YELLOW	6	No Change
9	Inability to provide timely and informed student recruitment projections	VP GE	DD ER	Inability to project workload and plan staffing requirements Impact on projections for planning an budget purposes meaning that academic areas are not equipped of resources to support increased student numbers. Potential negative impact on the student experience. Potential negative impact on future student recruitment.	4	4	● RED	16	Treat	Monitoring and regular updating of conversion rates of application/offer/acceptance to registered student Implementation of a methodology to develop range-based projections. Cross working between External Relations (new entrants); Planning (student population planning); and Finance (budgetary impact) to enhance robustness of projections available.	In place In place In progress	3	3	● AMBER	9	Up

Strategic Risk Area: Education (UG and PGT)

No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	Marking and assessment boycott (MAB) by UCU	VP E	Director of Academic Services & Online Education	Inability to progress and graduate some students. Impact on wellbeing of students. Impact on reputation of the University.	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	As part of the existing NSS institutional action plan for assessment and feedback, Schools will have ensured that all assessment is prepared for the second half-session. Provide guidance for the MAB with a focus on areas such as prioritising marking for student groups (e.g., graduating students). VPE and DASOE to meet with each Head of School to assess possible impact of MAB and to ensure that all Schools are managing the situation. VPE and DASOE to meet weekly with School Directors of Education. At the point of the final date for the hand-in of assessment (which will vary), assess the impact of the MAB on individual students. Put in place contingency to manage the impact on the students affected. Put in place communications at School and university levels for students – to explain the overall situation and available support (university) and to inform students of particular circumstances and mitigations (School)	In place In place In progress (will be complete by 20/04/23) In place In progress In progress In progress	4	3	●	RED	12	New Risk
2	Assessment and feedback on assessment is not of a high quality and / or provided within the required timeframes. Note the possibility of a marking boycott as part of industrial action which is an additional issue that impacts on this existing risk	VP E	Director of Academic Services & Online Education	Impact on student performance and progression NSS Assessment and Feedback results do not improve with impact on League Table rankings Unable to progress or graduate students due to impact of industrial action (e.g. marking boycott)	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	Continue with the agreed approach to monitoring the timeliness of providing student feedback at School level so that Heads of School / Directors of Education can intervene where necessary Continue with the agreed approach that ensures that all students are provided with all information about assessment (including but not limited to: type of assessment, criteria for marking, timelines for submission and return of grades/feedback) Take forward actions at institutional level that supports Schools to improve feedback (e.g., provision of training) Take forward a pilot of the use of TESTA (Transforming the experience of students through assessment) in one or more School Identify good practice in assessment at course, discipline and / or School levels and disseminate appropriately Each School will review the NSS results at discipline level and will put in place action plans at discipline level Quality assurance processes in place to ensure appropriate assessment is in place, including liaison with external examiners Guidance in place on assessment: development of assessment, inclusivity, integrity with continued work on matters of integrity (e.g., essay mills) Paper to be developed that outlines contingencies for any marking boycott. Guidance in place for Schools with respect to any missed teaching and impact on assessment.	To be done for each half session (Schools) To be done for each half session (Schools) In place In progress In progress To be done for 2023 NSS (Schools) In place Ongoing In progress In place	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	No Change
3	Non-continuation of students with some student groups being more at risk of non-continuation	VP E	Director of Academic Services & Online Education	Impact on individual students Loss of tuition fee income Impact on completion rates, degree awarding gap, and League Table position Reputational impact	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Continued development of transition into university support, orientation and induction approaches to support the needs of students Analysis of non-continuation data that enables targeted initiatives to be developed as necessary at institutional, School and discipline levels Monthly review of withdrawal data to enable 'real-time' understanding of any trends or concerns Analysis of particular demographic groups to determine if there are issues associated with particular groups, and take action to address the issues Ongoing equality impact assessment of teaching, learning and assessment and take action where necessary	In place for 2HS In progress In progress In progress Ongoing	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change
4	No increase in the level of student mobility / students' opportunity to engage with an international experience	VP E	Director of External Relations	Impact on student experience due to lack of opportunity to undertake international placements Impact on recruitment Impact on the achievement of the Aberdeen 2040 Commitment 11	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	International TFG is taking forward planning that aims to increase the number of opportunities for study abroad Take forward a pilot of COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) that aims to enable students to have an international experience without travel Communicate the existing opportunities appropriately Continue to work with networks (e.g., Aurora, Curtin) to progress increased opportunities for student mobility Continue to work at a national level to influence the approach to the funding for study abroad	In progress In progress In place In place In place	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change

5	Quality assurance arrangements are not in place or not adhered to in our TNE (transnational education) partnerships in Qatar and for the Joint Institute with South China Normal University	VP E	Director of Academic Services & Online Education	Impact on the student experience Impact on our reputation Impact on our external quality assurance outcomes	3	3	● AMBER	9	Treat	Produce a quality assurance report annually for a specific partnership focused Quality Assurance Committee meeting for each partnership, identifying any risks or issues Utilise the robust committee structures that are in place to monitor and intervene as necessary Ensure that TNE partners have all necessary information and support to enable the implementation of our required quality assurance processes	In place In place In place	2	2	● YELLOW	4	No Change
6	Students are unable to access work placements or go on to employment after graduation Note the risk score increase from 3, 3 (9) and 3, 2 (6)	VP E	Head of Careers and Dean for Employability and Entrepreneurship	Negative impact on graduate outcomes Negative impact on our graduates Impact on the achievement of Aberdeen 2040 Commitment 12	4	4	● RED	16	Treat	Analysis of graduate outcome data at School and discipline levels to identify areas that require targeted action with Schools putting in place action plans Progress the work of the Work Placement TFG to develop approaches, policy and actions that increase the opportunities for work placements (or alternatives) as part of an overall approach to support employability, including a consultancy exercise to support decision-making on next steps Work with the Development Trust to identify opportunities that will support the development of placement opportunities Upscale and widen co-curricular internship opportunities through new ABDNConnect internship programme (Communications to include engagement with alumni) Encourage UG students to undertake appropriate PG study with the University of Aberdeen	In place In progress In place In progress In place	3	3	● AMBER	9	No Change
7	Inability to complete the Aberdeen 2040 strategic work for Education relating to the following (some of this covered in sepeate risks): - Pastoral support - Monitoring, absence and engagement processes - Assessment and Feedback - Non-continuation and success - Education policy project - Enhancement-Led Institutional Review - Decolonising the Curriculum - Aberdeen 2040 Graduate Attributes and Skills - Aberdeen 2040 Delivery of Education - The International student experience - Employability and graduate outcomes	VP E	Director of Academic Services & Online Education and Director of People	Missed opportunity to enhance Education following the learning that has emerged from blended learning and the wider student experience during Covid-19 Negative impact on the League Tables	3	4	● RED	12	Treat	Action plan for Education, with associated workstreams in place Resource implications of the extensive work addressed Consultation approach embedded as part of all of the work (our colleagues, students, wider stakeholders) Monitoring through the University Education Committee structure	In progress In progress In progress In place	2	3	● YELLOW	6	No Change
8	Failure to adhere to requirements of Professional & Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) leading to risk of loss of accreditation	VP E	Director of Academic Services & Online Education	Reputation damage Negative impact on student employability Risk of litigation	2	4	● AMBER	8	Treat	Ensure close oversight by Schools of PSRB requirements QAC oversight of PSRB accreditation reports	In place In place	1	4	● YELLOW	4	No Change
9	Unable to improve the degree awarding gap for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students, Widening Access students and mature-age students.	VP E	Director of Academic Services & Online Education	Negative impact on the individual students Student performance and progression is not where it should be Reputational damage	3	4	● RED	12		A targeted action plan to be developed	In place	2	3	● YELLOW	6	No Change

Strategic Risk Area:	Research and PGR
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No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	Failure to grow research income (see also Financial Sustainability, risk No. 4 (Sustained loss of research income above sector average))	VP R	D of R&I	Reduced ICC income; Reduced ability to invest in research; Loss of track record impacts on ability to attract funding; Adverse impact on league tables; Reduction of REG year on year Impact on REF metrics	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Alignment of institutional research themes in Aberdeen 2040 to national funding priorities and the UN Sustainable Development Goals; - The team of Directors of interdisciplinary challenges, recruited to focus on excellent research and interdisciplinary education, supported by the Research Development Team/Grants Academy and the Impact and Knowledge Exchange Team in Research & Innovation; Review of the Grants Academy programmes; Develop the support approach focussed on large grant acquisition; - New V-P for Regional Engagement, working with the research Deans and R&I for the delivery of contract research agenda. - Creation of a dedicated space to support the work within the interdisciplinary themes underway; - Provision of pump-priming opportunities as well as matched/co-funding for strategically important projects; - Increased and dedicated support of very high value bids through Research & Innovation; - Further improvements to pre- and post-award management system - Provision of research income information to schools to aid income planning through Power BI dashboards - Provisions of benchmarking and information through dashboards; - Development of a pricing policy to maximize cost recovery.	In place In place In place In progress In place Under consideration In place In progress Under consideration	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	No Change
2	Reduced/insufficient quality of research	VP R	D of R&I	Decline in citations, number and percentage of highly cited papers; Reduced ability to attract funding; Reduced ability to publish in competitive journals or with competitive publishers; Adverse impact on league tables Reputational damage	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	Continued peer support through interdisciplinary themes, Grants Academy and School; Aberdeen 2040 promotes challenge based research through IDR themes, engagement with research users and partnership working to enable project proposals likely to attract competitive funding and to yield high quality outputs; - Staff development/training programmes for staff and PGRs available through the Researcher Development Unit; - In-School processes include mentorship and engagement/staff development through discipline and professional associations; - Membership of UK Research Integrity Office and UK Reproducibility Network commits us to working to nationally recognised standards of research integrity and reproducibility; - Increased and dedicated support for very high value bids likely to produce very high quality outputs - monitoring of rates of outputs and consideration of workload adjustment to academics if required - development of an institutional framework for the quality assessment of research throughout the REF cycle; - responsible use of metrics in developing research and publication strategies - review of workload allocations and provision of teaching buy out opportunities to research capacity is maintained against a background of increasing student numbers, particularly PGTs	In place In progress In place In place In place Under consideration In progress In progress Under consideration/ policy on responsible use of metrics approved by Senate	3	2	●	YELLOW	6	No Change
3	Failure to address weaknesses in research environment/impact and output support identified in REF2021 feedback	VP R	D of R&I	Sustained decline in research quality Failure to attract/retain staff, leading to loss of capacity Reduced income, reduced capacity to attract income/become major partner in research collaborations nationally and internationally Inability to demonstrate strategic use of REG to support research and impact	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	Continued reflection on outcomes in individual School meetings; provision of benchmarking and other indicators to inform discussions Identification of priority areas for investment in line with Aberdeen 2040 and in light of REF2021 benchmarking Review of institutional support structures for research - adding capacity to R&I to support grant acquisition and bid support, as well as for engagement and impact Development of institutional research assessment framework, compliant with the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) Participation in national networks informing the development of the next REF (probably 2028), early alignment of support and reporting structures to enable us to generate the correct metrics and indicators for assessment in 2028 Implementation of the recommendations of the Research Culture Task and Finish Group	In progress Under consideration In progress In progress In progress In progress	3	3	●	AMBER	9	New Risk

4	Reduced/insufficient KE activity; failure to grow our portfolio of enterprise, entrepreneurship and spin outs	VP R and VP RE	D of R&I and Dean for Enterprise & Innovation	<p>Reduced income from KE</p> <p>Failure to generate impact to report to funders or REF</p> <p>Inability to contribute and attract funds that enable generation of further impact/KE activities</p> <p>Inability to develop a portfolio of new spin out and start up opportunities for the innovation hubs in the region</p> <p>Reputational damage</p>	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with regional partners on industry needs; - Promote breadth of university assistance to industry recovery; - Promote collaboration beyond academia and partnership working through interdisciplinary themes; - Encourage work with non-academic partners on industry solutions - Enhance professional services support for enterprise and innovation; - Review incentives and promotion opportunities relating to KE and innovation activity; - Engage with regional partners on strategic bids, eg Freeport bid and working with NESAs partners - Increase capacity within R&I to support enterprise and innovation activity 	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p>	3	2	●	YELLOW	6	No Change
5	<p>Failure to attract PGR students; failure to retain, progress PGRs, low rates of completion; failure to provide a positive PGR experience</p> <p>(see also Student Recruitment risk register, risk No. 1 (Failure to meet Recruitment Targets) and risk No. 2 (International Students))</p>	VP R and VP GE	Dean of Postgraduate Research	<p>Reduction of research capacity</p> <p>Reduction of annual SFC PGR grant</p> <p>Impact on REF metrics</p> <p>Impact on PGR income where students fail to complete or fail to complete on time (non-compliance with UKRI 4-year rule)</p> <p>Reduced ability to recruit PGR students</p> <p>Reduced ability attract studentships and DTP funds and international applications</p>	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement findings of the PGR Task and Finish Group - Increased student support via PGR School; - Specific guidance for supervisors and PGR School co-ordinators around engagement; - Provision of mandatory training for PGRs and supervisors, core and generic training online; - Promotion of 'Engage the World' of staff profile changes including PGR recruitment button and update of study here pages; - Continued engagement with International funders/partnerships; - Ensure DTP applications are promoted and supported by institutional commitment required to match/co-fund; - Introduce interdisciplinary PhDs to increase numbers and support the work of the interdisciplinary themes 	<p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>Under consideration</p>	3	2	●	YELLOW	6	No Change
6	<p>Failure to attract and retain high quality T&R /R staff</p> <p>(see also: Staffing risk register, risk No. 1 (Recruitment) and risk No. 6 (Retention))</p>	VP R	D of R&I and D of People	<p>Reduced research capacity</p> <p>Reduced ability to attract external funding and PGR candidates</p> <p>Reduced ability to engage with industry/KE agenda</p> <p>Reduced visibility with adverse impacts on student and staff recruitment</p> <p>Longer term reduction of REG</p>	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement findings from Research Culture Task and Finish Group - Ensure rolling programme of facilities review to main high quality research facilities - Close engagement with and support to researchers; - Enhanced support for commercialisation and enterprise; - Monitoring of research metrics by protected characteristic to ensure inclusive approach to support; - Ensure high visibility of and celebrate research success through Comms, PERU, web content and social media 	<p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p>	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	No Change
7	Failure to maintain high standards of ethics and governance; failure to comply with regulatory and statutory requirements	VP R	D of R&I	<p>Clawback or financial penalties</p> <p>Statutory obligations not met</p> <p>Regulatory or statutory penalties</p> <p>Reputational damage</p> <p>Funder(s) refusing to accept applications from individual researchers</p> <p>Funder(s) refusing to accept applications from institution</p> <p>Loss of research data (linked to Cybersecurity risk)</p> <p>Loss of IP through espionage or unauthorised/harmful use of research outcomes</p>	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	Treat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular review and update of Research Governance Handbook to ensure compliance of processes and policies with funder requirements and integrity standards; - Mandatory online training introduced (for research integrity, fundamental ethics and research data management); - Mandatory in depth ethics training for ethics applicants and reviewers; - Continued membership and engagement with UK Research Integrity Office and UK Reproducibility Network; - Establishment of an institutional ethics group (as sub-group of the University Research Committee) to discuss and share good practice; - Implementation of a new University wide ethics system (Worktribe) to ensure consistency of ethics processes - Continued close partnership with NHS on clinical studies involving human participants; - Continued close scrutiny of Home Office regulated research involving animals to ensure compliance; - Develop guidance and process for registration of projects/partnerships under the National Security Investment Act 2021 (retrospective to 2020) 	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p>	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change

8	Failure to comply with funders' t's and c's	VP R	D of R&I	Clawback or financial penalties; Funder(s) refusing to accept applications from individual researchers; Funder(s) refusing to accept applications from institution; Depending on nature of breach, regulatory or statutory consequences; Reputational damage	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	- Monitoring of funders' conditions and policy requirements (including funders' penalty policies); - Early engagement with funders and third parties with a view to mitigate potential claims where appropriate; - Ensure communication with partners via PIs and Research & Innovation; - Support compliance with relevant training for researchers and PGRs	In place In place In place In place	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change
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Strategic Risk Area:	Digital & Information Services
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No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Completion Due Date	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	A failure, absence or compromise of IT Security procedures or controls results in loss, destruction or unauthorised access or modification of data and / or significant business interruption.	US & COO	DoDIS	Data security breaches Disruption to business activities Financial impact Reputational damage	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	Monitoring of organisation by security team, including weekends where specific threat intelligence warrants (if volunteers available). Information champions group for staff / student education. MFA now rolled out across all alumni, staff, contractors and students. Microsoft 365, VDI and VPN are covered by MFA with MyHR and external and shared account work underway. Multi-layered technical controls in place and continually assessed and improved (vulnerability management, email auto-forwarding, mobile management) to reduce risk. Review and improve security tools (SIEM, MS tools) to ensure that security and performance are optimal in the changing working environment. This includes installation of immutable data store to help protect data from ransomware attack. Information Governance Committee, Information Risk Working Group and Operation Security Group in place to provide policy, governance, prioritise risk mitigation activities. Adherence to and reporting to senior management based on Scottish Governance Public Sector Action Plan and Cyber Resilience Framework. Audit proposal now received. Active participation in external networks and threat intelligence sharing groups and forums Regular audits, security assessments and penetration testing. Improvement of information security training and development for staff and students with the introduction of new mandatory training modules for staff. Incident Response retainer service to support local staff Active restriction of user account and access permissions use of least privilege principle DSC and IGC now approved extended detection & response service to provide 24/7 support.	In place In place In place In place In place In place In progress In place In progress In place In progress In place In progress	 On-going process On-going process On-going process July 2023 February 2023	4	3	●	RED	12	No change
2	A failure, absence or compromise of Information Governance procedures or controls which results in the breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data. As well as the inability to meet accountability and legal obligations.	US & COO	DoDIS	Data security breaches Financial impact Reputational damage Damage or distress to individuals	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	Ensure significant proactive focus and staffing, including Data Protection Officer, in this area to identify and manage risk, and drive improvement. Information champions group for staff / student education with meetings in the diary to highlight key developments in Information Governance practices. Review and deploy information governance tools to expose and mitigate risk associated with storing of sensitive data. Installation of immutable data store to help protect data from ransomware attack. Information Governance Committee and Information Risk Working Group in place to provide policy, governance, prioritise risk mitigation activities. Adherence to and reporting to senior management based on Scottish Governance Action Plan and ICO Accountability Framework. Feb 23 Scot Gov survey under completion. Active participation in external networks and threat intelligence sharing groups and forums Regular audits and governance assessments. Improvement of data protection training and development for staff and students with the development of new mandatory training modules for staff. Development of International framework checklist to structure University governance response / engagement with international partners including SCNU / China / Calgary / Curtin / Qatar Regular monitoring of external environment for legal / environmental change that is relevant to University Governance Information Risk Management Plan approved at IGC, implementation of plan with new job roles across schools and directorates will reduce insitutional risk significantly.	In place In place In progress In place In place In place In place In place In place In place On-going process On-going process	 June 2023 July 2025	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No change



3	Inability to deliver work requests and system changes due to multiple, competing high level priorities and consistently high workload levels in particular areas. Includes contributory impact of loss of subject matter experts and workload capacity due to resignations, failure to attract staff or posts on hold for a prolonged period.	US & COO	DoDIS	Disruption to day-to-day activities Student experience Student progression Student completion Reputational impact Financial impact Regulatory Compliance Security posture degradation	4	4		RED	16	Treat	D&IS prioritisation process Escalation to SMT and relevant task and finish groups Financial case submitted to DSC for 21/22 and 22 / 23 onwards setting work priorities. Priority cases for recruitment submitted to Senior Management Continue discussion at a national level regarding support pools. Utilise contractor / agency market if business critical. Ad hoc use of retention arrangements or market premiums for staff attraction. Salary and benefits review for major risk areas Consideration and definition of the Employee Value Proposition	In place In place In place In place In place In place In place		3	3		AMBER	9	No change
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4	Constrained service improvement, service reduction due to inability to afford escalating revenue costs of provision. Applies to software license, maintenance and replacement of digital systems and applications.	US & COO	DoDIS	Financial impact Teaching failure and effect on student journey Administration service levels Research capacity Cyber / Governance risk	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	D&IS prioritisation process Escalation to SMT and relevant task and finish groups Financial case submitted to DSC for 22/23, 23/24 & 24/25 setting work priorities. Priority cases for recruitment submitted to Senior Management Continue discussion at a national level regarding support pools. Utilise contractor / agency market if business critical. Ad hoc use of retention arrangements or market premiums for staff attraction. Salary and benefits review for major risk areas Consideration and definition of the Employee Value Proposition	In place In place In progress In place In place In place In place	On going process	3	2	●	YELLOW	6	No change
5	Failure of digital delivery platforms / services due to supplier disruption, extended power cuts, fault, capacity or other issue. Widespread impact on Teaching, Research and administration.	US & COO	DoDIS	Disruption to business activities Reputational damage Financial impact Reduced student experience / progression Reduced grant income / research outputs	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Utilise expanded, multiple platforms where appropriate and affordable. Purchases alternative solutions when requirement is identified. RFC protocol in place to reduce internal errors when maintenance and change actions are undertaken Accessibility / captioning guidance in place VDI/ VPN system have undergone significant compute and licence expansion Monitoring of system performance with alerts in place via Nagios Re-configure University systems to minimise traffic impact. This is being monitored on an ongoing basis. System expansion considered on a case by case basis, e.g. VDI, VPN, Microsoft licenses (CRM, Security / PowerBI etc) Use of expandable technology stacks (VM, SAN store, cloud) and ability to escalate to senior management / DSC for funds to augment. Capacity Management is a regular focus of operational management Generator backup at Data Centres and split site redundant infrastructure for a number of core systems. Recently checked as part of business continuity work.	In place In place In place In place In place In progress In place In place In place	On going process	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	No change
6	Campus internet performance degradation due to capacity issues or internal / supplier failure.	US & COO	DoDIS	Disruption to business activities Reputational damage Financial impact	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	Re-configure University systems to minimise traffic coming on to campus. This is being monitored on an ongoing basis but may require further significant work for Home Working Policy implementation. Have dual resilient links for major buildings and Aberdeen inter-campus traffic . Remove on campus dependencies for major services (email / Teams) for emergency situations. Direct students to hardship fund to provide funding for local internet where relevant Deploy "data dongle" to staff for internet connectivity where appropriate Generator backup at Data Centres and split site redundant infrastructure for a number of core systems. .	In progress In place In progress In place In place In place	Solution in place, TRP based rollout. TBC - workload issue	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No change
7	Loss of institutional competitiveness through under-investment in digital initiatives and content, due to prolonged under resourcing, under-investment or poor strategic technology choices. This includes the risk of failing to appropriately manage and deliver Application Transformation initiatives.	US & COO and VP RE	DoDIS	Disruption to business activities Financial impact Reputational impact Reduced student experience Reduced research income	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	Ensure that ROI perspective is taken on project decisions. Work that may support income generation and new ways of working to retain / attract students given full consideration. Directorate and Digital funding bids completed for required duration (multi-year) In consultation with senior colleagues and school plans, development of long term project / technology roadmaps to inform financial planning. Production of well researched and detailed business cases in close collaboration with academic and professional services colleagues, including multi Directorate and School resource planning Close liaison with academic, professional service colleagues including DSC, forums and specific meetings Project Methodology, PID & scope documentation to ensure appropriate consultations Use of external knowledge bases such as Gartner for market / technology research to inform decision making	In place In place In progress. In place In place In place In place	On-going including through 10 year plan.	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No change

8	Technology replacement programme or capacity management stops for extended period due to supply / resource issues leading to failures and poor back office and user technology. This includes facilitation of institutional home working policy (HWP).	US & COO	DoDIS	Impact on longer term business continuity Financial impact Reputational impact Disruption to business activities	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	Ensure appropriate warranty packages are in place to maximise lifespan Utilisation of break / fix model and limited budget in the medium term. Utilise unspent budget allocations to ensure sustainability of operation Develop desktop replacement strategy to move to mobile provision Financial case for HWP technology provision submitted to DSC. Submission of orders in timely and bulked manner to try and ensure supply Lobbying of suppliers at local and national level	In place In place In place In place In place In place		2	3	●	YELLOW	6	No change
9	Inappropriate service provision to staff / students with particular & specific requirements (location / disability / accessibility / digital divide)	US & COO	DoDIS	Student Experience undermined Financial impact Reputational impact	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Utilise technical solutions to overcome issues of location and access to information. Increased use of VDI (purchase of expanded computer/licence complete) and implementation of scalable and secure VPN for all remote/ home working Consider purchase of equipment and / or internet for students. SFC monies allocated to hardship fund for specific student technology requirements. Captioning service for lecture capture Digital Accessibility Workgroup continues to champion increased adherence to WCAG regs and specific disability areas, e.g. dyslexia Use of internal and external hardship funds, equipment and content to help reduce digital poverty Digital Accessibility Policy in place with clear roles & responsibilities for management and relevant staff roles. Review of study spaces to include accessibility and inclusion. Proposal for wide scale digital accessibility training and further training support.	In place In place In place In place In place In place Under consideration In progress	March 2023	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	Upwards
10	Loss of digital content (corporate/research/heritage) due to lack of digital archiving and preservation service and systems	US & COO	DoDIS	Regulatory claims Inability to comply with research funder policies Reputational damage Irretrievable loss of unique materials	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	External review to inform plans Acquisition of digital curation and preservation systems via DSC bid Development of service and staffing to meet international standards Identify and implement archiving solution introducing resilience to existing infrastructure through cloud provision	In progress In progress Under consideration In progress	FY 2022/23 FY 2022/23 Under consideration FY 2022/23	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No change
11	Failure to adequately manage the museum collections, special collections and the Library collections.	US & COO	DoDIS	Irretrievable loss or damage to unique materials Failure to retain museum Accreditation and Recognition status Loss or reduction of SFC Museums Galleries and Collections grant Reputational Impact	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	Ensure building maintenance, and security systems and protocols, including regular checking of onsite and offsite stores, effective disaster prevention procedures and business continuity plans, and risk assessments for relevant activities Fulfil expectations of Accreditation and Recognition schemes, including approval of policies and governance arrangements by Museums Galleries Scotland and annual reporting Fulfil deliverables set by SFC, including annual reporting; engage with SFC through University Museums in Scotland group Ensure robust research and a transparent and consultative approach underpins activity, particularly when addressing issues such as decolonisation, slavery and repatriation; adherence to Museums Association Code of Ethics; close liaison with External Affairs Consultant led exercise underway to understand space / security requirements to move collections from Marischal to more appropriate location.	In place In place In place In place In progress	On-going process On-going process On-going process; grant confirmed for 2022-2024 On-going process March 2023	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No change

Strategic Risk Area: People

No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	Inability to recruit staff required to meet strategic priorities in Aberdeen 2040 and to deliver a positive staff and student experience, potentially exacerbated by skills shortages locally.	DoPeople	Head of HR Business Partnering	Staff shortages Critical shortage in some disciplines and impact on UG and PGT teaching Pause on recruitment due to financial challenges impacting on all business areas and particularly professional services delivery/support Impact on REF Resentment, following the need to review staffing complement and shift staff to business critical areas Inability to delivery in speciality areas as a consequence of economic environment and skills shortages.	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	Review of R&S Policy including Relocation Package to make more attractive Post of Senior HR Partner (Resourcing) to provide specialist recruitment support including for senior and hard to recruit to posts Development of proposals for market supplements and other incentives to attract staff where recruitment difficulties Review of reward practices (including promotion and career pathways, senior staff salary banding) Review of homeworking policy and hybrid working guidance following internal audit. Development of annual programme learning & development activity to support internal upskilling. Assessment from Financial Planning on risks of non-recruitment during recruitment pause ensuring business critical areas are supported.	Complete Complete In progress In progress In progress In progress Ongoing	4	3	●	RED	12	Up
2	Inability to retain the high quality staff required to lead, develop and implement key strategic and operational priorities	DoPeople	Head of HR Business Partnering	Staff shortages leading to excessive workloads for those remaining Drop in quality of education or research standards among academics Deterioration in ability to delivery support services across Directorates and Schools. Reputational damage.	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Staff Survey Review of Probation Procedures Comprehensive programme of staff development & leadership opportunities. Review of Contribution procedures and other Recognition practices Addition of home working/hybrid working to range of flexible working procedures.	Complete To be undertaken In place In progress Complete	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Up
3	Overseas working - risk of staff working overseas and not notifying the University. Risk of fines due to tax etc implications	DoPeople	Head of HR Business Partnering and Head of International Advice and Compliance	Reputational damage Financial impact	3	2	●	YELLOW	6	Treat	Guidance in place for staff and managers on the employment of staff overseas Global Mobility Policy to be implemented Working with external specialist to ensure country specific guidance and advice is in place as required.	In place In progress In place	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change
4	Failure in adhering to legal compliance, especially in relation to immigration	DoPeople	Head of HR Business Partnering and Head of International Advice and Compliance	Reputational damage Inability to recruit international staff as a consequence of loss of UKVI license if legal breach occurs and license revoked.	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Continued subscription to UKVI premium service and continuing to seek their advice on a case by case basis where appropriate Ensuring guidance issued by the UKVI is communicated and cascaded through HR and relevant University teams.	In place In place	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change
5	Deterioration in Employee Relations including potential of industrial dispute.	DoPeople	DoPeople and CFO	Adverse impact on student experience Detrimental impact on University's reputation Adverse impact on industrial relations/ partnership working with the Campus Trade Unions Inability to graduate students due to Marking & Assessment Boycott (MAB) Reputational damage	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	Meetings of the Industrial Action Working Group to manage the impact Regular meetings between management and the Campus Trade Unions Guidance and FAQ for staff and managers Reward Consultation and Negotiation Group established Principals and Guidance to mitigate the impact of MAB on the student experience.	In progress In progress In progress In progress In progress	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Up
6	Transition to hybrid working arrangements and return to campus impacting on staff performance/outputs, staff morale, staff engagement and student experience.	DoPeople	Head of HR Business Partnering and Head of Organisational Development	Loss of output Projects stall Staff satisfaction drops Increased stress for staff concerned about not being able to deliver all aspects of role Impact on service delivery and student experience	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Staff survey 2022 undertaken and action plans being taken forward. Workload Planning Review Group Homeworking Policy review undertaken and results being taken forward Ongoing consideration of adjusting priorities/delaying activity as appropriate Flexibility offered to staff (method and extent informed by survey results, sectoral and government advice A range of wellbeing support available (Wellbeing Toolkit) Strategies to manage user expectations (staff, students, community) and/or to adapt (or buy in) services to suit availability of staff	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing In place In place In place In place In progress	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change

7	Failure to comply with EDI legal and regulatory obligations, including Public Sector Equality Duty and related SFC requirements.	DoPeople	Head of Organisational Development	Increased risk of complaints and legal challenges Clawback of funding Staff and students feel less respected leading to lower effectiveness Negative impact on wellbeing issues.	2	2		YELLOW	4	Treat	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee continues to meet ensuring progress against the Aberdeen 2040 action plan/inclusive theme and wider strategic matters relating to EDI.</p> <p>Produce Mainstreaming and Equality Outcome Reports biannually - 2023 Interim Report approved by Court in March 2023</p> <p>Athena SWAN awards, Race Equality Charter, Stonewall Workplace Equality Index</p> <p>BSL Policy Gender Pay Gap Reporting</p> <p>SFC iGAP - now not required by SFC</p> <p>E&D training (incl. Unconscious bias) and Antiracism training for all levels of staff including Court</p> <p>Embed E&D in all activities</p> <p>Protected Characteristics data collection and reporting</p> <p>Promote internal diversity networks</p> <p>Mental health and wellbeing Strategy implementation</p> <p>Development of Gender Based Violence policy and action plan and implementation of the Equally Safe in HE toolkit</p> <p>Dignity at Work and Study Toolkit</p> <p>Compliance with REF E&D requirements</p> <p>Antiracism Strategy approved by Court and implementation to be undertaken Tackling Racial Harassment Action plan</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p>	1	2		GREEN	2	No Change
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Strategic Risk Area: Health, Safety, Wellbeing & Resilience (Staff and Students)

No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	Failure to progress day-to-day health and safety management (including fire safety)	US & COO	DoPeople	Non-compliance with potential for injury and/or loss plus enforcement action up to and including prosecution (unlimited fines).	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Estates and Facilities will continue to carry out statutory checks as far as possible (partially dependent on contractors)	In progress	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change
2	Failure to complete or review fire risk assessments for all University-owned or occupied premises	US & COO	DoPeople	Non-compliance. Failure to mitigate the risk of fire, resulting in injury and/or loss. Enforcement action could result in removal of licence for student accommodation or prohibition on use of a building or part thereof.	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Health and Safety Adviser continues to carry out assessments to agreed priorities.	In progress	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	New Risk
3	Campus is not accessible for staff and students with a disability.	US & COO	VP E	Inability for students to fully engage with their studies. Impact on health and wellbeing of both staff and students.	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Survey to students has been issued Further survey to disabled students considered Funding available to students through Hardship Fund to purchase additional equipment Existing support and access to DSA is still available and has been enhanced with additional staffing in Dec.2020. Thriving at Work and Study Recommendations to be implemented. Accessibility working group	In place Under consideration In place In place Ongoing Ongoing	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change
4	Significant Failure of Health and Safety Management leading to fatality, injury or illhealth arising from University activities on campus and elsewhere.	US & COO	DoPeople	Injury, work related illhealth, enforcement action, civil claims and reputational damage.	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Health and safety management overseen by quarterly H&S Committee meetings (and sub-committees) H&S Risk Register in place H&S Policy Review Programme Regular H&S communications to staff and students Mandatory induction and training undertaken Monitoring of accidents and incidents in place H&S audit programme	Ongoing In place In place In place In place In place In place	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change
5	Insufficient business continuity and emergency response arrangements	US & COO	DoPeople	Failure to meet duty of care in an emergency Loss of income Reputational damage	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Resilience Advisory Group oversees arrangements Busines Impact Assessments carried out BC Plans in place Plans exercise to agreed programme	In place In place In place In place	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change

Strategic Risk Area: International Partnerships

No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)	Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)	Risk Movement
1	Inadequate response to the management of international security risks, outside interference with research and academic discourse, and challenges to the protection of human rights and the University's core values.	VP GSR	DDER (TNE IP)	<p>Failure to protect intellectual property rights</p> <p>Exposure to the potential actions of politically or ideologically motivated individuals and state influence.</p> <p>Failure to safeguard the transfer of personal data in international partnerships</p> <p>Failure to recognise the need for the protection of the rights and privacy of staff and students in the use of their data.</p> <p>Failure to comply with anti-bribery and anti-corruption measures</p> <p>Failure to safeguard the academic freedom of the University and its staff</p> <p>Failure to protect the human rights of students and staff.</p> <p>Negative popular press and media coverage regarding challenges to forms of partnership association perceived to be influenced by foreign governments and agencies, and thereby to carry threat to civil liberty, academic freedoms, human rights and/or core values.</p>	4	4	● RED 16	Treat	<p>Establish TFG to scope immediate actions and project work to implement UUKi guidelines for the management of international security risk.</p> <p>Proactive management of cyber security attack risk</p> <p>Intellectual Property policies in place and incorporated into partnership agreements</p> <p>Policies in place on freedom of speech and academic freedom, for incorporation into partnership agreements</p> <p>Incorporation of international security issues including data transfer in transnational project approval and monitoring</p> <p>Develop guidance and process for registration of projects/partnerships under the National Security Investment Act 2021 (retrospective to 2020)</p> <p>Safeguards for international data transfers in agreements with partners and liaison with data protection professionals when formulating agreements.</p> <p>Ensure all partnership agreements have sufficient termination clauses, that due diligence is required on their consideration for renewal, and that a dedicated exit strategy exists and is regularly reviewed.</p> <p>Proactive strategy to respond to media interest or adverse UK political environment regarding some international partnerships e.g. regarding Confucius Institute, human rights matters in Qatar etc.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>Under consideration</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress (target Feb 23)</p> <p>In place (International Data Governance Framework)</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p>	2	4	● AMBER 8	No Change
2	Existing partnerships are impacted by changes in foreign government education policy as implemented by state bodies.	VP GSR	Dean for International Student Pathways & Progression	<p>Obstruction to partnership operating models and business plans</p> <p>Inability to deliver or contribute to academic programmes</p> <p>Disruption to students, individually or collectively</p> <p>Damage to relationships with policy authorities, partner institutions and other stakeholders</p> <p>Damage to reputation and future relationships</p> <p>Loss of income</p>	4	4	● RED 16	Treat	<p>Maintain strong formal relationships with key government stakeholders, eg Ministries of Education and qualification/recognition bodies, via partners where appropriate.</p> <p>Work in partnership with other Scottish universities through Universities Scotland to strengthen relationships with international government organisations.</p> <p>Maintain strong communication links with partners eg SCNU, AFG College, SDNU, Wuhan etc.</p> <p>Continually review external environment informed by market intelligence</p> <p>Work with Universities Scotland and partners including SCNU to respond to specific changes in CSCSE policy regarding 'one third rule'.</p> <p>Ensure all partnership agreements have sufficient termination clauses, that due diligence is required on their consideration for renewal, and that a separate exit strategy exists and is regularly reviewed.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with UK bodies including British Council and other relevant organisation (UK JI Alliance)</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>In place</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	3	3	● AMBER 9	No Change
3	Economic, geopolitical, military, or public health factors causing disruption to partnership activity in affected parts of the world.	VP GE	DDER (TNE IP)	<p>Inability to undertake international travel for visits to international partners for partnership governance, recruitment and conversion purposes</p> <p>Disruption to political and business relationships in key markets, impacting on business continuity</p> <p>Obstructions to financial payments from partners due to financial or currency controls, and/or exchange rate fluctuations</p> <p>Loss of income and/or access to student recruitment in key markets</p> <p>Disruption to students, individually or collectively</p> <p>Adverse changes in taxation liabilities impacting on a partnership</p>	4	4	● RED 16	Treat	<p>Monitoring of international diplomatic, military and geopolitical tensions and their potential consequences</p> <p>Monitoring of the regional political, economic and socio-cultural conditions in areas of significant partnership activity</p> <p>Maintaining strong communication links with partners to provide early awareness of changes in their external environments.</p> <p>Monitoring of the external environment informed by market intelligence and liaison with FCDO, UUKi and other bodies including overseas agencies where appropriate.</p> <p>Diversification of international partnership activity by geographical region, geopolitical alignment, and economic interdependency.</p> <p>Ensure all partnership agreements have sufficient termination clauses, that due diligence is required on their consideration for renewal, and that a separate exit strategy exists and is regularly reviewed for each.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress (target May 2023)</p> <p>In place</p>	2	4	● AMBER 8	No Change

4	Objectives and projected growth for the AFG College with the University of Aberdeen partnership in Qatar are not fully realised and/or there are fundamental failings in the partnership relationship, or in delivery by the partner, which undermine the effective functioning of the University's operations in Qatar.	VP GE	DD ER (TNE/IP)	<p>Potential loss of income</p> <p>Failure to deliver student recruitment growth/income growth and broadening of academic portfolio</p> <p>Disruption to academic provision and deleterious impact on the student experience and student outcomes</p> <p>Disruption to the recruitment of potential future students.</p> <p>Reputational damage in-country with Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE)</p> <p>Inability to approve or proceed with the planned Phase 2 expansion of activity.</p> <p>Unilateral actions by major stakeholders are destabilising or pose existential threat to the partnership</p> <p>Failure of AFG College/University staff to engage effectively to support the partnership</p> <p>Colleagues at all levels of the partnership do not deliver their responsibilities and/or act for the mutual benefit of the partnership.</p> <p>Reputational damage</p>	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	<p>Establishment of new governance structures that circumscribe the latitude for unilateral actions by either party and allow for effective progress monitoring.</p> <p>Establish Partnership Development Plan and associated KPIs, and close monitoring of student recruitment outcomes and projections.</p> <p>Regular contact between senior representatives of the University and AFG College.</p> <p>Effective relations are maintained at all levels of the partnership through ongoing liaison to ensure a close collaborative working relationship. Inclusion of AFG colleagues in appropriate decision-making structures of the University</p> <p>Conclusion of new Academic Cooperation Agreement and updating of due diligence prior to signing. ACA ensures roles and responsibilities and lines of communication are clearly articulated in all aspects of operation (e.g. quality, financial, operational etc.)</p> <p>ACA stipulates issue resolution processes and grounds for the exercise of break clauses, which are clearly defined and clarify teaching out arrangements in the event of early termination.</p> <p>Identify additional market relevant programmes supported by market research and local intelligence for applications to MoEHE.</p> <p>Secure feasibility study and critical path timeline from AFG College for Phase Two New Premises construction and campus opening</p> <p>Refreshing of exit strategy, and careful attention to termination clauses in ACA, for enactment if required.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress (target July 2023)</p> <p>In progress (target Sep 22)</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress (target May 2023)</p> <p>In place</p>	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
5	Failure to develop existing partnerships and deliver new partnerships for the recruitment of international undergraduate students particularly through articulation arrangements.	VP GE	Dean for International Student Pathways & Progression	<p>Loss of tuition fee income</p> <p>Failure to diversify articulation opportunities across academic disciplines and subject areas</p> <p>Increased exposure to dependence on articulation from a small number of partnerships</p> <p>Increasing exposure to shifts in geopolitical tensions, economic circumstances, and student demand</p> <p>Loss of goodwill with international partners and government stakeholders</p> <p>Negative impact on reputation and future relationships</p>	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	<p>Processes in place to ensure appropriate partnership governance and regular communication</p> <p>Engagement with articulation partner senior staff to maintain positive strategic relationships</p> <p>Liaising with partners to ensure appropriate information is available to partners and prospective students</p> <p>Partner engagement and student outreach to encourage conversion of students to transfer to Aberdeen for study</p> <p>Maintaining regular communication with articulation partners for the purposes of providing forward student number projections</p> <p>Explore new pathways and routes to study with existing partners through regular and open dialogue eg SCNU, Wuhan.</p> <p>Work with third parties such as the British Council to explore new articulation markets and partners</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress (target Oct 2022)</p> <p>In progress (target Nov 2022)</p> <p>Under consideration</p>	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change
6	Failure to deliver the full implementation of the Joint Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence with SCNU.	VP GE	Dean for International Student Pathways & Progression	<p>Loss of income under revenue sharing arrangements</p> <p>Loss of goodwill with partners and government stakeholders</p> <p>Compromised ability to further develop activity with the partner</p> <p>Damage to relationship with Chinese Ministry of Education and prospects of approval for future activity in China</p> <p>Reputational damage and negative impact on appetite for future collaborative opportunities</p> <p>Deleterious impact on the student experience.</p>	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	<p>Liaising with the partners to ensure appropriate information is available to support the recruitment and conversion of prospective students</p> <p>Effective governance arrangements in place with appropriate committee structure and regular monitoring of student numbers projections</p> <p>Relationship management involving direct engagement at a senior and distributed management level with counterparts across the partner institutions.</p> <p>Planning for the recruitment of academic and professional support staff at both SCNU and Aberdeen for the full delivery of the three programmes of study</p> <p>Membership of the UK-China Joint Institute Alliance for the sharing of experience and effective practice in the operation of JIs.</p> <p>Discussions regarding transition of JI students to UoA PGT programmes and development of a bespoke computer lab at SCNU to which UoA will contribute design ideas.</p> <p>2 SCNU delegations to UoA are expected in Summer 2023 – a senior team will visit to meet with VPGE and HoS to discuss possibilities of furthering our strategic partnership. A second team of JI senior professional services and academic staff will, with UoA colleagues, conduct a scoping visit for possible future SCNU staff development activities.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress (target Oct 2022)</p> <p>In place</p>	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change

7	Failure to secure maximum benefit from foundation study pathway arrangements with Study Group for the progression of international students.	VP GE	Dean for International Stakeholder Engagement	<p>Failure to deliver business case objectives for the relationship, particularly loss of potential tuition fee revenue from articulations to the University's full programmes</p> <p>Negative consequences for the working relationship with StudyGroup, up to existential threat to continuation of the relationship</p> <p>Lack of recovery on the University's investment to enable Study Group operations on campus</p> <p>Deleterious impact on the student experience from small cohort sizes</p>	3	4		RED	12	Treat	<p>International Study Centre in operation and supported by effective staffing and physical resources from both Study Group and the University</p> <p>Effective governance arrangements in place with appropriate committee structure and regular monitoring of student numbers projections, retention, completion and progression rates, etc</p> <p>Close liaison with regard to market conditions, horizon scanning, and new development opportunities.</p> <p>Establish new business development protocols to capitalise on arising opportunities arising from variation in the Study Group operational model and services offered</p> <p>Support embedding of new partnership director</p> <p>Identify reasons underpinning declining recruitment and comparable trends across partner network to identify a series of responses to regrow recruitment</p> <p>Undertake contractual review during 2022/23</p> <p>SG prepared draft Re-growth Strategy under review by UoA</p> <p>Deans and the Head of Int Partnerships reviewing the UoA-SG partnership and conducting a high-level options appraisal for consideration by the IPC in May 2023 (Re-growth Strategy will be integral to this process).</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	3	3		AMBER	9	Up
8	Failure to secure appropriate and effective bilateral agreements to support the international mobility of students.	VP E	US & COO	<p>Impairment of employability enhancing opportunities for current and future students</p> <p>Inability to deliver programme experience options as advertised, with potential regulatory and legal consequences.</p> <p>Loss of goodwill with partners and stakeholders impacting negatively on reputation and future relationships</p> <p>Mobility arrangements are not effectively governed leading to potential legal and insurance risk consequences.</p> <p>Deleterious impact on the student experience.</p> <p>Insufficient staffing (through absences and/or vacancies) effectively to manage ingoing and outgoing mobility and/or to manage existing agreements and secure appropriate new ones.</p>	3	3		AMBER	9		<p>Identify scale and scope of mobility arrangements previously governed by Erasmus+ arrangements that require to be replaced.</p> <p>Establish most efficient yet robust approach and timescales for replacing collective mobility agreements with bilateral agreements with partner institutions</p> <p>Ensure mobility agreements set clear expectations (strategic intent) for the relationship, and review dates for agreement review and renewal.</p> <p>Ensure mobility agreements reflect degree of exposure to risk, and provide for safe facilitation of matters such as data exchange.</p> <p>Resolve staffing issues by securing an effective and sustainable staffing complement.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress (target May 23)</p> <p>In progress (target May 23)</p> <p>In progress (target May 23)</p>	2	2		YELLOW	4	No Change
9	Failure to develop and maintain existing strategic alliances	VP GE	DDER (TNE IP)	<p>Reputational impact</p> <p>Failure to benefit from income-generating partnerships that may arise from strategic alliances</p> <p>Poor communication/strained relationship between the partners</p> <p>Failure to demonstrate added value from strategic alliances</p>	2	3		YELLOW	6	Treat	<p>Maintaining high levels of communication between leadership teams. Senior leadership to meet regularly and in-person when possible.</p> <p>Proactive approach to partnership management and maintaining momentum in the relationship.</p> <p>Widening engagement in strategic relationships across the University</p> <p>Ensure all partnership agreements have sufficient termination clauses, that due diligence is required on their consideration for renewal, and that a separate exit strategy exists and is regularly reviewed.</p> <p>Regular meetings of governance groups e.g. senior colleagues and steering committees</p> <p>Regular meetings of key staff e.g. Energy Directors</p> <p>UoA involvement in ACC Alliance events eg joint conferences and joint delivery of programmes and/or sharing of course provision.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>In place</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>In progress</p>	1	2		GREEN	2	No Change

Strategic Risk Area: Reputation

No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	Lack of ownership and understanding of reputation at an institutional and School level	US & COO	Head of Marketing and Brand Development	Impact on league table performance Schools and Directorates do not recognise the challenge associated with reputation and do not embed it in decision making and planning. Lack of governance, ownership and co-ordination Lack baseline data to measure performance and understand the historical context	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	Treat	Data gathering and research to support understanding of reputation and provide evidence to support action planning Benchmarking of reputational data School and Directorate planning process Training and development to support understanding reputation management and brand messaging Increased visibility of External Relations team	In progress In progress In progress Under consideration In progress	1	1	●	GREEN	1	No Change
2	Failures to perform in League Tables	SVP	D of Planning and Governance	Impacts on the institutions ability to attract and retain the best staff and students Undermines strategic priorities of the institution, including financial sustainability and fundraising	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	Treat	Further review and proactive monitoring of HESA data from Planning Continue analytical work to understand research data more fully, with investigation of opportunities for international benchmarking. Planning will proactively engage with individual schools and will offer School meetings/presentations discuss league table results in greater detail, and open staff sessions. Further enhance league table reporting beyond what is provided in 2020/21 so as to provide as much insight as possible e.g. through Power BI. Continued consideration of Reputational scores through (i) maximising QS contact lists for academics and employers and (ii) engagement with ER re. external data analysis to be carried out on promotional activities relating to academic and research reputation. Planning to support Schools and Professional Services through providing context to the league table analytics appropriate to their area. Utilisation of additional insights, e.g. THE Data Points, to inform future strategies	Completed for AY 22/23. TO be repeated in AY 23/24. In progress. To be completed by September 2023. In progress. To be completed by October 23. In progress. UK league table BI dashboard to be finalised by April 23. (i) completed for AY 22/23, (ii) in progress to be completed by end of 2023. In place. In progress. Final insights from Data Points to be presented to LTWG in April 2023.	1	1	●	GREEN	1	No Change
3	Reputational damage resulting from the behaviours or actions of a staff member, student, alumni or associated 3rd party (e.g. AUSA or AFG), single incident e.g. data breach or wider issue with non-compliance with good governance or legal requirements.	US & COO	Head of Communications	Refocuses narrative with key stakeholders, including the press and political stakeholders, impacting negatively on the perception of the institution's reputation Undermines wider institutional achievements Impacts the institutional ability to attract and retain the best staff and students, and potential partners Undermines strategic priorities of the institution, including financial sustainability and fundraising	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Encourage culture of openness and transparency such that staff / students / alumni to surface any issues early, and proactively develop strategy to respond to any reputational issues. Firefighting to support rapid response to issues which may arise Utilise social media listening tool to support horizon scanning. Consolidate and enhance relationships with media contacts	Ongoing Ongoing In place Ongoing	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
4	External environmental factors impact on the HE sector, and reputational challenge at a sector level impacts on the specifically the University reputation (e.g. Brexit)	US & COO	Head of Public Affairs and Stakeholder Engagement (PASE)	Impact on the ability to attract funding Negative impact on the policy environment	2	3	●	YELLOW	6		Ensure proactive horizon scanning to ensure the institution is live to sector wide issues and challenges Ensure proactive engagement with policy makers to ensure understanding of the impact and societal benefit the University supports Link across with the regional agenda and civic university agreement.	In progress In progress In progress	1	1	●	GREEN	1	New Risk
5	A gap develops between the institutional reputation i.e. how the University is perceived - either positively or negatively - by different stakeholder groups, and the underlying reality.	US & COO	Head of Marketing and Brand Development	Impact on league table performance Lack brand recognition and wider awareness Reputation does not positively reflect reality of institutional position, impacting reach, recognition, access to funding and ability to attract and retain both staff and students Financial sustainability	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Stakeholder map to understand our audiences Review ownership of Stakeholder map to ensure it proactively owned as a live document Build data to measure perception of reputation for different stakeholder groups to build understanding of gaps. This should include sentiment analysis Benchmark reputation data against peers to understand UoA reputational performance against that of benchmark group to inform decision making. Create engagement toolkit Review brand portal and assets to support effective and consistent use of the brand Roll out stakeholder engagement programme	In progress In progress In progress In progress and ongoing In progress In progress and ongoing	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	No Change

6	Predominant culture and focus on crisis communications to protect reputation, rather than proactive management of reputational risk i.e. a reactive approach to reputational issues which have already surfaced rather than a proactive approach to protect or advance reputation.	US & COO	Head of Comms, Head of PASE, Head of Marketing & Brand Development	Short-termism, reducing focus on longer terms planning to support reputational management Lack of trust in UoA Reduces credibility of strategic vision and its deliverability Undermines strategic priorities of the institution, including financial sustainability and fundraising	3	3	● AMBER	9	Treat	Directorate and School planning process Review of data sharing to understand impact of reputational management (or lack of) Training and development to build understanding of stakeholder holder engagement, reputational management and brand messaging	In progress Under consideration Under consideration	2	3	● YELLOW	6	No Change
7	Lack of brand awareness and brand integrity	US & COO	Head of Marketing and Brand Development	Reduced ability to amplify institutional voice Lack of differentiation and clear sense of University's purpose and benefits to different stakeholder groups Financial impact Inability to meet student recruitment targets	3	4	● RED	12	Treat	Review brand Consider approach to digital, including University website and social media Roll out updated brand portal including toolkit of assets which be used Maintain visibility range of different tools - both digital and in person	Under consideration In place In progress Ongoing	2	3	● YELLOW	6	No Change
8	Failure to progress Aberdeen 2040, and to ensure appropriate and co-ordinated storytelling to demonstrate progress to both internal and external stakeholder groups.	US & COO	Head of Comms, Head of PASE, Head of Marketing & Brand Development	Lack of trust in UoA Reduces credibility of strategic vision and its deliverability Reduces institutional buy into strategic vision, undermining is deliverability Undermines strategic priorities of the institution, including financial sustainability and fundraising	3	3	● AMBER	9	Treat	Aberdeen 2040 5-year planning process Directorate and School planning process Internal training of brand training / messaging	In progress and ongoing In progress and ongoing Under consideration	2	2	● YELLOW	4	No Change
9	Lack of understanding at an institutional and departmental level of the key stakeholder groups, and as a consequence, an impaired ability to manage their associated expectations.	US & COO	Head of PASE	Inability to meet expectations of stakeholders as to role the University can play (e.g. regional stakeholders associated with regional economic regeneration) Reduced ability to leverage external funding Impact on place-making aspect of Aberdeen e.g. loss of key festivals which support message around Aberdeen as a good place to live, work and study	2	3	● YELLOW	6	Treat	Complete Stakeholder map and role out across Schools and Directorates In conjunction with the VP Regional Engagement and Regional Recovery, ensure comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement. This will include the development and subsequent implementation of Civic University agreement. Ongoing commitment to events programme which supports Aberdeen 2040 and wider regional engagement and profile. Remain alert to funding and recovery packages made available and initiate early partnerships /collaborations. Training and development to build understanding of stakeholder holder engagement, reputational management and brand messaging	In progress In progress In place Ongoing Under consideration	2	2	● YELLOW	4	No Change
10	Failure to engage with the regional stakeholders, NHS and businesses including through the Pathfinder implementation (SFC review of coherence and sustainability of the Scottish tertiary sector) (Please note that this risk is also included in the External Environment area)	VP RE	US & COO	Loss of political and policy influence as well as reputation if SFC perceived to be not engaged. Relative disadvantage if funding mechanism adjusted as a consequence. Aberdeen 2040 commitments undermined if excluded from regional partnership relationships.	3	3	● AMBER	9	Treat	Active engagement with Regional Stakeholders through NE Regional Pathfinder Delivery Board. Re-establishment of liaison group with NHS around Foresterhill Regular communication with SFC, US, Scottish Planners and other sector bodies; Co-creation of Civic University Agreement with regional partners	In place In place In place Under consideration	2	3	● YELLOW	6	New Risk
11	Reputational damage by association with unsuitable funder	US & COO	DoDAR	Loss of trust in University	3	3	● AMBER	9		Ensure appropriate governance and due diligence of prospects and donors using existing structures – Compliance Committee, Board of Trustees, Gift Acceptance Policy, Ad hoc committee on gift acceptance, communication between Trust and University, and University's Governance and Nominations Committee and naming of assets policy	In place	2	2	● YELLOW	4	No Change

Strategic Risk Area:	External Environment
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No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	Global geo-political or health disruptions	US & COO	DoPlanning and Governance	Potential for multi-dimensional impacts on the University - students unable to access financial resources, disruption to supply chains, limitations on mobility of staff and students	3	4	●	RED	12	Treat	Risk assessment of recruitment markets Increased contingency in project budgets. Development of framework for support for impacted individuals.	Under consideration Under consideration In progress	2	4	●	AMBER	8	No Change
2	Major constitutional change	US & COO	DoPlanning and Governance	Potential for significant disruption to supply chains, mobility of students and distraction of policy makers or reprioritisation of public funding. Destructive impacts possible in run up to any referenda.	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	Treat	Active contingency planning in relation to supply chains and the potential for staffing and student recruitment impacts. Reinforced promotion of University profile.	In progress	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change
3	SG review of the purpose of Tertiary Education fails to recognise HE wider contributions	US & COO	DoPlanning and Governance	Potential impact on funding for the sector and consequentially for UoA. Potential for longer-term policy impacts if sector ambitions not seen to be aligned	2	4	●	AMBER	8	Treat	Regular communication with SFC, US, aiming to ensure sector engages institutional engagement with SG and SFC Scottish Planners and other sector bodies; Discussions with regional partners	In place In place	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	Down
4	Significant UK policy changes impacting on staff or student recruitment, fees, or research funding.	US & COO	DoPlanning and Governance	Impact on student numbers and/or ability to recruit staff Reduction in fee income per head Change in access to research funding	3	3	●	AMBER	9	Treat	Active engagement in relevant policy forums Active horizon scanning and contingency planning	In place In place	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	Up

Strategic Risk Area: Environmental Sustainability

No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	<p>Funding and Finance: Failure to make adequate capital and recurrent funding provision in long-term financial planning to support delivery of institutional net-zero and targets, including failure to mitigate financial impact of the eventual cost of offsetting hard to tackle emissions e.g. procurement, business travel, and student travel to study.</p> <p>Links to Financial Sustainability risk as well as to Estates & Facilities capital programme and infrastructure resilience risks.</p> <p>Note: progress on the key mitigations (see *) should result in the mitigated risk score decreasing.</p>	SVP	DoEF	<p>Inability to make sufficiently rapid progress in tackling Scope 1 & 2 emissions e.g. through fabric improvement and heat decarbonisation</p> <p>Reputational impact if carbon reduction targets are not met</p> <p>Loss of credibility with external stakeholders, staff, students</p> <p>Associated energy, operational and lifecycle cost impacts, carbon taxes, and (eventually) off-setting charges</p> <p>New builds fail to attain sufficiently robust environmental & emissions standards</p> <p>Hard to treat old building stock is neglected</p> <p>Opportunities to participate in city-wide initiatives are missed e.g. district networks</p> <p>Reliance on fossil fuels into the longer term</p> <p>Inability to demonstrate the embedding of robust long-term financial planning for all aspects of net-zero</p> <p>Failure to make appropriate allowances for eventual offsetting of residual emissions (in particular related to Scope 3 categories)</p>	4	4	●	RED	16	Treat	<p>Development of a net-zero strategy definition and Implementation Plan *</p> <p>Development and active management of a long-term net-zero project register *</p> <p>Development of a Business Travel policy to target emissions reduction</p> <p>Identification of and investment in appropriate expertise to take forward net-zero planning and projects *</p> <p>Initial allocation of net-zero project funding identified</p> <p>Sustained investment over multiple years *</p> <p>Wider review of Estate Strategy to include sustainability and strategic energy issues</p> <p>Discussions with local partners about district heating and alternative heat sources e.g. hydrogen</p> <p>Sustainable Heating Programme Board established</p> <p>Heating & Energy strategies being reviewed *</p> <p>Development of Management Information to allow improvements works to be brought forward eg Condition Survey / Energy Survey</p> <p>Offsetting approach to be agreed institutionally*</p>	<p>In progress, (working group established early 2023, aiming for late summer 2023)</p> <p>In progress, target early 2023</p> <p>In place (complete)</p> <p>In progress, initial appointments made</p> <p>In place, initial projects tendered early 2023</p> <p>Under consideration, allocations included in ten-year capital plan</p> <p>In progress (see Estates & Facilities Risk Register)</p> <p>In progress, long-term discussions</p> <p>In place</p> <p>In progress, target early 2023</p> <p>In progress, condition surveys complete and being analysed</p> <p>In progress, paper being drafted for next SDC</p>	4	3	●	RED	12	No Change
2	<p>Whole Institution Resourcing and Capacity: Failure to adequately resource sustainability commitments or to secure staff with required expertise across the institution</p> <p>Links to both the Staffing and Health, Safety & Wellbeing risks.</p>	SVP	DoEF	<p>Scale of sustainability challenges are underestimated</p> <p>Directorates and Schools unable to / fail to address necessary operational changes and challenges</p> <p>Inability to progress key projects</p> <p>Insufficient expertise to understand / address key technical challenges e.g. in areas such as the delivery of net-zero projects, or the embedding of necessary supply-chain management measures necessary to tackle Scope 3 emissions.</p> <p>Impact on wellbeing and retention of existing staff</p> <p>Whole-institution approach is not adopted across Professional Services and Directorates, with sustainability seen as a specialist or niche area</p>	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	<p>Agreement to recruit posts to a new Sustainability team in Estates given with initial appointments made (Aug 2022)</p> <p>Identification of appropriate training for existing staff</p> <p>Embedding of sustainability as part of job descriptions and appraisal process (under review by HR)</p> <p>Consideration to be given to development of a 'network' approach e.g. staff champions and local sustainability groups to address issues material to individual teams (emerging organically in some areas e.g. labs, IT)</p> <p>Consideration to be given to areas where specialist support will be required to make operational progress e.g. capacity in Procurement to engage with our supply chain and encourage behaviour change among buyers</p>	<p>In place, ongoing</p> <p>In progress, target spring 2023 (paper to SDC March 2023)</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>Under consideration, will be next priority after staff training is developed</p> <p>Under consideration, e.g. Procurement post had been scoped but recruitment deferred.</p>	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change

3	Reputation: Inability to demonstrate meaningful commitment to sustainability and the twin climate and ecological emergencies Links to Reputation, Education and Research risks	SVP	Head of Sustainable Development	Impact on staff and student recruitment and retention Negative media commentary Damage to local, national & international partnerships Student protest and/or challenge Lack of a co-ordinated approach to the Sustainable Development Goals Impacts negatively on SFC Outcome Agreement Failure to capitalise on opportunities e.g. regional collaboration, student engagement etc Progress is slower than competitor institutions, negatively affecting reputation Inconsistency between operational imperative to tackle sustainability issues and our educational and research strategies e.g. failure to offer appropriate programmes or courses; failure to recruit academics with expertise in a range of sustainability relevant disciplines; failure to embed sustainability in graduate attributes. Focus more on the climate emergency rather than on the nature and ecological emergency	3	3	● AMBER	9	Treat	High visibility of senior leadership and key oversight role of Sustainable Development Committee + Dean appointment made Aberdeen 2040 implementation plan to 2025 in place and evolving Enhanced capacity for sustainability endorsed Consultation arrangements e.g. climate assembly, business travel focus groups (travel consultation complete; assembly idea to be explored) Annual SDG Report published Commitment to THE Impact Ranking exercise Aberdeen 2040 implementation plan contains explicit curriculum (17) and research (18) actions. SDGs prominent in impact case studies and high-profile SDG related research showcased in Report and via research awards. Annual SDG Report covers all institutional activity (with content evolving year-on-year) Sustainability issues emerging as core strand of current review of graduate attributes Initial programme and course mapping took place as part of 2022 SDG Report exercise, with further discussion of curriculum mapping to follow. Development of a Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan	In place In place, ongoing In progress, ongoing In progress, first climate assembly on 15 March 2023 In place, ongoing (2nd report published Nov '22) In place, ongoing (result of 2023 submission pending) In place, reviewed at SDC In place, SDG mapping of research now routine. In place, annual In progress (see Education Risk) In progress (see Education Risk) In progress, aim for end of 2023 (CS Assembly on 15 March provided a forum for consultation)	2	3	● YELLOW	6	No Change
4	Reporting: Failure to meet statutory and/or voluntary sectoral reporting requirements.	SVP	Head of Sustainable Development	Censure e.g. by SFC re Outcome Agreements Missed deadlines or weak submission e.g. PBCCD Institutional response fails to keep pace with rapidly evolving guidance and expectations related to PBCCD reporting e.g. financial planning, Poor league table performance e.g. THE Impact Ranking University Court inadequately briefed on sustainability issues.	3	3	● AMBER	9	Treat	Horizon scanning and membership of sector bodies e.g. EAUC Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) group established (covers THE Impact) Sustainability content embedded in Annual Reporting / SDG Report published Consideration being given to appropriate resourcing (addressing single points of failure) Annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duty report produced, responding to evolving criteria e.g. emissions categories reported extended to include Procurement in 2022 + work now done to assess student travel emissions) Sustainability content for SFC Outcome Agreement Sustainable Development Committee established, with summary reports of issues shared through institutional governance channels. Risk Register scrutinised at every Sustainable Development Committee and routinely shared with Audit & Risk Committee	In place In place, reviewed annually In place, reviewed annually In progress, initial appointments made in August 2022 In place (annual) In place (annual) In place (routine) In place (routine)	2	3	● YELLOW	6	No Change
5	Insufficient management of environmental standards Links to Estates & Facilities compliance risks.	SVP	DoEF	Inability to achieve emissions targets Risk of regulatory breaches e.g. pollution. SFC challenge Reputational damage	3	3	● AMBER	9	Treat	Sustainable Design Guide Infrastructure projects embed environmental sustainability e.g. via BREEAM Robust waste contracts Regular audits and external validation e.g. waste, energy	In progress (review to be taken forward over summer 2023) In place, ongoing In place, ongoing In place, ongoing	2	3	● YELLOW	6	No Change
6	Integration & Engagement: Failure to fully engage staff and student community in supporting institutional sustainability commitments. Links to Education risk.	SVP	Head of Sustainable Development	Unable to adopt a genuinely shared responsibility for sustainability initiatives Necessary behaviour change is not secured Staff and students feel left out of process Aberdeen 2040 commitments are not achieved	2	3	● YELLOW	6	Treat	Role of Sustainable Development Committee in ensuring shared responsibility Consultation and communication mechanisms being considered (e.g. climate assemblies) Enhanced capacity for sustainability endorsed e.g. of behaviour change Review of baseline training opportunities Sustainability content in Management Programme	In place, ongoing In progress, first CA on 15 March 2023 In place, initial appointment made, ongoing In progress, paper to SDC on 9 March 2023 In place (since 2021/22)	2	2	● YELLOW	4	No Change

Strategic Risk Area:	Leadership and Governance
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No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement		
1	Lack of effective engagement with Scottish Government and/or SFC results in poor relations on key matters: outcome agreement; widening access; funding; additional oversight	Principal	US & COO	Financial impact Additional regulatory oversight Reputational damage - staff and student recruitment	2	4	●	AMBER	8	Treat	Regular and meaningful engagement with the Scottish Government and SFC to deliver transparent 2-way communication at Court and SMT level. Constant horizon-scanning to identify changes in political priorities and regulatory oversight combined with proactive measures, as appropriate/required.	In place In place	2	3	●	YELLOW	6	No Change
2	Delivery of the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy delayed due to staff workload and time pressures, or disrupted by external environment factors.	Principal	SVP	Reputational damage Financial impact Staff satisfaction	4	3	●	RED	12	Treat	Institutional risk management and mitigations in place across the university to ensure that adequate resource is in place in all key areas to take forward delivery, and to facilitate effective management of staff workloads; ultimately reducing any potential impacts on the 20-year strategy. For external factors, the University is engaged in horizon scanning on an ongoing basis, and undertakes scenario planning as part of its wider planning arrangements. As shown with Covid, the University has proven agile and effective in responding to disruptive changes in the external environment. All mitigations associated with this risk will be kept under review to ensure effectiveness.	In place In place In place	3	3	●	AMBER	9	No Change
3	Membership of Court not sufficiently diverse to effectively reflect and govern the University community	US & COO	Head of Governance & Executive Support	Lack of informed and constructive challenge to strategy development from perspective of diverse community. Reputational Damage	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	Treat	Regular review of diversity of Court Membership via Governance and Nominations Committee. Prioritisation of greater diversity in Court recruitment has been agreed and commitments made in Court' Statement of Intent on Diversity. Revised approach to ensure recruitment and development is aligned to Aberdeen 2040 strategy and charitable purposes.	In place or in progress	2	2	●	YELLOW	4	No Change

Strategic Risk Area:	AUSA and Other Third Parties
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No.	Risk (what could happen)	Risk Owner	Risk Manager	Consequences (how would this affect the University)	Likelihood	Impact	Unmitigated Score (gross)		Response	Mitigations (what is being/has been done to control the risk)	Status (in place/in progress/under consideration)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigated Score (net)		Risk Movement
1	Rocking Horse Nursery suffers from extended closure, reduced occupancy levels or failure to maintain access to national childcare schemes.	US & COO	CFO	Financial impact (Inability to pay the University Service Charge) Reputational impact as Nursery, despite status as a SCIO, viewed as the University Nursery (University seen as defacto trustee). Staff and student satisfaction and impact on ability to work/study in the absence of alternative childcare arrangements	2	2	YELLOW	4	Treat	RHN to change legal form from Trust to SCIO Close liaison with Finance Directorate maintained Formalisation of lease arrangements for use of the nursery building	Complete In place In progress	1	2	GREEN	2	Down
2	ASV financial sustainability challenged following a prolonged period of lockdown and actions already taken e.g. restricted opening, reduced staffing, and other adaptations to recover from periods of closure during pandemic.	US & COO	CFO	Financial impact - as a result of increased funding requirements on the JV partners (ACC and UoA). Reputational impact on University if unable to maintain the operation of national standard sports facilities. Staff and student experience impacted through reduced access to facilities contributing to health and wellbeing. As well as undermining potential recruitment lever.	4	3	RED	12	Treat	Strategic discussion between shareholders required to reassess the future ownership and investment direction. Short term proposal to increase revenue grant from UoA to offset reduction from ACC and to investigate capital contribution options.	Ongoing In place	4	3	RED	12	Up
3	AUSA sustainability	US & COO	AUSA Chief Executive	Financial impact - requiring additional support from the University	2	3	YELLOW	6	Treat	Strategic review commissioned by AUSA Board Active engagement on planning with UoA.	In progress In progress	3	2	YELLOW	6	No Change
4	Long term sustainability of third-party catering and other providers on campus (e.g. Kilau, Food Story, Subway, Blackwells, Starbucks etc) threatened by lower footfall and less trade post-pandemic, with potential to adversely affect the staff and student experience.	US & COO	DoEF	Financial impact (rental income >£10k per month) Staff and student experience (risk of loss of key campus providers) Other independent traders (e.g. Shelter Coffee, Machar Bar, JG Ross, Newsagent) may close with impact on staff and student amenities	4	2	AMBER	8	Treat	Regular contact with Head of Commercial & Catering to identify risks to individual business. Development of commercial strategy and estates visioning exercise to include consideration of "sticky campus" and changing staff/student needs and attractiveness of Old Aberdeen to visiting families and tourists.	In place Under consideration	2	2	YELLOW	4	No Change

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

1.1 **This paper provides a report on the key items of business considered by the Governance and Nominations Committee on 28 March 2023.** It is focused on items of business for approval, as detailed in section 3, however summaries of other item business considered are included (the detail of which is available through the agenda, papers and draft minutes of the meeting that are available within the [Decision Time](#) Resources area).

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	N/A	N/A
Further consideration/ approval required by	University Court	26 April 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

3.1 The Court is invited by the Committee to:

- 1) **Approve** the reappointment of two independent members for a period of one year with effect from 1 August 2023. Section 4 refers.
- 2) **Approve** the updated approach to Senior Governor and Governor performance reviews. Section 5 refers.
- 3) **Approve** the proposed approach to revising the Code of Practice on Conflicts of Interest and that this may be taken forward and approved by Senior Management as an executive/operational matter. Section 6 refers
- 4) **Note** the current or future vacancies on Court Committees and the opportunity to express an interest in these to the Governance and Nominations Committee. Section 7 refers.
- 5) **Note** the report of other items of business considered by the Committee and **approve** the Committee’s recommendation at section 8.2.

4. REAPPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF COURT

4.1 Following discussions between the Senior Governor and the members concerned and consideration of their contribution to the Court via the performance review process and the skills and experience requirements of the Court, the Committee recommends to Court:

- The reappointment of Iain Mackay for a period of 1 year from 1 August 2023 (current 2nd period of office concludes on 31 July 2023).
 - The reappointment of Lyndsay Menzies for a period of 1 year from 1 August 2023 (current 2nd period of office concludes on 31 July 2023)
- 4.2 The Committee noted that both reappointments would support continuity and important contributions from both members to the ongoing work of the Court, in particular, Lyndsay Menzies' expertise supporting the development of the University's brand and with Iain Mackay providing important continuity in the leadership of Remuneration Committee.
- 4.3 The Committee also noted with regret that Keith Anderson had advised it of his intention to retire from Court at the conclusion of his current period of office on 31 July 2023. The recruitment of independent members would now be for two vacancies arising during the course of 2023 at the end of July and end of September respectively, with a further three vacancies arising in July 2024.
- 4.4 The Committee also agreed that it should receive a paper on both the Scottish Code's requirements on periods of office and those of good governance practice.

5. SENIOR GOVERNOR AND GOVERNOR PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESSES

- 5.1 The Committee received and considered a paper which outlined a revised approach to undertaking Governor reviews across a standard format, with specific requirements for Court committee chairs and the Senior Governor.
- 5.2 The Committee welcomed the paper and endorsed the longer-term approach of aligning reviews of individual governors with those for Court and its committees. The Court is invited to approve the updated approach as detailed in **Appendix 1**

6. REVIEW OF CODE OF PRACTICE ON CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 6.1 The Committee received a paper outlining proposed amendments to the University's Code of Practice on Conflicts of Interest. The Code was introduced a number of years ago primarily in response to the increasing (and welcome) number of academics who were engaged in commercial activity (eg spin out company directorships) and in recognition that this would likely lead to some situations where a conflict of interest could exist and the need to manage these. At that time, the decision was made that the forerunner to the Governance and Nominations Committee should as a Court committee be assigned some responsibilities for oversight of the Code and to adjudicate on issues/individual cases where required.
- 6.2 As presently framed, the Code covers both declarations of interest from Court members and wider conflicts of interest matters pertaining to staff particularly those of a commercialisation of research nature. As such it includes issues which are staffing policy matters and, under the new governance arrangements, it is suggested should be subject to executive rather than Court oversight through the Governance and Nominations Committee. The majority of the Code relates to employees and only a relatively small part of the Code relates to declarations of interest by Court or Audit & Risk Committee members. The proposed revisions are, therefore, intended to ensure that the role of the Governance and Nominations Committee is focused on matters related to Court, Audit and Risk

Committee and Senior Management members and that wider staffing conflicts of interest matters are addressed at an executive/senior management level. The Committee's remit has already been amended to reflect this.

- 6.3 The Committee approved, for its part, the proposed changes and Court is invited to agree that these may be taken forward taken forward and approved by Senior Management as an executive/operational matter. The proposed approach is set out at **Appendix 2**.

7. MEMBERSHIP OF COURT COMMITTEES

- 7.1 The Committee noted that no major changes to the memberships for 2022/23 were considered necessary, these having been subject to a significant refresh in the past year. Court members are, however, invited to express an interest to the Governance and Nominaiton Committee in the current or future vacancies on committees detailed below. The Committee Chairs are also invited to discuss with the Senior Governor any future membership needs on their respective committees.
- 7.2 The Committee also noted and endorsed Anne Minto's nomination to a vacancy for one of the four positions for independent members of Court on the Business Committee of the General Council.

Vacancies on Court Standing Sub-Committees

Audit and Risk Committee

- Vacancy for an Independent Member of Court (from 1 August 2023)

Governance and Nominations – 2 vacancies

- Vacancy for the Chair (Independent Member) (from 30 September 2023)
- Vacancy for an Independent Member of Court

Commercialisation – 1 vacancy

- Vacancy for an Independent Member of Court (from 30 September 2023)

Thematic/Advisory Groups

Pensions Advisory Group

- Vacancy for an Independent Member of Court

Investment Committee

- Vacancy for an Independent Member of Finance & Resources (FRC) Committee – a call to relevant FRC members has been issued

Advisory Group on Collections Deaccessioning and Repatriation

Considers proposals for the repatriation and other deaccessioning from the University's Museums and Special Collections, making recommendations to the University Management Group and University Court.

- Vacancy for an Independent Member of Court

8. FURTHER BUSINESS CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

SECRETARIAT SUPPORT FOR REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

- 8.1 The Committee noted that the transfer of secretariat support for the Remuneration Committee to the Governance and Executive Support Team would commence from April 2023.

STATUS OF GOVERNANCE REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION

- 8.2 The Committee received and noted an update on the status of the action plan to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Externally Facilitated Review of Governance. The Committee also agreed, **subject to Court approval**, that a recommendation from the very first stage governance review of 2020 around a modernised meeting facility for Court should be removed from the action plan given current financial constraints and the approach to now meeting in different venues across campuses.

REPORT ON DIVERSITY OF COURT

- 8.3 The Committee received and noted a report on the diversity profile of Court to inform its monitoring of the diversity of the membership on Court's behalf. The report provided a comparison with the diversity profile of both the University's staff and student communities and with wider higher education sector data. The paper also provided the Committee with the Court's current Statement of Intent on Diversity for review.
- 8.4 Overall, comparison with the sector showed that Court had made good progress in creating a more diverse and inclusive membership, but that further progress was required, as had been previously identified by the Committee when considering the forthcoming round of independent member recruitment.

TRADE UNION BRIEFINGS AND SHARING OF COURT PAPERS

- 8.5 The Committee received a paper on a revised approach to the composition and other arrangements relating to the briefings and sharing of Court agenda papers with trade union representatives. The Committee broadly welcomed the proposals subject to some minor amendments being made but agreed it would be appropriate to engage with representatives of the Trade Unions prior to a recommendation being made to Court.

GOVERNANCE VISION

- 8.6 The Committee received and welcomed a paper for information outlining a broad vision for the development of the University's governance arrangements, reflecting the priorities of the recently established Governance and Executive Support Team

ANNUAL REPORT ON RESEARCH AWARDS/CONTRACTS AND DONATIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY

- 8.7 The Committee received and noted an annual assurance report on the sources of significant donations/pledges and grants/contracts made to the University including those from the Development Trust.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 9.1 Further information is available from Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Committee (email b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk).

11 April 2023 v1

Confidentiality Status: Part-Closed – Section 4 Closed until Approved by Court

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

GOVERNOR REVIEWS

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

- 1.1 This paper outlines a revised approach to undertaking Governor reviews. It details a standard format for all Governors, with specific requirements for committee chairs and the Senior Governor.
- 1.2 The aim of the updated approach detailed below is to:
- a) Provide a format that is suitably flexible to meet the needs of individual Governors while also being sufficiently robust to produce a review that is meaningful for individual Governors and Court as a collective;
 - b) Support arrangements that maximise the use of the limited time available of Court members;
 - c) Dovetail individual, Court and committee reviews to develop a more integrated approach that supports continuous development;
 - d) Ensure the feedback loop of relevant information is passed to the Governance and Nominations Committee and the Governance and Executive Support Team to inform their discussions on future re-appointments and action any development activity; and
 - e) Develop an approach that steadily builds confidence for the next externally facilitated review.
- 1.3 The approach detailed within this report is proposed to run for one year, with a view to transferring to a more integrated arrangement in academic year 2024/25 that dovetails with other governance developments that will link each activity to deliver a more rounded view of governance effectiveness and development needs.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Governance and Nominations Committee	28 March 2023
Further consideration/ approval required by	Court	26 April 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 3.1 The Court is invited to:
- 1) **Discuss** and **agree** the proposed approach for reviewing i) individual Governors, ii) committee chairs, iii) and the Senior Governor;

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 It is recognised good practice for all types of governing bodies to undertake regular externally facilitated and internally-led effectiveness reviews of individuals, committees and the main decision-making forum; in this instance, the University Court.
- 4.2 There are various reasons for undertaking regular reviews including:
- Identifying any development opportunities for individuals;
 - Reflecting on current practices to: identify the ongoing effective contributions of individuals; where, appropriate to highlight where improvements could be made; and being offered constructive feedback on performance;
 - Ensuring that the governance arrangements in place to support Court and Governors are effective, robust and proportionate; and
 - Informing the process of re-appointment of an individual where their tenure may be up for renewal.
- 4.3 In addition, the current version of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance 2017 (the Code) states:
- Members' individual contributions are expected to be reviewed regularly, at a minimum every two years, through a standardised process with the active involvement of the member concerned (para. 41).*

It is a condition of Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funding that the University adhere to the Code.

- 4.4 By undertaking an annual, structured, review Governors will become familiar to the concept and practice and view the arrangement as a tool to identify ongoing development opportunities by which to maximise their effectiveness on Court and in committees, for the benefit of the University.

5 CURRENT PROCESS

- 5.1 The existing process for Governors, other than the Senior Governor, was introduced in April 2022 and, with all Governor reviews concluded in January 2023, it is timely to review its operation. Currently, allocated time (in terms of a number of weeks assigned to the review of members of a particular committee) is dedicated to individual Governor reviews, spread across the academic year. The Senior Governor leads on the reviews for Governors, asking a set of questions of each Governor and inviting them to reflect on their performance and development needs. The questions broadly relate to:
- Understanding of role on of a charity trustees, the purpose of Court/committees and what is expected of an individual in their role;
 - The effectiveness of contributions to Court/committees over the previous 12 months;
 - Interests and commitments in terms of Court/committee activity (to identify interests and skills that may be of use to standing committees or ad hoc activity);

- Training and development opportunities and needs (including information needs and the quality of information presented to Court/committee);
 - For relevant Governors, discussion of their thoughts on reappointment; and
 - Committee chairs and the Senior Independent Member are invited to reflect on their role and contributions in leading committees or being the Senior Independent Member and to identify any development opportunities to support them in their role.
- 5.2 The Senior Governor leads on the review of the Principal, as the most senior executive staff member within the University. Good practice is for the most senior executive member on a governing body to also be reviewed in both their management and governance functions: that is their performance is reviewed as a charity trustee and as the chief executive (or equivalent, in this case the Principal).
- 5.3 The Senior Independent Member leads on the review of the Senior Governor. The feedback from that review informs Court discussions related to the re-appointment of the Senior Governor or any ongoing development activity identified to support the Senior Governor in that role.
- 5.4 It is recognised that Governors nominated by AUSA are subject to a term of one year, for a maximum of two years. As with other Governors, these individuals should also be given the same opportunity to reflect on their performance, and to be offered ongoing support and development activity. For that reason, a similar approach is proposed, caveated with the need to ensure that review activity is timely given the limited tenure.
- 5.5 There are a number of strengths and weaknesses attached to the current arrangements for Governor review. The revised approach aims to:
- Reduce inconsistencies in the approaches taken for different types of Governor which may make it hard to compare experiences and processes across the whole of Court;
 - Deliver a degree of flexibility to the process, to mitigate against any movements between committees within the academic year and to maximise the limited time of Court members (whether staff, otherwise remunerated, or volunteers);
 - Support the timely feedback to individual Governors, especially the Senior Governor, and the sharing of key insights to the Governance and Executive Support Team which could aid the improvement of governance and support activity;
 - Offer every Governor the same opportunity to reflect on their performance and identify opportunities for development (personal and professional) in a timely manner; and
 - Build confidence in Court members to maximise the benefit of such arrangements, especially when the time comes for an externally-facilitated review.
- 5.6 This paper proposes a modified approach that caters for the specific needs of:
- i) individual Governors; ii) committee chairs; and iii) the Senior Governor. It is divided into three parts to reflect the different types of Governor mentioned

above, but each approach will build upon the basic framework outlined for individual Governors (unless otherwise differentiated). The final section details other work that is being undertaken to support Court and governance effectiveness and how the proposed approach to Governor reviews dovetails with that activity to develop a more holistic approach to reviewing effectiveness.

6. INDIVIDUAL GOVERNOR REVIEWS

- 6.1 The Senior Governor will continue to lead on the review of all the Court members, including the Principal. Appendix A provides a number of suggested questions that could inform that conversation.
- 6.2 The Senior Governor currently meets quarterly with all Governors. One of these sessions is dedicated to having a conversation about the performance of the individual Governor.
- 6.3 It is proposed that the framework for those conversations are broadened to include discussions of the following themes:
 - Understanding of the role of Court and that of Governor and charity trustee;
 - Leadership qualities and competence (Court, committees, SMT);
 - Strategic decision-making and oversight;
 - Understanding and informing strategic risk discussions;
 - Robust decision-making (demonstrating challenge); and
 - Development, support and succession planning.
- 6.4 The Senior Governor will provide feedback (either verbally or by email) to the Governance and Executive Support Team on general themes emerging from each discussion with individual Governors. This will be used to improve induction and development processes, identify collective training needs and any other matters that could better support Governors to fulfil their legal and ethical duties. Specific information relating to the performance of each individual Governor will not be communicated to the Governance and Executive Support Team so as not to undermine the confidential nature of such discussions.
- 6.5 Information acquired as part of the review process will be used to inform the Governance and Nominations Committee in their work relating to their remit, especially in the case of Governor re-appointments. The Committee recently agreed that the reappointment of independent members should be informed by:
 - The contribution of the member to the Court as assessed by the proposed Annual Performance Review process;
 - The skills and experience requirements of the Court and the members' respective contributions to these; and
 - The wishes of the members concerned following discussion with the Senior Governor.
- 6.6 The annual report and accounts and the University website will provide an overview of the process taken to review Governors. The Governance and Executive Support Team will maintain a Court development plan that will be revised in light of general feedback from individual reviews and other activity

assessing the effectiveness of Court and governance arrangements more broadly.

7. COMMITTEE CHAIR REVIEWS

7.1 The Senior Governor will lead on the review of the committee chairs. These conversations will take place in a similar vein to that detailed in section 6. There will be a specific theme asking the chairs to reflect on their performance as a committee chair and to identify any development activity required to help them be effective as a chair. Specific questions on the performance of committee chairs are detailed in Appendix A for the Committee to **review** and **agree**.

7.2 The Senior Governor will be required to provide a verbal report on the effectiveness of committee chairs to the Governance and Nominations Committee when it reviews the composition and effectiveness of Court committees.

8. REVIEW OF THE SENIOR GOVERNOR

8.1 The Senior Governor review will be led by the Senior Independent Member. The review will take place in one meeting to be concluded before the summer recess.

8.2 Currently, the Senior Governor is asked to reflect on:

- How they lead on Court maturity and effectiveness;
- Their leadership role;
- Their ambassadorial role; and
- Any further development opportunities they would be interested in accessing.

8.3 It is proposed that the themes to be covered by Senior Governor, in conversation with the Senior Independent Member, reflect those detailed in 6.3. However, there should be a specific focus on how the Senior Governor manages the key relationship with the Principal. Suggested questions are contained in Appendix A.

8.4 In advance of the meeting between the Senior Governor and the Senior Independent Member, the Senior Governor will provide written responses to the agreed questions. That information will be shared with fellow Governors and the Senior Independent Member will identify the general themes from within the feedback provided by the wider Court members. This will form the basis of the discussion between the Senior Independent Member and the Senior Governor.

8.5 The Senior Independent Member will produce a written report to Court, in closed session, to frame the outcome of the various conversations held to inform the review of the Senior Governor. The Senior Governor will have the right to review that draft and provide additional information ahead of circulation to Court. The Senior Independent Member should relay the outcome of the Court discussion and any agreed action(s) to the Senior Governor within 14 calendar days of the Court meeting.

9. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

9.1 In addition to the revised approach to Governor reviews, the Governance and Executive Support Team are working on several other governance development tools to support Court and the University in its commitment to continuous governance improvement. Each activity and tool should interlink and support each other to deliver a holistic approach to governance developments. This should mean that the approach to reviewing Governors will change in AY 2024/25 to reflect the broader developments and to produce a more integrated approach to different governance activity that supports Court, committees, individuals and the University.

9.2 In brief, other governance activity that will eventually feed into individual and collective reviews include:

- An annual online governance questionnaire that will produce a benchmark for assessing governance developments and effectiveness. The information captured will influence conversations and actions pertaining to:
 - Governor reviews;
 - committee effectiveness and composition;
 - the quality and frequency of meetings;
 - the degree to which the information needs of Court and its committees are being met (quality and timeliness of papers etc.); and
 - the ongoing need to deliver good governance in response to internal and external challenges.
- Refining the skills audit process (the aforementioned questionnaire and skills matrix aligned to Aberdeen 2040) that links specific skills, competencies and attributes to the delivery of agreed strategic, charitable, educational and other goals. This will be used to support Court and committee recruitment, self-reflection and development opportunities.
- The introduction of a Court maturity matrix that can be used to support the development of Court, committee and other governance areas in the aim of continuous improvement (this matrix will be shared with the Committee in due course). It is intended that this approach will be used in Governor, Court and Committee reviews from AY 2024/25 to identify areas requiring greater support and to plot governance progress over several years. A draft of this document will be presented to the Governance and Nominations Committee as part of the deep dive discussion in May.
- An internal review of Court by the Head of Governance and Executive Support, subject to the Committee's approval. This will involve Court being observed in its June meeting with feedback provided to the Senior Governor on areas relating to:
 - quality and frequency of contributions by Governors in the meeting observed;
 - verbal and non-verbal communication observed;
 - general behaviours exhibited; and
 - time management.

An external review will be undertaken by an independent and experienced third-party every three years.

- A review of the effectiveness of Court and its committees (as mentioned above), including the quality of the information presented and discussed.

9.3 All of these activities will support a better understanding of the governance needs of the University and will shape the work of the Governance and Executive Support Team in ensuring the governance arrangements are effective, robust, efficient and proportionate for the success of the University.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

10.1 Further information is available from Mr Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Court (b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk) or Louise Thomson, Head of Governance and Executive Support (louise.thomson@abdn.ac.uk)

11 April 2023 Confidentiality Status: Open

APPENDIX A: EXAMPLES OF GOVERNOR REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following offers suggestions as to the questions that could be included in the review of the different Governors on Court – it is not anticipated that every question is addressed, but that the most pertinent are identified for inclusion.

The questions are grouped by the six themes identified in 6.3 of the report:

- Understanding of the role of Court and that of Governor and charity trustee;
- Leadership qualities and competence (Court, committees, SMT);
- Strategic-decision making and oversight;
- Understanding and informing strategic risk discussions;
- Robust decision-making (demonstrating challenge); and
- Development, support and succession planning.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE OF COURT AND THAT OF GOVERNOR AND CHARITY TRUSTEE

1. How comfortable are you in your understanding of the role of charity trustee and the legal, regulatory and funding environment in which the University operates?
2. What is your role on Court and how does that support the University's charitable and educational purposes?

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND COMPETENCE (COURT, COMMITTEES, SMT)

3. To what extent does your experience of Court mirror what was described in recruitment material, role descriptions and induction? What could be improved to make the information provided better reflect the reality of your experience?
4. What area of Court/Committee activity do you think you contribute to significantly? In what way?
5. How do you see your role on Court developing over your tenure?
6. How do you contribute to committee activity?

STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING AND OVERSIGHT

7. How do you deploy your skills, competencies and aptitudes to supporting the achievement of Aberdeen 2040?
8. How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the wider operating environment of the University? Where does that knowledge come from?
9. To what extent do you believe you have contributed to the strategic oversight of the University? In what ways?

UNDERSTANDING AND INFORMING STRATEGIC RISK DISCUSSIONS

10. What is your understanding of the University's appetite for risk?

11. What do you understand to be the difference between strategic risk and risk appetite?

12. What do you think are the top five strategic risks to the University?

13. What keeps you awake at night in terms of the University's activities?

14. What additional training on risk would be helpful to you in fulfilling your role?

ROBUST DECISION-MAKING

15. In what way do you think you contribute to robust decision-making?

16. How do you prepare for meetings?

DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

17. What skills, experience, competencies and aptitudes do you bring that are useful to the work of Court?

18. How effective are you as a Governor? What would help you be more effective?

19. Are there any development opportunities you would welcome as an individual or for Court collectively? What are they?

20. Do you enjoy serving on the Court, and why?

21. Question for new appointments: Was your induction programme suitably tailored to your needs? What could be improved for you, and the Court collectively?

22. Question for re-appointment discussion: What could you contribute to the work of Court if re-appointed for a further term?

23. Question for re-appointment discussion: What would be the benefits to the University of re-appointing you for a further term?

COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

24. Committee chair question: In what way have you, as chair of XX committee, improved the work of the committee and its oversight support to Court?

25. Committee chair question: What would you like to develop as part of your chair commitments?

26. Committee chair question: How would you describe your role?

27. Question to committee members: Do you think you are an effective member of XXX committee? How is that effectiveness manifested?

28. Question to committee members in relation to committee chairs: How would you describe the effectiveness of the chair of XXX committee?

SENIOR GOVERNOR

In addition to the questions identified above, the Committee may agree that one or more of the following questions are appropriate ask the Senior Governor.

29. Senior Governor question: In what way has your leadership improved the work of Court (and committees)?

30. Senior Governor question: Describe your working relationship with the Principal (and other members of SMT)?

31. Senior Governor question: How would you describe your activity in building relationships with key stakeholders: those that directly benefit from the University and its activities (e.g. students and staff) and those that influence or are impacted by its activities (funders, regulators, other universities, the wider University community)? What would be your key achievement in building stakeholder relations and meaningful engagement?

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

**CODE OF PRACTICE ON CONFLICTS OF INTEREST IN RESEARCH AND
COMMERCIALISATION**

INTRODUCTION

The University of Aberdeen believes that the establishment of links between its employees and outside bodies – whether government departments, commerce, industry, or others – is not only in the public interest but also benefits the University and the individuals concerned. However, it is possible that such links may give rise to potential conflicts of interest. The following guidelines are provided to help individuals assess whether or not proposed activities could cause a conflict of interest and to outline the procedure for disclosure of any perceived or potential conflict.

This guidance -

- Assists in identifying conflicts of interest in research, knowledge exchange commercialisation
- Sets out how and to whom such conflicts of interest should be disclosed
- Provides examples on how conflicts of interests may be mitigated/resolved to protect the University and its employees

It applies to all employees of the University of Aberdeen engaged in research, including the delivery of research and knowledge exchange projects and the support of research and knowledge exchange activities, facilities and resources. It does not apply to conflicts of interest arising out of close or intimate relationships between staff and students or between members of staff which are covered by the policies referenced below.

It is focused solely on conflicts of interest arising out of personal or private interests that have a direct bearing on research or knowledge exchange activities undertaken as part of an employee's contractual duties. The University of Aberdeen is obliged to deal with issues raised under this guidance in a fair, prompt, reasonable and transparent way, paying due attention to the effects of any actions on an employee's work, career and reputation.

Related policies: Replaces the Code of Practice on Conflicts of Interests (2002)
Recruitment and Selection of Staff (2022)
Staffing Policy: Staff and Students Conflicts (2006, last revised 2017)
Staffing Policy: Staff Relationships (2008, last revised 2017)

This guidance does not affect any statutory rights under the institutional Whistleblowing Policy or any ethical considerations arising from client confidentiality.

GUIDELINES AS TO CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The University of Aberdeen recognises that many of its employees maintain close links with outside organisations, or are closely associated through friends and family with those who are so linked. Such links are often beneficial to both the University and the employees, and generally encouraged as part of our wider engagement with stakeholders in research and knowledge exchange activities.

In cases where such links, current, past or future, give rise to conflicts of interest, this guidance sets out steps and actions to be taken to address or mitigate them.

A conflict of interest exists where the decision making or judgement of an employee may be influenced by actual or potential benefit or advantage that could be obtained from it, for example (list is not exhaustive):

- When deciding whether to award a contract or other favourable terms for a company in which they, or a friend or a relative, have a financial interest;
- Obtaining financial or other benefit for themselves, a friend or relative in return for providing advantage or potential advantage;
- When disclosing confidential or commercially sensitive information to third parties in return for financial or non-financial benefit;
- Using institutional resources, information or facilities obtained through University employment for financial or non-financial benefit for themselves or a friend or relative;
- When compromising research objectivity or integrity (including the delaying or prevention of publication) in return for financial or non-financial benefit.
- Involvement in externally funded activity which might infringe the right of a student, engaged in the activity, to complete the degree for which he or she is registered, and/or to publish freely his or her findings (except in the circumstances referred to in sub- paragraph b above) or where a supervisor is also a shareholder or director of the company sponsoring the project financial interest held by an individual (or by his or her immediate relative/s or household member/s) in an external enterprise, engaged in activities closely related to that individual's line of research in the university. Examples of such interests are paid consultancies, paid service on a board of directors or advisory board, or equity holdings in or royalty income from the enterprise. The existence of such an interest does not necessarily imply conflict, but may give an appearance of conflict, and should be declared (as set out in more detail below).
- A personal involvement in any company or commercial enterprise which is in a contractual relationship with the University, or which is in the process of negotiating a contract with the University, where the employee has been concerned or connected with placing or negotiating the contract in question or with the research or other activity which the contract might cover

Where a conflict of interest exists, it will need to be disclosed, whether actual, perceived or potential. The test to be applied is whether a reasonable observer would conclude that, in the given circumstances, an employee's ability to fulfil their duties and make decisions is influenced by private or personal interests. A perceived conflict of interest is one which a reasonable person would consider likely to compromise

objectivity. A potential conflict is a situation which could develop into an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

In addition, there are certain circumstances which can give rise to conflicts that require approvals and requirements are set out below.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORSHIPS AND APPOINTMENTS

It is University policy that no member of staff shall hold any executive directorship or appointment without the express approval of the [Start up and Spin out Panel] (SUSOP) and their Head of School/Directorate. Approval for such directorships may be given in the following circumstances:

- Where a member of staff has satisfied SUSOP that the holding of an executive directorship is or will be necessary to satisfy the requirements of a recognised stock exchange for the listing of scientific, research-based companies; and/or
- Where SUSOP is satisfied that approval will be justified on other grounds, eg a prerequisite for investment.

Consent will be given only if SUSOP is satisfied that the appointment will comply with the general conditions relating to the holding of other appointments.

For the purpose of this guidance, an executive directorship is one involving an active management role, whether or not including research, in the company concerned.

HOLDING OF OFFICES AND SHARES BY MEMBERS OF STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITY

No member of staff shall, without permission of SUSOP, serve in a personal capacity as a director or other officer or employee or agent or sub-contractor of a company or commercial enterprise, the establishment of which arose out of or was connected with work done in the University, or any company or commercial enterprise in a contractual relationship with the University, where the member of staff was concerned or connected with placing or negotiating the contract in question.

Any member of staff nominated by the University to serve as a director or other officer of a company shall be deemed to accept the nomination in the discharge of his or her duties as an employee of the University. Any director's fee or other emolument shall normally be accepted on behalf of the University and applied to University purposes.

No member of staff, without permission of SUSOP, shall hold any shares in a company, the establishment of which arose out of or was connected with work done in the University, or any company in a contractual relationship with the University, where the member of staff was concerned or connected with placing or negotiating the contract in question, unless such shares have been acquired following the listing of the company on a recognised stock exchange.

SUSOP shall have powers to vary these requirements and shall report any such variances to the Senior Management Team (SMT).

DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All conflicts of interest, whether actual, perceived or potential, must be disclosed. In the vast majority of cases, disclosure should be made to [line manager or Head of School/Directorate]. Where this is not possible, disclosure must be made to [V-P Research or V-P Regional Engagement].

Disclosure should be made in writing and provide sufficient information to enable the person to whom disclosure is made to judge whether a conflict of interest exists, what the nature of that conflict is (including whether actual, perceived or potential), whether the links are current, past or in the future, whether conflict of interest is in relation to the employee, or their friend(s) or relative(s). This includes a description of the research or knowledge exchange activities involved, the nature of the links, and, where appropriate, details of external funders and other partners or parties to the project. It should then be discussed with appropriate senior officer(s), and the course of action agreed be communicated, in writing, to the employee.

Employees disclosing a conflict of interest must not take any further part in the decision making or activity that gave rise to the conflict of interest until a final or interim resolution has been agreed.

The confidentiality of disclosures will be respected as far as possible, and shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Where a conflict of interest ceases to exist, for example because links to an outside organisations have come to an end, the employee must inform their line manager/Head of School as appropriate.

Research & Innovation shall manage a central register of conflicts of interest which records all disclosures and their resolution.

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All efforts must be made to agree a resolution of a conflict of interest, seeking advice from appropriate professional services colleagues or senior colleagues as appropriate. Where it is agreed that a conflict of interest exists and an agreement cannot be reached within [one] week of disclosure, the person to whom the conflict of interest was disclosed, together with the Head of School or other appropriate senior officer may reach an interim conclusion

- For the employee to cease all involvement in the activity that gave rise to the conflict of interest; or
- For the employee to continue their involvement in the activity with appropriate modifications

Until a final resolution has been agreed.

The default resolution for conflicts of interest is the cessation of all activities in question, and where a resolution cannot be agreed, the default applies. Other possible resolutions include (list is not exhaustive):

- disclosure of all pertinent information to other relevant individuals;
- exclusion from, or third party review of, any decision-making/authorisation;

- revisions to the research proposal or other plans;
- reduction of involvement in the activity;
- close monitoring of the activity;
- termination of involvement by others (e.g. a relative or friend) in the activity;
- divestiture of relevant personal interests; and/or
- reimbursement by the employee to the University for indirect costs or for the use of facilities.

Where any modifications of involvement in an activity have a substantial impact on an employee's contractual obligations to the University, advice from an HR adviser must be sought.

A record of all declarations made under these guidelines shall be maintained by Research & Innovation. In addition to declarations made from time to time under the above procedure, and members of staff shall be required to provide updated information on request.

FAILURE TO DISCLOSE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Failure to disclose an actual or perceived conflict of interest, or to remain involved in breach of an agreed resolution or interim resolution, may result in disciplinary action and serious cases could result in dismissal. In determining whether disciplinary action is appropriate, consideration will be given to the extent to which the employee could reasonably have been aware of the actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest and/or made a reasonable decision not to declare it.

Title	Guidance on Conflicts of Interest in Research and Knowledge Exchange Activities
Author / Creator	Marlis Barraclough
Owner	Research & Innovation
Date published / approved	
Version	1
Date for Next Review	2 years after first approval
Audience	All staff and students
Related	Replaces Code of Practice on Conflicts of Interests (2002) Recruitment and Selection of Staff (2022) Staffing Policy: Staff and Students Conflicts (2006, last revised 2017) Staffing Policy: Staff Relationships (2008, last revised 2017)
Subject / Description	Guidance on how to identify and resolve actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest related to research and knowledge exchange activities
Equality Impact Assessment	
Section	Research & Innovation
Theme	Research Governance
Keywords	Conflict of interest

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COURT
REMUNERATION COMMITTEE REPORT

1 Purpose of the Paper

- 1.1 This paper reports to Court on the main items of business discussed at the meeting of the Remuneration Committee on 20 March 2023.
- 1.2 The report includes one item for formal noting by Court – the implementation of the Senior Staff Pay Policy for 2023.

2 Previous Consideration By /Further Consideration Required

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered by	n/a	n/a
Further consideration required by	University Court	26 April 2023

3 Recommended Action

- 3.1 The Court is invited to:
- (i) Formally note the implementation of the Senior Staff Pay Policy in 2023.

4 Professorial Pay

- 4.1 The Committee discussed and approved Senior Management proposals to develop an extension to the Grade 9 pay spine, accessible to all staff through the Senior Staff Pay process, subject to assurance on the appropriateness of the spine-point steps and robust data analysis to support assessment of progress. The approach replaces previous proposals to introduce Professorial Banding given, identified through due diligence, the potential for negative impacts on the gender pay gap during implementation as individuals are initially assigned into the structure.
- 4.2 It was recognised that the extension to the pay spine would not in itself solve gender pay gap issues but would improve transparency and will be supported by; the mentoring and coaching of individuals, development of a market forces policy, alignment of salary review process with new Academic Promotion framework and action at recruitment to support diversity. The Committee, while recognising the Aberdeen 2040 commitment, looked to SMT to set a more urgent target to remove the gender pay gap.

5 Senior Staff Pay Policy 2023

- 5.1 Remuneration Committee approved a budget of £100,000 for the 2023 Senior Staff Pay exercise, with the restriction of the pool of eligible staff to those earning less than 3 times the University average salary (£45,932). The proposal recognises that no Senior Staff Pay exercise was conducted in 2022, because of the late initiation of the 2021 round, and the current financial position of the University. No changes to the Pay Policy itself were proposed. The policy requires exceptional performance to be demonstrated above the level commensurate with the current level of remuneration, supported by national benchmarking of professional services salaries and the criteria for academic promotions.
- 5.2 The Committee approved the 2023 exercise as proposed.

6 Gender Pay Gap

- 6.1 The Committee received the latest information in relation to the Gender Pay Gap, which identified a further reduction in the pay gaps for professors, both recently promoted and experienced staff. The Committee welcomed the effective data analysis underlying the paper and that the movement reflected both the promotions exercise and the targeted Senior Staff pay exercise.

7 Head of School Allowance

- 7.1 The Committee approved an increase to the Head of School allowance for the Business School, in recognition of the scale of growth of the School. At present, a standard allowance is paid to all Heads of School. The Committee noted that a similar argument would need to be considered in relation to the Head of School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition if a future post holder was to be employed on a standard rather than clinical contract.

8 Severance Policy Update

- 8.1 Remuneration Committee has oversight of severance agreements and considered information on 4 settlements reached in the previous 12 months. In all cases the settlements were within the authority delegated to the Executive. The most recently settled being a long-standing case (4 years) involving several employment tribunal applications and significant legal costs. It was confirmed that a breakdown of trust and confidence contributed in some of the cases but that a range of personal circumstance factors were also evident.

9. Further Information

- 9.1 Further information is available from Tracey Slaven, University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer tracey.slaven@abdn.ac.uk

12 April 2023

Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

FINANCE AND RESOURCING COMMITTEE REPORT**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

1.1. This paper is provided to University Court for information as an overview of the business conducted by the Finance and Resourcing Committee at its meeting on 13 April 2023, to provide an overview of the assurances obtained, and for onward noting of the specific items of business, as outlined in section 3 below. The agenda, papers and draft minutes of the meeting are available within the [Decision Time](#) Resources area for members of Court.

2. Previous Consideration By /Further Approval Required

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	N/A	
Further consideration/ approval required by	N/A	

3. Recommended Action

3.1 The Finance and Resourcing Committee met on 13 April 2023 in an online meeting via Microsoft Teams. University Court is invited to:

- **Note** the following items approved by the Committee via its delegated authority:
 - The project proposal and business case for the Hillhead Electrical Infrastructure (HEI) Project (item 6.3 refers).
 - The amended planning assumptions for the three-year period 2023-24 to 2025-26 (items 8.3 – 8.4 refer).
 - The proposed funding settlement for Aberdeen Sports Village (ASV) for 2023-24, and its consultation on the wider strategic positioning in relation to the joint venture (items 8.8 – 8.9 refer).
- **Note** the Committee's consideration and discussion of the following matters:
 - Formal noting of the business conducted via circulation since its last meeting in February 2023 (items 4.1 – 4.3 refer):
 - Approval via circulation on 27 February 2023 of proposals for an 8% increase in student accommodation rents.
 - Endorsement via circulation on 27 February 2023 of the business case and capital proposal for the Hillhead Heating Infrastructure Project, and Court's subsequent approval of the Project for implementation at its meeting on 1 March 2023.

- Receipt and comment via circulation on 24 March 2023 of the University's Financial Forecast Update to the SFC, prior to its submission to the SFC on 31 March.
- An update from the Principal on the Higher Education sector and University developments (item 5.1 refers).
- A presentation from the Director of Estates & Facilities to outline the approach to the development of the University's forward Estates Strategy and associated Capital Plan (item 6.1 refers) .
- An update on the current status of the King's and Johnston capital projects (item 6.2 refers).
- The proposed process for the conduct of the Committee's formal review of effectiveness in June 2023, following its first year of operation (item 7.1 refers).
- An update on the student population following the intake in January 2023, and associated budgetary implications (items 8.1 – 8.2 refer).
- The Management Accounts for February 2023 (item 8.5 refers).
- An update on USS Pension covenant compliance, noting that no adverse reporting was required (item 8.6 refers).
- An update on the conduct and key findings of the externally commissioned Post-Implementation Review (PIR) on outcomes from the delivery of the Qatar partnership, and ongoing negotiations between the University and Al Faleh Group (AFG) regarding the arrangements within the partnership (item 8.7 refers).
- The current financial sustainability risks for the University, as contained within the institutional Strategic Risk Register (item 8.10 refers).
- An update from the Investment Committee in relation to the University's endowment, Development Trust and Northern College portfolios and recent changes to the composition and membership of the Investment Committee (item 9.1 refers).

4. MATTERS ARISING

Student Rent Increase

- 4.1. The Committee formally noted its approval via circulation on 27 February 2023 of a rent increase of 8% across all student accommodation.

Hillhead Heating Infrastructure Project

- 4.2. The Committee formally noted its approval via circulation on 27 February 2023 of the business case and capital proposal for the Hillhead Heating Infrastructure Project, and Court's subsequent approval of the proposal at its meeting on 1 March 2023 on the recommendation of FRC.

SFC Financial Forecast Update

- 4.3. The Committee formally noted its consideration and noting via circulation on 24 March 2023 of the University's Financial Forecast Update, which was subsequently submitted to the SFC at the deadline of 31 March, following approval by the Senior Management Team on 23 March.

5. PRINCIPAL'S INTRODUCTION

5.1. The Committee noted the update on the Higher Education (HE) sector and University developments, as outlined within the paper. The following elements were highlighted by the Principal for the Committee's specific attention:

- Financial Position;
- Industrial Relations and renewed potential for strike action, including a marking and assessment boycott;
- King's and Johnston Projects.

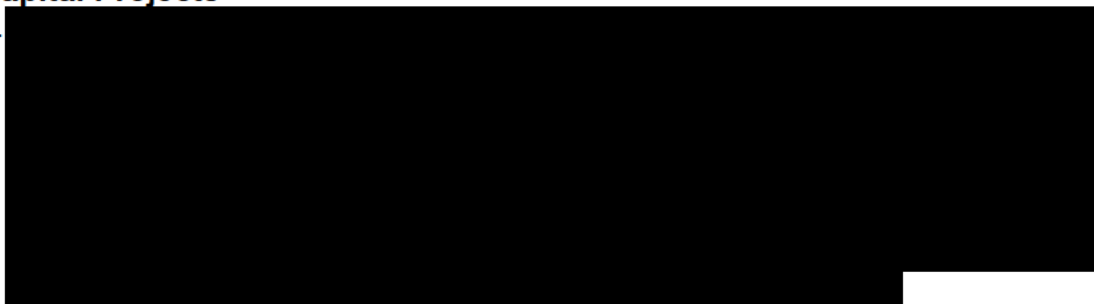
6. ESTATES & FACILITIES

Deep-dive Presentation

6.1. The Director of Estates and Facilities joined the meeting to deliver a presentation on the approach to the development of the University's forward Estates Strategy and associated Capital Plan.

Capital Projects

6.2.



Hillhead Electrical Infrastructure Project

6.3. The Committee approved a proposal and business case for the Hillhead Electrical Infrastructure (HEI) Project under its delegated authority for the approval of capital spend between £1m and £5m in value, with the estimated cost being £1.1m.

7. COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE: END OF YEAR REVIEW

7.1 The Committee endorsed the proposed process for its annual review of effectiveness in June 2023 following its first year of operation, supplemented by an observation of the Committee's June meeting by the Head of Governance.

8. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Student Population Report and Budgetary Impact 2022-23

8.1. The Chief Financial Officer and Director of Planning presented an update on the student population, following the last reporting to the Committee in October 2022, to outline the movements in the overall student population following the intake in January 2023. An update was also provided on student recruitment for September 2023.

8.2. The budgetary implications were noted as follows:

- The 2022/23 student recruitment cycle had delivered continuing growth in overall gross fee income. At the February 2023 Snapshot 3 on Student Loads and Fees, total gross tuition fee income was £110.3m, representing an increase of £8.3m (8% growth) on the end year position in 2022 of £102m. This was due to the increase in tuition fee rates for 2022/23 as the overall total student population fell by 195 Full Time Equivalent (FTE).
- However, the (2022/23) Snapshot 3 forecast also identified a shortfall of £14.1m against the budget target. The majority of the gross fee shortfall (65%) had arisen against the International Post-graduate Taught (PGT) budget target and this accounted for £9.1m of the total shortfall.
- The overall International PGT population for 2022/23 would be 1,659 FTEs; this was 50 FTEs lower than the final figures (at Snapshot 5) for 2021/22. However, collectively the Schools had budgeted to increase this population category to 2,006 FTEs.

Amended Planning Assumptions 2023-24 to 2025-26

8.3. The Committee received and approved updated three-year planning assumptions underpinning the financial plans for the years 2023-24 to 2025-26.

8.4. The Committee noted its concern at the challenging financial context and in particular that:

- The updated planning assumptions may be subject to further change (for example for amendments to pay awards or Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funding for the interim or final funding announcements).
- The assumptions in relation to academic fee income, pay awards and utility costs would require significant revision from the planning assumptions previously agreed for 2023-24 to 2025-26 due to the lessons learned on student intake in 2022-23 and pressures in the external and economic environment.
- It was recommended that as part of the three-year budget plan, scenario planning on PGT international tuition fees would be presented to FRC and Court. The budget as agreed by Schools would be flexed by various percentage increases and decreases in PGT international student fees with the impact on agents' fees and fee discounts calculated to provide scenarios for the overall institutional deficit position. These scenarios would be stress tested by the Student Recruitment team to ensure that the overall institutional projected FTEs were in line with their expectation of the University's market placement, the wider opportunities, and were reasonable based on the latest applications and offers data (including domicile of applicants).
- A contingency budget would be required for potential non-achievement of non-controlled SFC funded places due to the underachievement in 2022-23, and lower sector wide and University UCAS application levels for 2023-24.
- The University's main strategic objective was to ensure that growth in student tuition fee income would recover in 2023-24 and future years, combined with growth in research income and commercial income. However, as long as the inherent wider economic and sector challenges persisted, it was likely the

University may take longer to return to a surplus position. This would be clearer when the 2023-24 budget was complete.

Chief Financial Officer's Report

Management accounts (MMR) for February 2023

- 8.5. The Committee received and noted the management accounts for February 2023.

Update on USS Pension Covenant Compliance

- 8.6. The Committee received a report on the University's 2021-22 debt monitoring results and compliance against the USS pension covenants, noting that no adverse reporting to USS Trustees was required. This is included as a separate item on today's Court agenda.

Update on Qatar Partnership

- 8.7.



Aberdeen Sports Village (ASV)

- 8.8 The Committee received the proposed funding settlement for Aberdeen Sports Village (ASV) for 2023-24 and approved the proposal for a funding uplift of £20,000 for 2023-24 to £864,000.

- 8.9



Risk Register

- 8.10 The Committee received and noted the current position with regard to financial sustainability risks, as outlined within the updated Strategic Risk Register, which had been updated to reflect the current financial situation including the removal of the potential financial impact of the pandemic, rewording around inflation risk and detail around mitigations in respect of business-critical projects.

9 INVESTMENTS

- 9.1 The Chief Financial Officer provided an update from the Investment Committee in relation to the University Endowment, Development Trust and Northern College portfolios and an update on recent changes to the composition and membership of the Investment Committee.

10 FURTHER INFORMATION

10.1 Further information is available from Jan Whitfield, Clerk to the Finance and Resourcing Committee, janine.whitfield@abdn.ac.uk

Confidentiality Status: Sections 6.2, 8.7 and 8.9 contain commercially sensitive information and should remain closed.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

PENSIONS ADVISORY GROUP REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

- 1.1 This paper reports to Court on the main items of business discussed at the meeting of the Pensions Advisory Group of 5 April 2023. The agenda, papers and draft minutes are available within the [Decision Time Resources](#) area for members of Court.
- 1.2 The report includes one item for approval by Court – proposed amendments to the Group’s Remit and Terms of Reference. The report also advises Court of the Group’s consideration by circulation of a technical consultation on a change to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) rules.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER CONSIDERATION REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered by	n/a	n/a
Further consideration required by	University Court	26 April 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 3.1 The Court is invited to:
 - (i) Approve the proposed amendment to the Group’s Remit and Terms of Reference. Section 4 and **Appendix 1** refers.
 - (ii) Note the Group’s consideration of a technical consultation on changes to the scheme rules of USS.

4. REMIT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 4.1 The Group recommends to Court for approval proposed amendments to its remit and terms of reference which it had previously agreed should be reviewed to better reflect the breadth of the Group’s role across the University’s pensions landscape. The small number of amendments are set out in track changes in **Appendix 1**.

5. DISCUSSION WITH THE CHAIR OF UASLAS AND UASLAS SCHEME ADVISORS

- 5.1 The majority of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion with the Chair of the University of Aberdeen Superannuation and Life Assurance Scheme (UASLAS)

Trustees and the Scheme's Advisors to assist the Group in understanding the position of the Scheme and any key issues it faced. The main points discussed related to:

- The Group noted that in the past year the Scheme deficit had moved from £9.1m to a reported £1.6m, but now stood at £13m, which was significant in the context of the overall size of the Scheme but reflected the impact of current inflation levels on forward liabilities. This was also noted as being before prospective changes from the Pension Regulator which were likely to increase the deficit. The Group therefore anticipated further early engagement with the Trustees at the point when the outcome of that valuation was known, to support Court's consideration of potential options in relation to contributions and benefits. This would need to include an assessment of further regulator requirements for the funding of schemes.
- The Scheme's ability to weather shocks such as the crisis in the gilt markets and liability-driven investment funds experienced in autumn 2022.
- Declining employee participation levels in the Scheme, while noting the responsibilities of Scheme Trustees was to ensure the Scheme was adequately funded for its members and that employee participation with the Scheme was that of the employer. The Group went on to discuss steps being taken to engage with employees on the benefit of the scheme and the potential future need to discuss the structure of the scheme or alternatives to it.
- The Scheme's approach to sustainable and ethical investment and mirroring the University's policy on these areas.

6. REPORTS ON USS

Reporting to USS on Covenant Compliance

- 6.1 The Group received a report on the University's 2021-22 debt monitoring results and compliance against the USS pension covenants – which is also included as a substantive item on today's agenda.
- 6.2 It was confirmed that USS were yet to request the information for the financial year 2021-22, however the University did not anticipate that the metrics would be amended from those already agreed and outlined within the paper. The University had therefore calculated the five metrics for 2021-22 based on the workings provided by USS for 2020-21 and was confident to report on compliance following the production of its annual accounts in November 2022 and its submission of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Finance Return based on the accounts.
- 6.3 It was noted that, although the University had breached two of the five metrics A-E in 2021-22, there was no requirement for it to enter into further engagement with the USS Trustees, as all four metrics A-D would need to be breached in any year, or any three of metrics A-D in consecutive years, in order to trigger additional reporting.
- 6.4 It was noted that in future reports it would be helpful for the Group to also see a forecast of the tests position versus budget forecasts.

Reports on USS Current Issues

6.5 The Committee received and noted:

- A Joint UUK and UCU Statement on the Current Dispute (Dated 15 March 2023)
- The USS Valuation Exercise Timetable
- The Latest USS Financial Management Plan

6.6 In discussion, it was noted that while the reports from the USS valuation were positive, the Group considered it premature to be conclusive regarding restoration of benefits and setting expectations which might still be difficult to meet. In particular, prospective changes from the Pension Regulator would need to be recognised in the upcoming Triennial Valuation and which could change the funding position. The Group noted that no updates from UUK/USS had been received on the progress of the workstreams on potential changes to address the concerns raised following the last Triennial Valuation.

7. ORAL REPORT ON UASLAS SCHEME RULE CHANGES

7.1 The University Secretary advised the Group of two changes to the UASLAS Scheme Rules. The first concerned the rules around payment of death benefits and the removal of a restriction on payment of death benefits being made after twenty-four months after the date of death of the Member. The second concerned clarifications to the rules on the calculation of benefits in respect of scheme members who undertake variable hours, the intention of which was to ensure that these members are entitled to benefits calculated as far as possible in the same way as other members of the Scheme.

7.2 The Group requested that the University should consider from its perspective when a review of the Scheme Rules should be undertaken and to advise the Group of this.

8. PENSION SCHEME PARTICIPATION AT THE UNIVERSITY

8.1 The Group discussed participation in the University's pension schemes and noted in particular that cost of living issues were understood to be deterring staff participation in the schemes. The Group discussed whether alternative schemes or more flexibility within the existing schemes might be required in the future. It was agreed, however, in the context of the UASLAS, to await the outcome of its triennial valuation before considering this in greater depth.

9. CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO USS SCHEME RULES

9.1 The Group considered by circulation a technical consultation from Universities UK regarding a proposed change to USS rules (**further information if required [here](#) [Decision Time](#)**). The changes were in response to extended powers of the Pensions Regulator to impose fines of up to £1m (previously capped at £50K) under the new Pension Schemes Act 2021. The UUK consultation related to the introduction of a process by which scheme employers would be required to settle a proportion of any fine and a method of apportionment for this. The USS Trustee will be given the ability to pay a fine imposed by the Pensions Regulator and as

this could not lawfully be paid from scheme assets the USS Trustee would fund the payment of the fine from specific payments collected from employers. UUK are supportive of the proposed approach and intend to back the appropriate rule changes within the Joint Negotiating Committee on behalf of employers, subject to this being confirmed by the consultation.

- 9.2 The Group noted that the implication for the University would be that in the event of USS receiving the maximum fine of £1m by the regulator, the University's contribution to paying such a fine based on 2021/22 figures would be £10,124. The Group notes that this is not a material level of exposure and there appear few alternative solutions to the one that is proposed. In addition, USS have a range of internal controls in place and the risk of a material fine is considered as being low. The Group, therefore, considered the proposed rule changes to be appropriate. It noted that a response to UUK was not required unless there were any concerns with the proposed approach.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 10.1 Further information is available from or Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Advisory Group (email b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk).

18 April 2023

Confidentiality Status: Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
PENSIONS ADVISORY GROUP

1. COMMITTEE TITLE

Pensions Advisory Group

2. DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT

October 2020 (amended to Court Advisory Committee in September 2021)

3. CONVENER AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AREA

Convener: An independent member of Court
Clerk: Finance

4. PURPOSE

To provide on behalf and from the perspective of Court as the formal employer, guidance and challenge to the Executive, recognising the inherent conflict of interest for staff, in relation to pensions issues, in the development of the University's position for strategic pension scheme decisions relating to all current schemes across the University and for where alternative pensions provision may be required.

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

~~Responsible for all pension schemes available to University staff.~~ To provide oversight to Court in relation to pensions made available to staff by the University.

With regard to the USS and UASLAS schemes -to be responsible for:

Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)

- As part of the triennial actuarial review, receive any consultation materials submitted by USS, UUK or any other party (e.g UUK Actuaries)
- Oversight of any consultation with scheme members arising from the valuation process
- Oversight of any consultation between the University, UUK & USS and liaison with Trade Unions as appropriate
- Oversight of and guidance on the development of any employer response to any consultation; approval authority rests with University Court given expected levels of materiality
- Oversight of any debt monitoring or any other regulatory requirements arising from revised scheme design

University of Aberdeen Superannuation & Life Assurance Scheme (UASLAS)

- Review of the triennial actuarial review completed by the UASLAS Trustees
- Oversight of any consultation with scheme members arising from the valuation

- Oversight of and guidance on proposed major changes to scheme or benefit design to be recommended to the Court
- Delegated powers to approve minor changes to scheme rules

6. COMPOSITION AND QUORUM:

Convener: An Independent Member of Court

Membership: Two independent members of Court and two staff members, ensuring inclusion of pensions and industrial relations issues.
A member of Senior Management Team (SMT), by nomination of the Principal.

In Attendance: Director of People
Assistant Director of Finance (Financial Accounting)
University Secretary

Quorum: 50% of members (including Convener)

The advisory group may co-opt external specialist advice or members with the agreement of Governance & Nominations Committee.

7. MEMBERSHIP

Convener: G McRae

Membership: G McRae
O Thoresen
Independent Member - Vacancy
O Cox
D Skatun
M White

In Attendance: D Dyker
C Sherrit
T Slaven

8. REPORTING LINE AND INTERFACE WITH OTHER COMMITTEES

Formal reporting line: Court
Interface with other Committees: Provides reports to SMT as required

9. FREQUENCY AND TIMING OF MEETINGS

Five Meetings per Academic Year.

10. PUBLICATION OF PAPERS

Agenda papers issued to Committee members and formal attendees only.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT REPORT**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

1.1 This report provides Court with an update for information on the activities of the Directorate of Development & Alumni Relations (DAR) for Q2.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Senior Management Team	13 April 2023
Further consideration/ approval required by	Court	26 April 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

3.1 The Court is invited to note the paper which is for information.

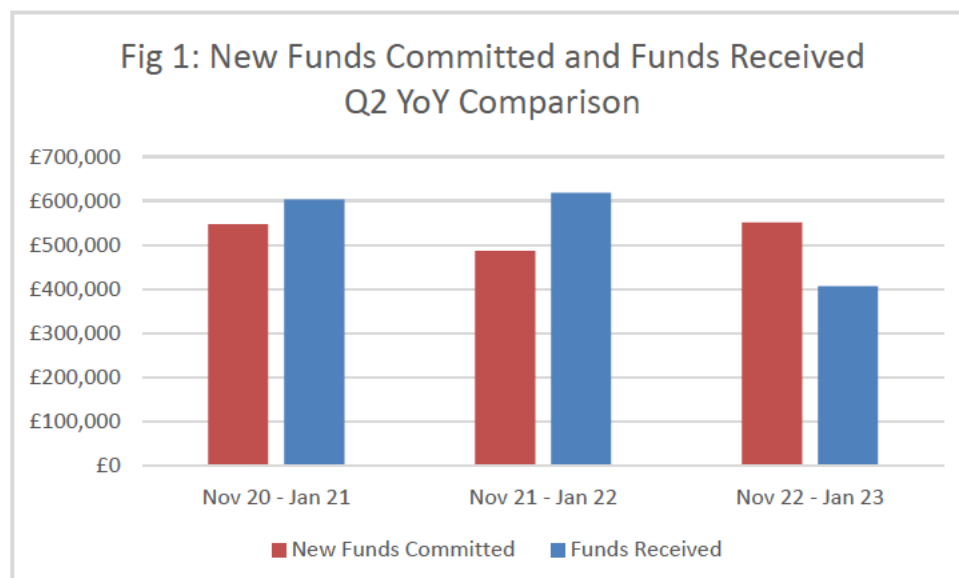
4. INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 This report covers fundraising and alumni engagement activities during Q2.
- 4.2 During this period the DAR team has maintained good levels of income, seeing an increase in new funds committed compared to same period in the previous year. This indicates that we are increasing our cultivation and solicitation activity with new and existing donors e.g., resolicitations, and maintained good stewardship through the pandemic period.
- 4.3 There has been a decrease in legacy income. In previous years there was significant realised legacy income as a result of the long-term stewardship of high-level legacy pledgers. There is greater investment in this area with the appointment of a dedicated legacy giving Development Officer, and development of a legacy giving strategy and plan.
- 4.4 There has been an increase in new funds committed (NFC), but cash income is down, and there has been a reliance on one or two major gifts from legacy, corporate and T&F activity in recent years. We aim to increase income and activity around individual giving. There have been gaps in staffing due to difficulties in recruiting to key roles, and a fall in cash income is partially attributed to the drop off in activity during pandemic, against a background of factors such as the cost-of-living crisis.

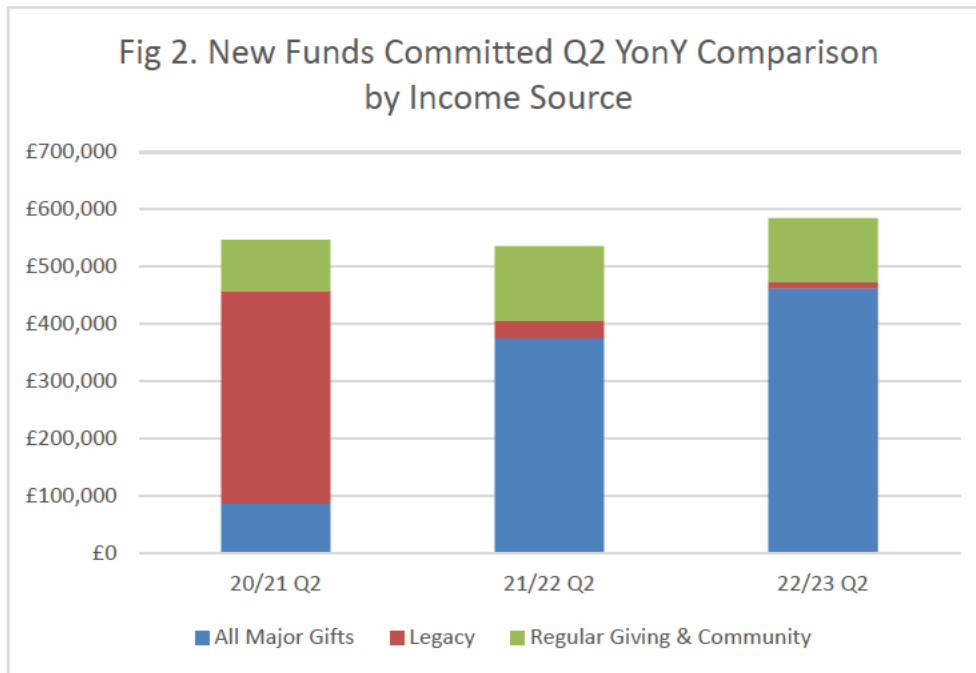
- 4.5 There has been an active programme of alumni engagement in the UK and internationally, with events and visits taking place in Shanghai, Shenzhen, Hong Kong, Paris, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Athens, Paris, Vilnius, and Vienna; as well as on online, on campus, and locally, including at His Majesty's Theatre and Peterhead Prison.
- 4.6 Satisfactory progress is being made in campaign planning activity. The Campaign Management Board met in February, and this is a significant step forward in mobilising the University behind the campaign planning process. More detail around campaign planning activity is outlined below.

5. DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY AND FUNDRAISING PERFORMANCE

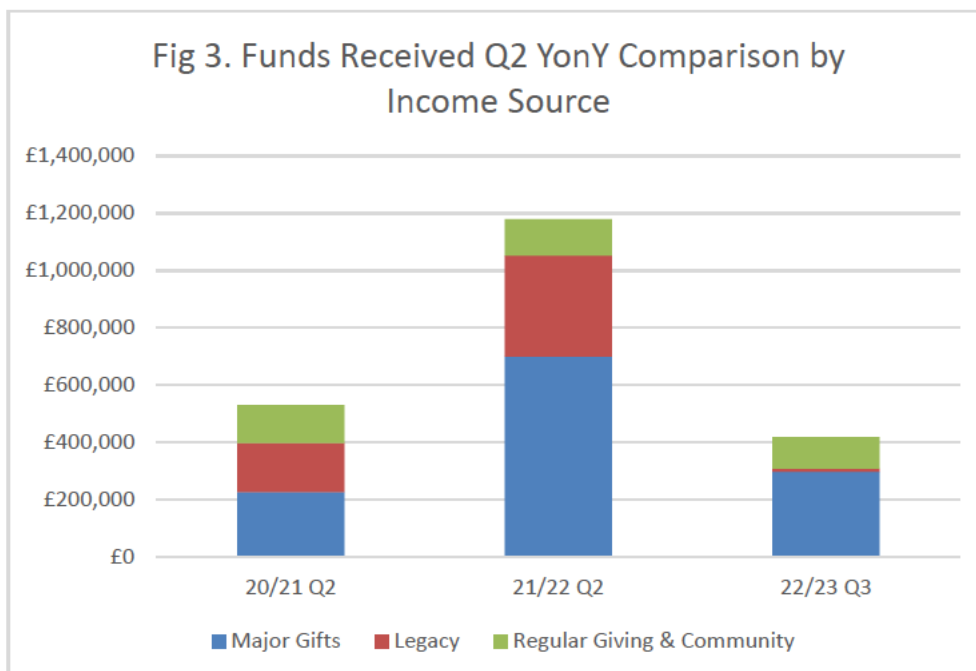
- 5.1 The figures below provide a summary of fundraising income and activity for the period 1 November 2022 to 31 January 2023, i.e., Quarter Two of the financial year (Q2).
- 5.2 In line with CASE-Ross Global Reporting Standards (CGRS), DAR related fundraising performance will now be measured and reported as New Funds Committed (funds committed in the reporting financial year from any individual or qualified organisation) and Funds Received (cash received within the reporting period). The CGRS publishes worldwide standards for recording institutional fundraising outcomes and includes definitions of what constitutes educational philanthropy and guidance around gift counting, funds received, and new funds committed. New Funds Committed for Q2 is 13% higher than at the same point in 2021/22. Funds Received is down 34% from FY21/22 Q2. Figure 1, below, provides a comparison with the preceding two years.



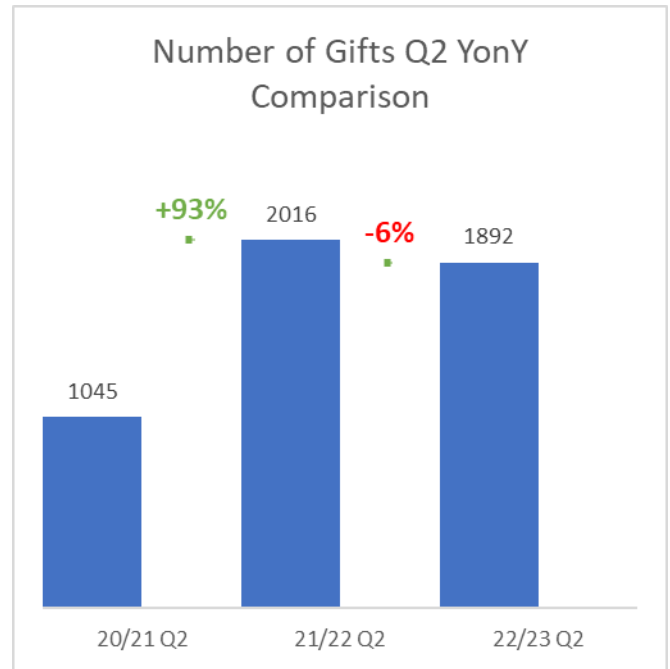
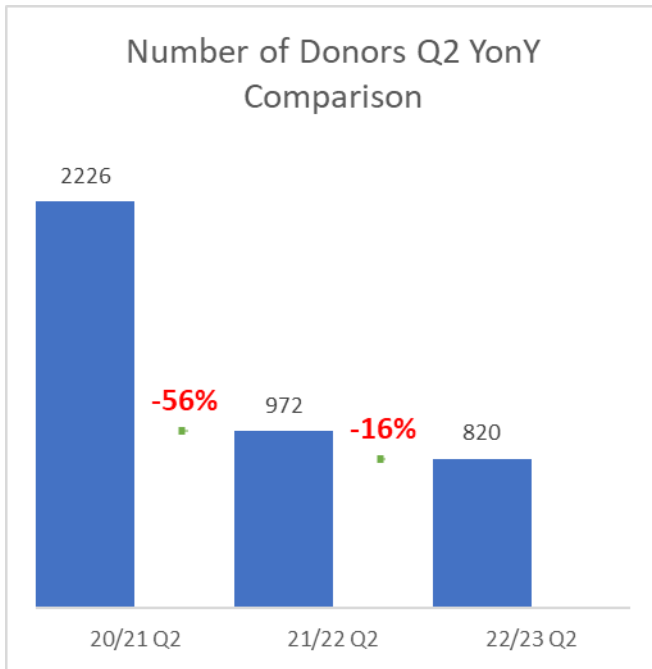
- 5.3 New Funds Committed from all major gift activity in Q2, including legacies was £461,828, an increase of 23% compared with the same period in the previous year. Legacy income was down by 65% and new funds committed from regular giving and community fundraising decreased by 14%.



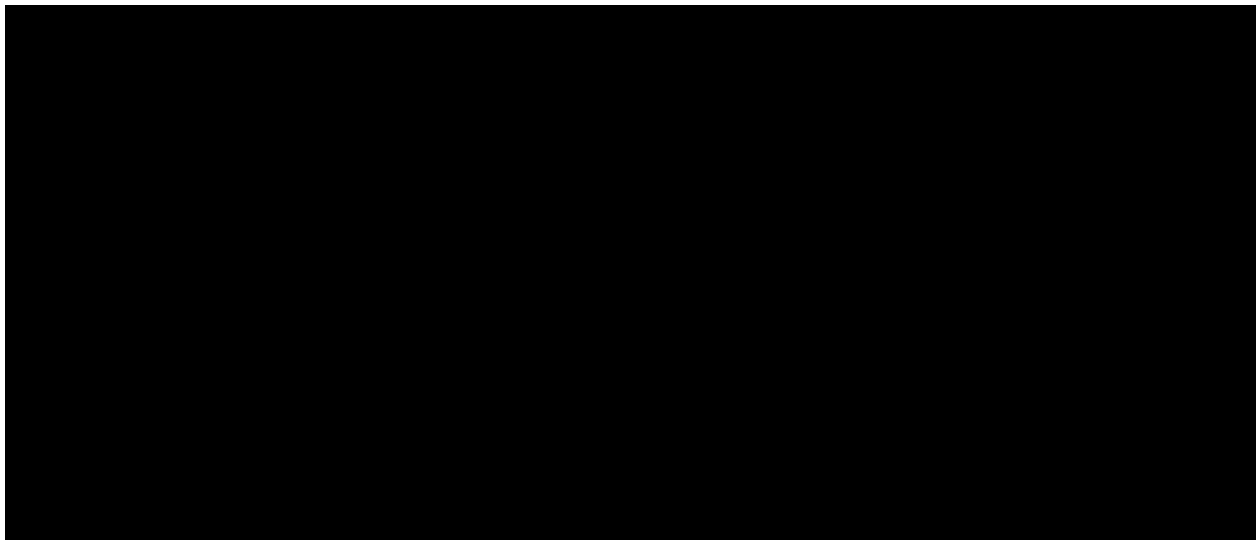
5.5 Total Funds Received (FR) in Q2 was £419,108, compared to £1,178M in the same period in the previous financial year. Funds Received from major gifts decreased by 58% and Funds Received from Regular Giving and Community Giving stood at £111,225 in Q2, with 87% of that income derived from Regular Giving activity.



5.6 The number of donors in Q2 was 820 which is a 16% decrease on the same period in the previous year. The number of gifts received in FY22/23 Q2 is 1,892 compared to 2,016 in the same period in the previous year.



5.7 Notable gifts during this period include:



5.8 The total value of legacy gifts at the end of the quarter was £10,711. We have been notified of three legacy gifts that be received by year-end including, £102,000 for the Elphinstone Institute, an unrestricted gift of £56,500, and approximately £729,388 from the estate of the late Ruth Smith. This legacy will be allocated towards the B H Smith Neurology Chair. Our Legacy Officer, Vanessa Holmes, will be organising an event on the 20th of May hosted by Professor George Boyne to relaunch the Thomas Reid Circle.

5.9 The major gift pipeline continues to look healthy. The Development team have been focused on closing outstanding asks over the last quarter and nine new proposals have been submitted since November 1st, 2022. There are currently 93 proposals at the planned stage of which five were added in the last quarter. The total value of planned and pending proposals as of 31st January 2023 is £14.9M. Significant interactions with donors and prospects during Q2 included:

- The John Shivas Memorial Trust pledged £100,411 to support a PhD in Women's Health Research.
- The Agreement for the McDonald Agape Foundation grant of £500,000 was signed off and the first grant instalment has been received. An additional grant of £25,000 was also received for Prof. Tom Greggs in recognition of his leadership in guiding the Department of Divinity to first place in the 2021 REF rankings.
- The Kildrummy Castle Garden Trust's solicitor has confirmed that the Trust's final accounts have been submitted to OSCR, meaning the winding-up process should be able to proceed. The final sum to be received is still to be confirmed.
- The second and final grant claim for the £723,000 grant from the Wolfson Foundation in support of the FCI scanner and imaging suite project was submitted and approved, confirming that the full grant amount will be received. The funds will be received in Q3, and the Foundation will be moved back to stewardship/cultivation with a view to a new proposal being submitted when possible.
- New scholarships have been secured and/or renewed from MacDuff Shellfish, CNOOC, EnQuest, Petrofac and RSK Geosciences.
- The Development team is working with colleagues in the Business School to progress a proposal for Hauser & Wirth following a meeting with Ewan Venters in December 2022.
- Donations received towards the George & Lilian Adam Smith memorial fund reached £55,000 in support of At-Risk Students.
- The family of the late Frank Bealey, founder of the Department of Politics and International Relations have donated a further £5,000 to continue the Frank Bealey Prize for best fourth year politics student.

5.10 From 1 November 2022 to 31 January 2023 – i.e., Q2 – **disbursements from the Development Trust** to the University totalled £570,540. The total has risen to over £3.1M at mid-April.

6. CAMPAIGN PLANNING

6.1 We are now working towards a revised timeline in line with the recommendations from the feasibility study completed in July 2022. The feasibility study carried out by Halpin, included a set of strategic and operational recommendations. The campaign planning period has been extended through to 2024. Our activity over the next 12-18 months will be focused on scoping and developing campaign themes and priority projects, launching a programme of internal engagement, and aligning campaign marketing and communications with the University's brand development.

- 6.2 Liza Boffen-Yordanov and Clare Livingston presented a campaign update to the University Management Group (UMG) in January. The purpose of the presentation was to socialise UMG with the output of the feasibility study, to provide an update on campaign governance and to engage with senior academic staff on identifying campaign priority projects.
- 6.3 In January 2023, the University Senior Management Team approved the campaign as a strategic project. A Campaign Management Board has been established to oversee implementation and delivery of the campaign. The Board is led by Professor Karl Leydecker and includes representation from across the University's internal stakeholders.

7. ADVANCEMENT SERVICES

- 7.1 Since November 2022, we have been working with Chris Webber, Blackbaud Customer Success Manager on a digital improvement project which includes implementation and delivery of a robust suite of campaign related reports. A considerable amount of time and resource has been committed by the Data team over the last three months to review and update gift recording processes and procedures. In line with best practice we will be recording and reporting on campaign income and activity as per CASE-Ross Global Reporting Standards (CGRS). This will allow DAR to normalise all reporting in a consistent way. As such, we will be working towards developing a Campaign Management Dashboard and Report WorkCentre.
- 7.2 In Q2 there has been a focus on the annual audit and preparations for the move to the Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). Many thanks are due to Glen Wilson and Ewan Mclean in the Finance directorate and to Jenny Styles, Karen Moir, and Will Gibb in the DAR team for dealing with the extra work this has generated. New auditors have been appointed for the 2022/23 audit as part of the University's wider tender process.
- 7.3 The prospect research team has access to new resources, WealthX and Altrata, and have been busy working on identifying prospects for international travel, discovery calls and guest lists and providing briefings and profiles.
- 7.4 The team has supported events including the annual Scholars' Reception and will be working on the Founders' Day events which will take place on 26 May. They are also developing a stewardship plan utilising the membership tab of Raiser's Edge.

8. COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

- 8.1 The relaunched alumni and supporter magazine production will be sent out to alumni and supporters in April/May.
- 8.2 Work is ongoing on a variety of outputs to support the legacy giving programme. Positive feedback was received on the first Thomas Reid Circular newsletter published in November. A free will service agreement has been established with

Bequeathed and this will feature on our website and be promoted to potential legacy pledgers.

- 8.3 We are providing marcomms support for a range of events including the Scholars' Reception and rescheduled Founders' Day Celebration. We are also supporting the community fundraising officer in developing collateral for upcoming sponsored fundraising events.
- 8.4 The audit of the Development and Alumni Relations web pages is in progress ahead of the auto-migration to the new Content Management System in June. This will include future planning for a more significant phased redevelopment of the pages.

9. ALUMNI RELATIONS & REGULAR GIVING

- 9.1 A significant amount of activity has taken place across Alumni Relations & Regular Giving in Q2. There were 14 events spanning in-person and virtual, with a total of 594 attendees. The events generated an average Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 90, which is excellent.
- 9.2 The annual Celebration of Carols event in London returned for the first time since 2019 and was a great success. Donations at the event contributed £1,000 towards the Christmas appeal.
- 9.3 Community fundraising activity has focused on the stewarding of donors and planning for forthcoming fundraising events including Run Balmoral and the Kiltwalk.
- 9.4 Regular giving activity was focused on the Christmas appeal, in support of medical innovation. So far, £20,708.48 has been raised for the General Medical Research Fund, to support a range of research activities in the School of Medicine, Medical Science & Nutrition. Interestingly, 36% of the total was generated from seven donors, who received a bespoke appeal pack as part of a specific segment of previous givers or known friends to the University.

10. SCIO STATUS

- 10.1 The transfer to the SCIO took effect on 1 February 2023. The Chair has signed a Deed of Appointment of the Trust Fund, transferring funds to the SCIO and the acceptance of the Development Trust's liabilities. The process of moving to new bank accounts is completed, and the investment accounts will transfer on 1 May. This work will be ongoing over the next quarter and beyond.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES

- 11.1 We have had a number of staffing changes within the Development team in recent months. Since May 2022, Clare Livingston, Campaign Director has provided interim cover for the Head of Development post which has been vacant since November 2021. After an unsuccessful recruitment round in October 2022, Minerva, an executive search firm specialising in Development and Higher Education recruitment was appointed to undertake a new search. In February

2023, interviews were held with five candidates, and we are pleased to report that we have appointed Myra Matthews as Head of Philanthropy. Myra comes to us from the University of Leicester.

11.2 Louise Mackay joined the Development team on 1st March. Louise comes to the University with over 7 years' fundraising and relationship management experience, most recently, in the role of Relationship Manager for Macmillan. Charlotte Farmer returned from maternity leave in January and Rebecca Pirie has commenced maternity leave in March.

11.3 Gary Coull, Alumni Relations Officer, has recently moved to a new role in the Careers & Employability Service. Gary made a significant contribution to our alumni relations activity over the last four years, and we wish him all the very best with his new position. The vacancy is currently on hold.

12. UPCOMING DAR ACTIVITY & EVENTS

April 2023

- 12 - Alumni event in Washington DC
- 15 – Luxembourg alumni day trip to Diekirch
- 15 - Annual New York Tartan Day Parade
- 16 – Alumni event in Toronto
- 17 – Alumni event in Edmonton
- 22 – Warsaw Alumni event
- 27 – Metabolism talk & Rowett tour

May 2023

- 9 – Valencia alumni event
- 11- Online talk- women in America c.1900-40: from the Gilded age to the Shadow of War
- 20 – Thomas Red Circle, Legacy Event, Aberdeen
- 24 – Madrid Alumni event
- 25 – The Aberdeen Burgh Records Project
- 25 – Founders' Day service, and Celebration of Research with impact event, Aberdeen

June 2023

- 10 – Lyon alumni event
- 12 – Berlin Biergarten alumni event
- 13 – Frankfurt summer alumni event
- 14 – Luxembourg alumni event
- 15 – Brussels alumni event
- 16 – Amsterdam alumni event
- 26 – Graduation week

August 2023

- 19 – Memorial Service for Professor John Mallard

September 2023

- 20 – University lunch, Marcliffe at Pitfodels

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

13.1 Further information is available from Liza Boffen-Yordanov, Director of Advancement at liza.boffen-yordanov@abdn.ac.uk

Confidentiality Status: Part Closed – Section 5.7

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COURT
GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2022

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

1.1 This is a paper to inform Court of the 2022 Gender Pay Gap report.

1.2 This paper is provided for information and to seek approval that the report be published on the University's website (once also approved by the Partnership, Negotiating and Consultative Committee -PNCC - in May 2023).

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Senior Management Team	6 April 2023
	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee	18 April 2023
Further consideration/ approval required by	Court PNCC	26 April 2023 15 May 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

3.1 The Court is invited to consider the Gender Pay Gap 2022 report, attached as Appendix 1.

3.2 Due to a change in the date of the PNCC this will be considered by that committee in May 2023.

3.3 The Court is invited to approve publication of the Gender Pay Gap Report 2022.

4. DISCUSSION

Background –Gender Pay Gap and Gender Bonus Gap Reporting

4.1 The Gender Pay Gap is the difference in average earnings of males and females over a period of time, irrespective of their role. It, therefore, captures pay differences between males and females on a broader level and is different from equal pay which considers the difference in earnings of males and females undertaking like work.

- 4.2 The Gender Bonus Gap (GBG) considers the difference in the mean and median bonus pay of males and females, expressed as a percentage. In the context of the University, bonus pay refers to payments made under the Contributions Awards Policy and the Senior Staff Pay Policy.
- 4.3 There is a legal requirement for organisations with 250 or more employees to publish their Gender Pay and Bonus Gap information on an annual basis. Despite universities in Scotland and Wales being exempt from this legal requirement, a decision was taken in 2018 that the University would publish the information annually.
- 4.4 The Gender Pay Gap Regulations stipulate the information to be published and provide a framework and formula for calculating the gaps, which the University adopts for this purpose. The information to be published is as follows: the mean/median GPG; the mean/median GBG and the proportion of males and females in four quartile pay bands (lower, lower/middle, upper/middle and upper). The information for the GPG 2022 is based on data at a snapshot date – 31st March 2022 - and for the GBG information is based on the 12 months preceding 31st March 2022.
- 4.5 Actions to address the University's GPG and GBG (calculated using the external regulatory framework and formula) to date have focussed on identifying and understanding the underlying causes of the gaps to influence them in a positive manner through our recruitment, progression, reward and recognition practices.
- 4.6 The Gender Pay Gap report 2022 is attached as Appendix 1. In summary this demonstrates:
- A mean GPG of 18.2% (a decrease from 20.2% in 2021).
 - A median GPG of 16.2% (a decrease from 19.4% in 2020);
 - A mean GBG of 4.9% and a median GBG of 4.3%.
- 4.7 The proportion of males and females in the four quartiles demonstrates that there continues to be a higher representation of females in the lower and middle lower quartiles and a higher representation of males in the upper quartile. However, the figures illustrate an increase in the percentage of females in the upper middle and upper quartiles when compared to the 2021 report.
- 4.8 The pay quartile pay band mean and median gaps highlight that the only quartile of concern remains the upper quartile (mean gap 10.3% and median gap 5.8%).
- 4.9 The reasons for the GPG within the University continue to be attributable to a number of areas influencing it. A key factor is occupational segregation: over and under-representation of females at different grades. A number of other areas impact including starting pay, leavers and our arrangements to award contribution.
- 4.10 The Report includes a progress update based on the action plan for the GPG report 2021 and considering the data for 2022. Actions continue to cover a range

of areas that aim to positively influence the GPG and GBG, namely measures relating to recruitment, progression (including academic promotion), pay, recognition and career development opportunities for staff.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

5.1 Further information is available from Debbie Dyker (d.j.dyker@abdn.ac.uk) or Tracey White (twhite@abdn.ac.uk) .

Confidentiality Status: Open

Appendix 1 – Gender Pay Gap Report 2022

University of Aberdeen Gender Pay Gap Report 2022

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Our commitment to addressing and eradicating our Gender Pay Gap (GPG), as well as gaps pertaining to other protected characteristics, is highlighted in [Aberdeen 2040](#).

1.2 The GPG shows the difference in the average and median pay between males and females in the workforce. It is not the same as equal pay, which looks at the pay differences between males and females undertaking roles of equal value (i.e., at the same grade). As part of the report, we also consider the Gender Bonus Gap (GBG) which considers the difference in the mean and median bonus pay of males and females, expressed as a percentage.

1.3 This Gender Pay Gap report sets out and contextualises the GPG and GBG data for 2022. The overall GPG is based on a snapshot date of 31st March 2022 and the GBG on data in the year leading up to 31st March 2022.

1.4 Our mean GPG for 2022 is 18.2% with a median GPG of 16.2%. Both represent a reduction from the 2021 mean GPG (20.2%) and median GPG (19.4%) which is positive, albeit further steps need to be taken to reduce them further.

1.5 Analysis of data pertaining to pay quartile information, highlights that we continue to see a higher percentage of females in roles in the lower and lower middle quartiles. However, we do see an increased percentage of females within the upper middle and upper quartiles which will have had a positive impact on both the mean and median GPG. We do, however, continue to see a higher number of males in roles falling within the upper quartile and outlying salaries, in particular, impacting the mean GPG.

1.6 Our mean GBG for 2022 is 4.94% and our median GBG 4.35%. Due to the impact of the pandemic on normal progression arrangements that would have been included in the GBG calculation for 2021, a comparison cannot be made between 2022 and 2021.

1.7 Steps to continue to positively influence both GPG and GBG are outlined, reflecting practical measures in recruitment, progression, recognition, career development opportunities and our pay policies.

2. Our workforce headcount for this report and how we calculate the Gender Pay Gap/Gender Bonus Gap

2.1 There are 3409 full pay relevant employees who form part of the calculations based on the snapshot date of 31st March 2022. At this date, 1982 (58%) of the University's workforce were females and 1427 (42%) were males.

2.2 Our workforce is diverse and multi-national, with a wide range of occupational groups including cleaning, security and catering roles, grounds and maintenance, administrative, professional services and technical staff, academic and managerial roles.

2.3 Calculations pertaining to the GPG and the GBG are based on the requirements detailed in legislation¹. Further background information about this, including what is and is not included in the calculations, can be found at **Appendix A**.

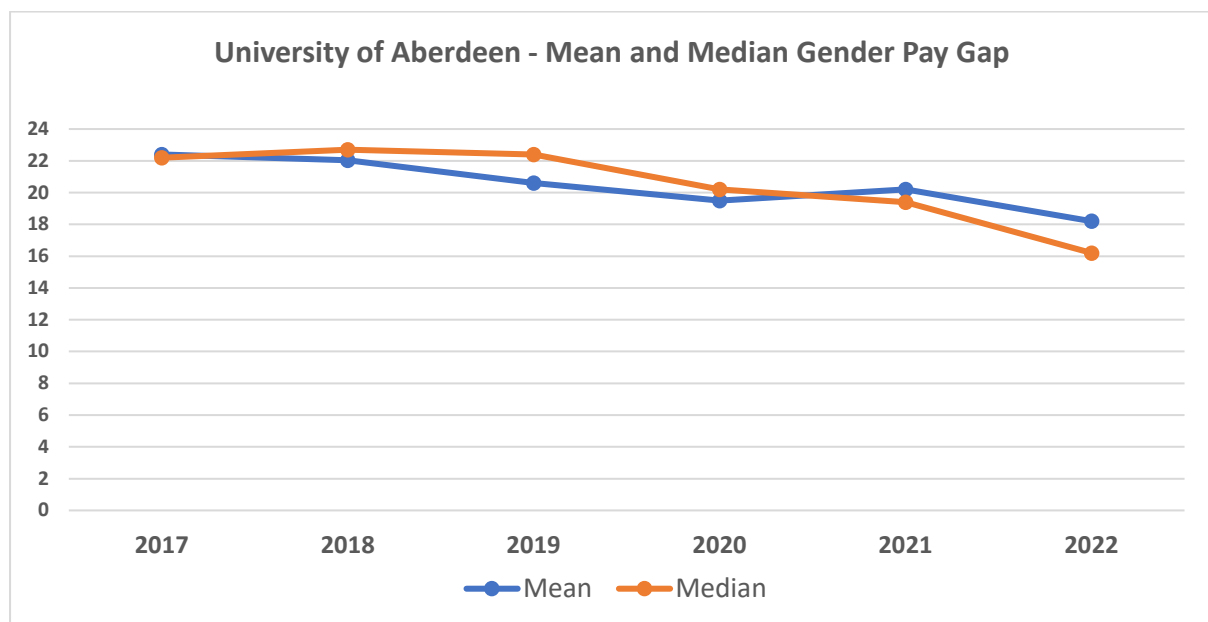
3. Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap 2022

3.1 Our statutory mean GPG for 2022 has reduced, from 20.2% on 31st March 2021 to 18.2% on 31st March 2022.

3.2 Our statutory median GPG for 2022 has also reduced, from 19.4% on 31st March 2021, to 16.2% on 31st March 2022.

3.3 Diagram 1 and Table 1 below detail the GPG Mean and Median percentages, highlighting a positive trend in that the figures for 2022 are the lowest since reporting began in 2017.

Diagram 1 – University of Aberdeen Mean and Median GPG 2017-2022



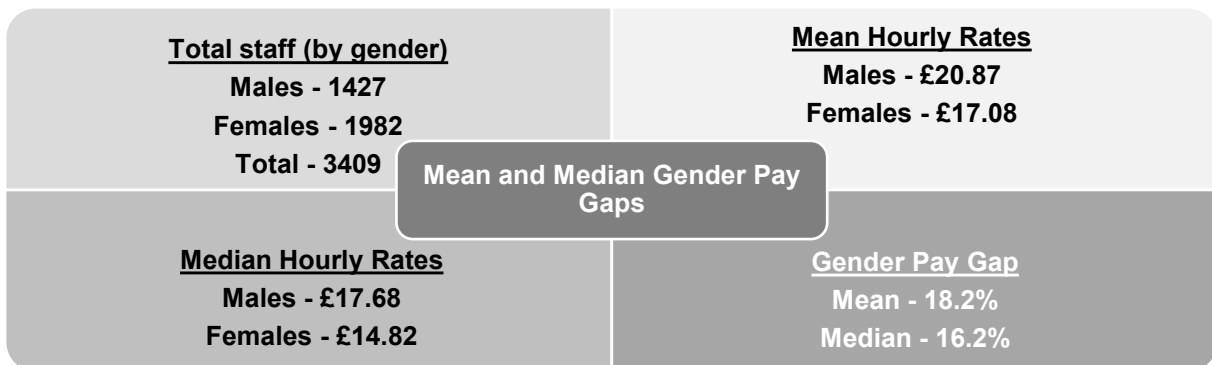
¹ [Making your calculations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Table 1

Year	Mean (%)	Median (%)
2022	18.2 ↓	16.2 ↓
2021	20.2 ↑	19.4 ↓
2020	19.5 ↓	20.2 ↓
2019	20.6 ↓	22.4 ↓
2018	22.03 ↓	22.7 ↑
2017	22.4	22.2

3.4 Diagram 2 below provides a fuller breakdown of the GPG hourly rate information which results in the mean and median pay gap percentages.

Diagram 2



4. Mean and Median Gender Bonus Gap (GBG)

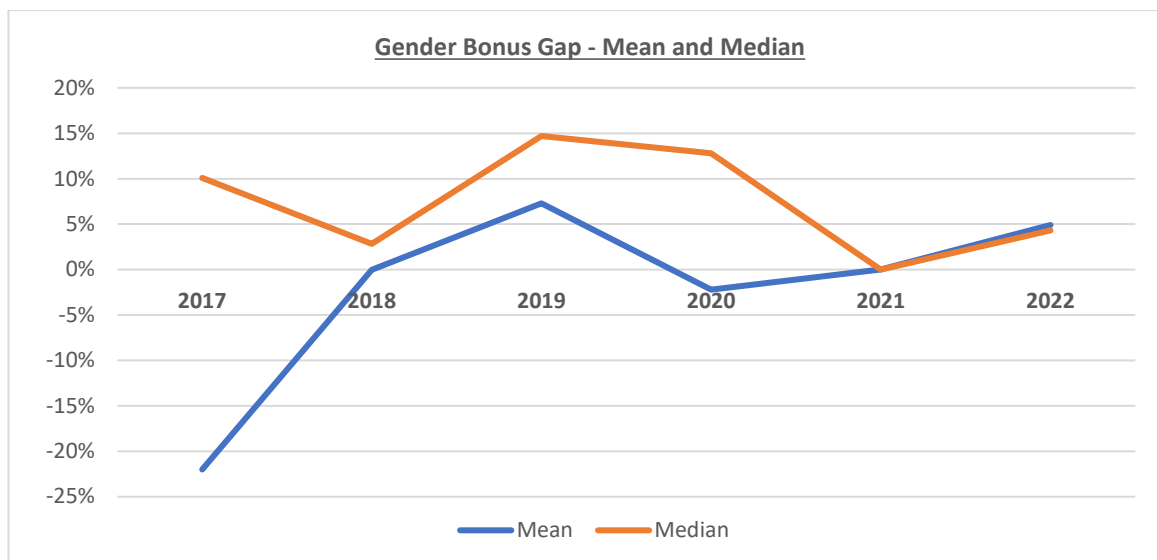
4.1 The GBG considers the difference in the mean and median bonus pay of males and females, expressed as a percentage. Bonuses included for the purposes of the calculation are uplifts paid to senior staff based on the Senior Staff Pay Policy (approved by the Remuneration Committee) as well as consolidated and non-consolidated awards applicable to all other staff (as provided for in the Contributions Awards Policy). Diagram 3 illustrates historical information pertaining to the GBG.

4.2 The data for 2022 (based on bonuses awarded between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022) highlights:

- A total of 107 females (5.4%) and 62 males (4.3%) received a bonus during this period.

- The average bonus for females was £2,297 and for males £2,416, resulting in a mean GBG of 4.94%.
- The median bonus for females was £1,822 and for males £1,905, resulting in a median GBG of 4.35%.

Diagram 3 – Gender Bonus Gap Mean and Median (2017-2022)



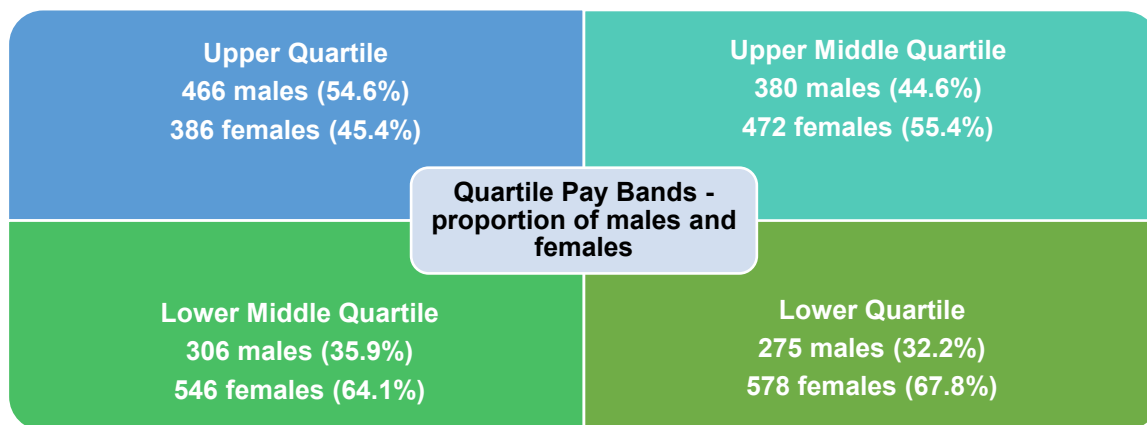
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*	2022
Mean	-22%	-0.04%	7.29%	-2.20%	0.00%	4.94%
Median	10.10%	2.82%	14.70%	12.80%	0.00%	4.35%

*during the period 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021 no bonuses were paid based on the Senior Staff Pay Policy and Contribution Awards Policy due to the projected financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. Proportion of males and females in quartiles pay bands

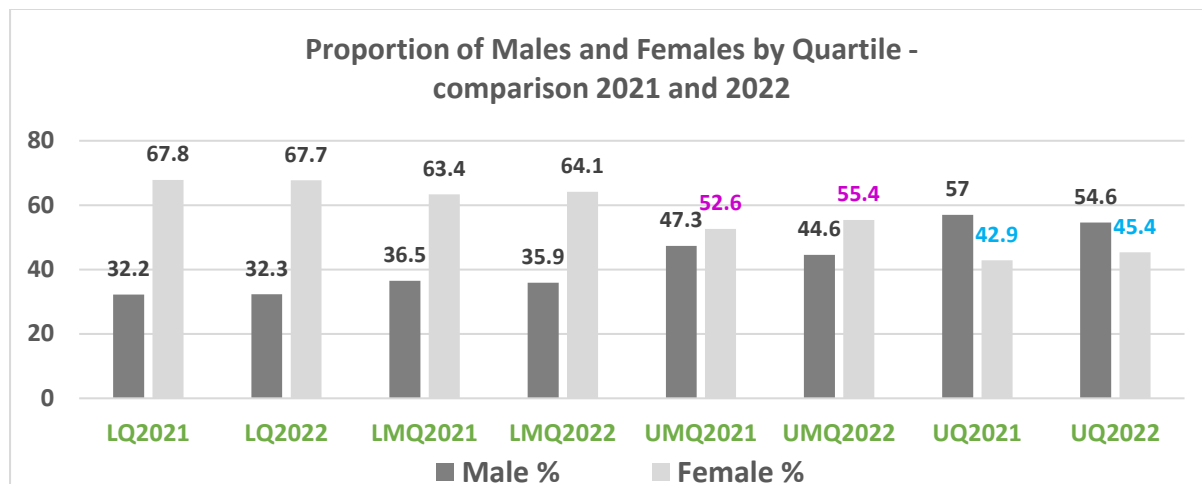
5.1 The distribution of males and females in each of the quartiles pay bands is presented in Diagram 4. This demonstrates a continuing trend of a disproportionate distribution of males and females in the quartiles – i.e., a higher % of females in our workforce in roles in the lower and lower middle quartiles and a higher % of males in our workforce in roles in the upper quartile.

Diagram 4 – Distribution of males and females in quartiles pay bands



5.2 We have, however, seen a slight shift when previous pay quartile information is considered. Diagram 5 below illustrates the comparison between 2021 and 2022 in the % split between males and females for each of the pay quartiles, demonstrating that whilst the split remains similar for the lower and lower middle quartiles, we have seen a change in both the upper middle and upper quartiles. Both show an increased % of females in 2022 (upper middle quartile up from 52.6% in 2021 to 55.4% in 2022; upper quartile up from 42.9% in 2021 to 45.4% in 2022).

Diagram 5



Key

LQ – lower quartile UMQ – upper middle quartile
 LMQ – lower middle quartile UQ – upper quartile

5.3 The mean and median gender pay gaps within each of the quartiles is provided in Table 2 below, illustrating that the area of concern is the upper quartile.

Table 2 – Mean and Median Gender Pay Gap by Pay Quartiles

Quartile	Mean GPG	Median GPG
Lower	1.39%	2.33%
Lower Middle	-0.11%	0.32%
Upper Middle	2.03%	4.49%
Upper	10.32%	5.80%

6. Factors affecting the Gender Pay Gap and Gender Bonus Gap

Gender Pay Gap

6.1 The GPG is attributable to a mix of different factors as detailed below.

-Occupational segregation and, in particular, females being over-represented in roles within the lower and lower middle quartiles continues to have a significant impact. However, the slight increases in the percentage of females in the upper middle and upper quartiles is positive and will have contributed to the reduction in both the mean and median GPG.

-Variations between starting pay for females compared to males. For staff appointed to Grade 1-9 posts, a higher percentage of males were appointed above the starting point for the grade of the post and although small numbers, the data shows that males are still more likely to be appointed in the contribution zone of a grade. For staff appointed to Grade 9 off-scale, the data illustrates that a higher percentage of males continue to be appointed to such posts and the salary range for males demonstrates that they are more likely to be appointed to a higher salary than females. In addition, outlying salaries in Grade 9 off-scale continue to impact on the mean GPG.

-Analysis of leaver information demonstrates that senior female members of staff leaving also continues to have an impact. During this period, five female members of staff on Grade 9 off-scale left the University. Three female members of staff started in Grade 9 off-scale positions during the same period, therefore, overall, there was a reduction in female members of staff in these senior positions.

Gender Bonus Gap

6.2 Data highlights that steps taken with regard to payments made under the Senior Staff Pay Policy have had a positive impact in the distribution of such awards between males and females.

6.3 The key factor impacting on our GBG relates to awards given to staff under the Contribution Awards Policy. Data illustrates that such awards provided to female members of staff are more likely to consist of one increment progression, with males being more likely to receive a one-off payment. This may suggest that more male members of staff are already at the top of the contribution zone for the grade of their post and, therefore, a one-off payment is the option available under the Contribution Policy to recognise achievements or there may be other reasons why a one-off

payment is considered appropriate. Our approach to rewarding contribution under the Contribution Awards policy is an area that requires further investigation.

7. Actions to reduce our Gender Pay Gap and Gender Bonus Gap

7.1 We are committed to reducing/eradicating the GPG and GBG and the table at Appendix B represents practical steps we are taking to do so, in areas where we can positively influence the gaps such as recruitment, recognition, pay policies, progression and career development opportunities.

Appendix A – Background information about the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) and Gender Bonus Gap (GBG) calculations

The GPG concerns differences in the mean and median earnings between females and males in an organisation regardless of their role or seniority. It is important, therefore, to note the difference between the GPG and equal pay calculations as follows:

- Equal pay calculations identify differentials in the rates paid to women and men for the same or comparable work (an Equal Pay Audit was undertaken by an external consultancy during 2021 to review equal pay).
- GPG reporting is a comparison of the average salaries paid to women and men in the University and takes no account of the roles or work involved.

Data analysis undertaken

Data analysis for the report is undertaken as per the stipulated requirements:

- GPG – data at a snapshot date of 31st March 2021
- Gender Bonus Pay Gap – data 12 months prior to 31st March 2021
- Proportion of females and males in each quartile – data at a snapshot date of 31st March 2021.

Who/what is included in the calculations?

The analysis for the GPG is based on all posts held by ‘full pay relevant’ staff as at the snapshot date of 31st March 2021. Full pay relevant staff refers to staff who during the relevant period, are not being paid at a reduced or nil rate as a result of being on leave, which includes unpaid annual leave, maternity, paternity, adoption, parental and shared parental leave, sick leave and other special leave.

Data for Gender Bonus Gap is based on bonuses received between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021. (NB payments classified as bonuses under GPG reporting were frozen during the reporting period, i.e. 12 months prior to 31st March 2021, other than retention payments made to two members of staff).

As per the GPG regulations, the data we report on includes:

- The mean GPG (the difference in the mean pay of full-pay males and females, expressed as a percentage)
- The median GPG (the difference in the median pay of full-pay males and females, expressed as a percentage)
- The mean bonus GPG (the difference in the mean bonus pay of males and females, expressed as a percentage)
- The median bonus GPG (the difference in the median bonus pay of males and females, expressed as a percentage)
- The proportion of males and females who received bonus pay
- The proportion of full-pay males and females in each of four quartiles pay bands.

Bonuses normally considered as part of the reporting include Remuneration Committee payments and consolidated and non-consolidated contributions awards (received in the 12 months prior to 31st March 2022).

For staff with non-standard working hours (zero hours, guaranteed minimum hours, casual workers) the number of hours is based on the average number of hours worked over the 12 weeks ending with the last complete week of the 31st March 2022 pay period.

Non-monetary benefits cannot be included in the GPG reporting. Salary sacrifice arrangements are regarded as a non-monetary benefit therefore deductions for salary sacrifice are excluded from base pay for the purposes of GPG reporting.

Appendix B – Actions to reduce our Gender Pay Gap**2022 Update & Action Plan**

Theme	Our actions to date and future actions
Recruitment & Retention	<p>We continue to take steps in our recruitment practices with the aim of a positive outcome on the GPG – for example, by ensuring that, where we use executive search organisations for senior and/or specialist posts, female candidates are included in shortlists.</p> <p>We launched our new Recruitment and Selection Policy and Toolkit during 2022 and are using workforce data to inform our recruitment campaigns across all our roles, with the aim of improving representation of those currently under-represented in the University. This includes females in upper middle and upper quartile roles and males in lower middle and lower quartile roles.</p> <p>We continue to ensure that our job adverts use gender neutral language and that we also highlight the opportunities for job share, part time working and/or hybrid working arrangements as per our Homeworking Policy.</p> <p>For senior posts (University Management Group level) we have adopted the ‘Rooney Rule’ principles and only take forward selection processes where we have applications from candidates from those protected characteristics which are under-represented, in particular women or racialised groups.</p> <p>We are aware that we need to take further steps in the following areas:</p> <p>(i) improve engagement with our local community and beyond, including key organisations, to find ways to increase the pool of candidates applying for roles with us, for example following the approach in taking forward an Antiracism Roundtable.</p> <p>(ii) a full survey of recruitment enquiries and how individuals progress through the process to appointment to enhance our understanding regarding any bias and where barriers exist.</p>

Theme	Our actions to date and future actions
	<p>(iii) introduce robust measures to review data every 6 months to ascertain whether the steps we are taking are having a positive impact on our workforce data and the GPG. Based on this we will consider adopting setting more detailed gender balance targets.</p> <p>(iv) review of our leavers processes including consideration of introducing exit interviews as well as exit questionnaires and other steps to identify what improvements can be made to retain staff where appropriate, including the use of retention payments as part of the development of a Market Supplement Policy.</p>
<p>Terms and Conditions relating to reward</p>	<p>The Reward Consultation and Negotiation Working Group is now established and is focussing on a variety of areas relating to reward.</p> <p>Key progress has been made in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - undertaking a consultation exercise to develop a new Pay Policy which is due to be implemented in May 2023. <p>The policy includes specific measures relating to starting pay as well as pay on progression for both Academic and Professional Services staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of new guidance pertaining to casual work which is being piloted during the 2022/23 academic year. This includes new arrangements with regard to minimum hours thresholds and ongoing reviews of contracted vs actual hours have also been established to ensure appropriate use of alternative contracts. - negotiations pertaining to the 35-hr week and harmonisation of terms and conditions are underway. - The Remuneration Committee is giving further consideration to arrangements for Professorial pay and consideration will also be given to Grade 9 off-scale pay for Professional Services staff. - further consideration will be given to Contribution Awards, including how we ensure consistency in use of the different types of awards available for staff.

Theme	Our actions to date and future actions
Recognition	<p>We continue to highlight equality, diversity and inclusion in a specific category within our annual Excellence Awards.</p> <p>As part of our new Academic Promotion Policy/Framework of Criteria, we have included a mandatory requirement for those applying for promotion to demonstrate how they contribute to equality, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>We are also intending to recognise additional roles undertaken by staff in our proposed workload model.</p>
Progression	<p>A new Academic Promotion Policy/Framework of Criteria has been launched in February 2023. This introduces new criteria which aim to broaden how we recognise academic achievement through our promotion process. There have been extensive briefings for staff, academic line managers/Heads of School and our Senior Vice-Principal will lead sessions in how to prepare a strong application for promotion.</p> <p>The new procedure includes the opportunity for applicants to submit information about individual circumstances either on the application form or on a separate, confidential form with a process to consider detail submitted. This includes the opportunity for staff to highlight factors that may have impacted on the quantity of output such as part time working, caring responsibilities and health matters.</p> <p>We continue to provide guidance to our Heads of School to encourage applications from female members of staff as well as further support this through sessions delivered by our Women's Development Network.</p> <p>We have also continued our Social Bias Observer scheme involving a social bias observers sitting on promotion sub-Committees.</p> <p>The Regrading and Professional Services Career Progression Working Group has been established to consider how we can enhance career progression for Professional Services staff.</p>
Career Development opportunities	<p>We will be undertaking a review of our annual review process to ensure a closer link with our Academic Promotions procedure and to further enhance how this process supports career development for all staff.</p>

Theme	Our actions to date and future actions
	<p>The Regrading and Career Development Working Group is also considering other steps to support career development such as the creation of secondment and working shadowing policies.</p>
<p>Learning and Development</p>	<p>We have a range of EDI training that staff are asked to complete and others that are signposted to.</p> <p>Aurora Training Programme – we support women accessing this leadership programme by asking that schools allocate budget for at least one attendee per annum. To date, 89 female members of staff have completed the programme with 38 completing it during 2021/22 and 2022/23.</p> <p>We have also launched our International Leadership Development Programme again, following a pause due to the pandemic. This is aimed at staff Grade 8 and 9 and we currently have 18 members of staff participating in the programme (8 females).</p> <p>The Regrading and Career Development Working Group is also considering what other learning and development opportunities can be offered to support career development of staff.</p>
<p>Support</p>	<p>Mentoring and coaching – we have trained mentors for parents and carers and have encouraged more female members of staff to sign up to mentoring. This includes asking those completing the Aurora development programme to sign up to become a mentor once they have completed it.</p> <p>Our Women’s Development Network is established and a key activity is to host sessions for female members of staff considering applying for promotion. This provides female members of staff with the opportunity to hear from senior female members of staff who have previously applied for promotion.</p>

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN 2019-2024

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

1.1 This paper is to update Court on the University's legal obligation to promote the Gaelic language across the University and to inform Court about the suggested new requirements from the Scottish Funding Council to ensure regular Gaelic awareness activities are undertaken for Court members. The paper is for information.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Senior Management Team	6 April 2023
Further consideration/ approval required by	Court	26 April 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

3.1 Court is invited to note:

- the University's obligations as per the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.
- the University's Gaelic Language Plan 2019 -2024
- the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) Gaelic Language Plan which commits it to working with the HE sector to progress Gaelic language awareness and development at all levels including with Governing Bodies.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 secured Gaelic as an official language of Scotland. The aim behind the Act was to ensure the continued promotion of one of the original languages of Scotland, to celebrate our diversity as a nation and to continue to promote multilingualism in Scottish modern society.

- 4.2 The establishment of Gaelic as an official language through the Act brings statutory commitments for several public bodies across Scotland including some universities and the Scottish Funding Council. Under the Act, the University of Aberdeen is required to develop a Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) through which it should detail how it will promote awareness of the Gaelic language throughout the organisation. This is refreshed every five years. The University's current GLP 2019 – 2024 can be found [here](#) (with the Gaelic version [here](#)).
- 4.3 The GLP is led by the University's Gaelic Language Plan Advisory Group (GLPAG) which meets quarterly. It is chaired by Professor Marion Campbell, Vice-Principal Research and reports to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. It monitors activities and delivers an annual report on progress.
- 4.4 The University must report on its GLP implementation annually to Bòrd na Gàidhlig, an executive non-departmental public body responsible for developing and implementing the [National Gaelic Language Plan](#).

5 GAELIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

- 5.1 The University has a long Gaelic history going back to the time of its foundation in 1495 - the inscription on the tomb of Bishop Elphinstone outside King's Chapel is in Old Gaelic. There is also a strong heritage of Gaelic language and culture across the Northeast of Scotland – many place names and names of hills and rivers are derived from Gaelic and 'The Book of Deer', the oldest written record of Gaelic in Scotland with Gaelic written in its margins, originates from the North East of Scotland.
- 5.2 Today, the University provides varied opportunities for students to learn Gaelic either as a degree subject or alongside other degree programmes. These are supported by the University's Gaelic Department within the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture. Students are in the process of re-establishing the Celtic Society, which will promote the language and culture of Gaelic within the student community.

6 UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

- 6.1 The University's GLP details how it will promote Gaelic throughout its business. It has several high-level aims, to:
- raise awareness of Gaelic at all levels of the organisation
 - increase the number of students learning Gaelic
 - create more opportunities for staff and students to learn and use Gaelic
 - include Gaelic in the University's corporate identity as well as offering bi-lingual public services, including signage.

- 6.2 The University's current GLP was designed with the input of all relevant Schools and Directorates to ensure that the activities being suggested within the plan were achievable and deliverable and were able to be incorporated easily into the day-to-day functions of the University.
- 6.3 The GLPAG has driven forward initiatives such as bi-lingual Gaelic language signage, encouraging the sharing of staff and student experiences of using the Gaelic language, offering shared accommodation for Gaelic-speaking students, and increasing the level of bilingual University social media posts to generate interest and engagement in Gaelic (see Appendix A for a selection of recent activities). The Group has a remit to horizon-scan and address requirements emerging in the external environment. There are also several resources available to staff including a Gaelic letterhead, Gaelic brand templates and Gaelic email signatures should staff wish to use them. Court members may also request Gaelic email signatures via the GLPAG if they would like them.
- 6.4 In 2022 the University successfully secured funding from the Gaelic Language Implementation Fund (GLAIF) to appoint a dedicated Gaelic Language Development Officer for twelve months to progress the University's commitments in its GLP and to raise awareness of Gaelic and the University's GLP across the University. Carola MacCallum took up this post in February 2023.
- 6.5 Upcoming priorities for the GLPAG include offering Gaelic awareness sessions and Gaelic skills training to staff and organising events and exhibitions with a Gaelic theme and embedding Gaelic in other University events. Networking opportunities for Gaelic students will be increased through re-establishing a Gaelic Society connecting Gaelic speaking students from across the University. It is noted that the University will seek to address the national shortage of Gaelic teachers by exploring options to reinstate the Gaelic teaching course in the School of Education.

7 FUTURE DIRECTIONS – REQUIREMENTS VIA SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

- 7.1 The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) recently published its new Gaelic Language Plan - see [Gaelic Language Plan 2022 – 2027](#). The Plan commits the SFC to promoting and encouraging universities (and colleges) to introduce Gaelic language awareness and language learning opportunities for staff, and to report on progress made.
- 7.2 One commitment made within the new SFC plan is to work with Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland to encourage Gaelic awareness training for College and University Court/Board members and senior management.

7.3 As such SFC will be expecting Universities to ensure regular Gaelic awareness activities for Court members and members of Senior Management Teams. The University's GLPAG will ensure Court is kept apprised (through reports such as this document) of developments in relation to Gaelic and the GLP as part of the University's work to take forward its GLP commitments in 2023/24. This action will be embedded in the next iteration of the GLP. The University will be required to report on the progress made through its Outcome Agreement with the SFC.

8 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Court is invited to note the information contained in the paper, and particularly the University's ongoing obligation to progress the promotion and awareness of the Gaelic language, and to support the Scottish Government's commitment to give the Gaelic language protection and prominence as an official language of Scotland. Court should also note the new SFC plan for University Court members to engage in Gaelic awareness and the commitment of the University's GLPAG to keep Court aware of new developments in the area.

9 FURTHER INFORMATION

9.1 Further information is available from: Marion Campbell, Vice-Principal Research m.k.campbell@abdn.ac.uk, Janine Chalmers, Head of Organisational Development janine.chalmers@abdn.ac.uk or Carola MacCallum, Gaelic Language Development Officer carola.maccallum@abdn.ac.uk

15th March 2023

Confidentiality Status: Open

Recent Engagement Activities to support the University's Gaelic Language Plan and Awareness of Gaelic

Events

- The service in September in St Giles Cathedral to reflect on the life of the late Queen included an arrangement of Psalm 118 in Gaelic by the University's Professor Paul Mealar, performed by renowned singer Karen Matheson OBE. The University shared this on its social channels with a link to the news article <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/news/16341>. This is the video of the performance: <https://www.facebook.com/529942130/videos/409348188008715/>
- Museums and Special Collections used a bilingual introductory text in the online exhibition '[Walking with Birds: The Art of Audubon and MacGillivray](#)'. This reflected the heritage of Prof. William MacGillivray (1796-1872) who grew up on the Isle of Harris and spoke Gaelic.

Articles published

- An article by Frances Wilkins, Senior Lecturer in Ethnomusicology, the University of Aberdeen on Gaelic Psalm singing was featured in 'The Conversation' in August 2022 [Gaelic psalm singing: why the ancient tradition is in danger of disappearing \(theconversation.com\)](#)

Social media examples

- In June 2022, [a bilingual news story](#) on a Hebridean study exploring the link between genes and disease was shared on the University's webpage.
- A video of Finlay Morse singing 'Silent Night' in Gaelic in the University's King's College Chapel was shared on the University's Social Media platforms on Christmas Eve 2022. [As we look forward to Christmas,... - University of Aberdeen | Facebook](#)
- The phrase "Bliadhna Mhath Ùr" (Happy New Year) was shared next to "Happy Hogmanay" on University Social Media platforms on the 31st of December 2022. [Happy Hogmanay! Bliadhna Mhath... - University of Aberdeen | Facebook](#)
- A [tweet](#) was shared in May 2022 on the Gaelic for Business and Local Authorities online course.
- The annual Aberdeen Fèis was advertised through the University's Social Media Platforms on the 29th of March 2023. A member of staff and a student at the University are teaching at the Fèis. [Is e Fèis cothrom do dhaoine... - University of Aberdeen | Facebook](#)

Staff items

- In January 2023, [a news story](#) paying tribute to Christina McGonigle who worked in various roles in Gaelic and Celtic studies at the University between 1996 and 2015 was posted in the Staff Newsletter and University News webpage.
- A video from Historic Environment Scotland on pronouncing “Nollaig Chridheil” (Merry Christmas) was shared in the Staff Newsletter on the 22nd of December 2022, along with the Learn Gaelic Christmas vocabulary webpage.
- In January 2023, a news story ‘[Seinn Spioradail: Sacred Soundscapes of Scotland's Highland and Island Communities](#)’ invited readers to attend an event hosted by Frances Wilkins about Gaelic spiritual singing.
- A piece about the concert of Aberdeen Gaelic Choir (Còisir Gàidhlig Obar Dheathain) at the Cowdray Hall in April was published in Staff News. Several members of staff and students sing with the Aberdeen Gaelic Choir. [Aberdeen Gaelic Choir Concert](#)

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND STANDARDS REVIEW: FINDINGS**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide members of the Court with an update on the findings of the recent Quality Enhancement and Standards Review by the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS), which took place on 14 February 2023. In particular, the paper notes that the Review team is **confident** in the University's progress.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	University Education Committee	23 March 2023
	Quality Assurance Committee	29 March 2023
	Senate	19 April 2023
Further consideration/ approval required by	Court	26 April 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

3.1 Members of the Court are invited to note the findings of the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review detailed in the Report attached as **Appendix A**.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) review process, Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR), completed its fourth and final cycle in 2021/22. ELIR has been replaced by a new external institutional review methodology which will be a two-phase approach as follows:

- **Phase 1:** Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR)/Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM) (2022/23-2023/24)
- **Phase 2:** Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) (2024/25 onwards)

4.2 The new external institutional review method is being developed in the context of a major Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Review: *Coherent Provision and Sustainability: A Review of Tertiary Education and Research*. A key outcome of this review to date, has recommended the development of a new Tertiary

Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF). The TQEF will cover both Further and Higher Education provision under a single framework. The requirements to comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) also influenced the revised process along with a comprehensive evaluation of ELIR 4. The new TQEF is being developed in close consultation with the sector and is due for implementation in 2024/25.

- 4.3 Pending completion of the development of the TQEF, there is a need for continued external review of quality to ensure the SFC can fulfil its statutory obligations under section 13 of the *Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005* in regard to quality assurance and enhancement. As such, the QAAS have implemented a phased approach to quality enhancement arrangements, with Phase 1 commencing in 2022/23-2023/24, and Phase 2 commencing in 2024/25, coinciding with the publication and launch of the TQEF.
- 4.4 During the two academic years which comprise Phase 1 (2022/23 and 2023/24) an institution will undergo QESR during one and will have an Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM) in the other. The relative timing of QESR and ILM are driven by the timing of ELIR 4 and, as an institution who underwent ELIR early in the cycle, the University's QESR visit took place in 2022/23 with an ILM being scheduled for 2023/24.
- 4.5 The Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) for the University took place on 14 February 2023, following a comprehensive submission of required documentation. On the day, a number of sessions took place with the Review panel:
- Session with HEI Key Contacts
 - Session with Students
 - Session with Quality Assurance-focused Staff
 - Session with Quality Enhancement-focused Staff

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 5.1 There are only two possible outcomes from this process: confident, or not confident. The Review team reached the following conclusion for the University of Aberdeen: "From the evidence presented, the review team is **confident** that the institution is making effective progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision to enable effective arrangements to be in place for managing academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience." In addition, four areas of good practice were identified, and only two recommendations for action both of which the Review team understood were actions already being taken forward by the University. These are summarised below and outlined in detail in the report, attached as **Appendix A**.
- 5.2 The report has been reviewed for factual accuracy by the Vice-Principal (Education), Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement, and Director of Academic Services and Online Education, and returned to QAA Scotland. The report was published on the QAAS website on 11 April 2023.

- 5.3 The QESR report identified the following areas of good practice:
- 5.3.1 *Effective implementation of University strategies*: the University has an effective approach to strategic planning in relation to teaching and learning, particularly the engagement with the strategy and its underpinning action plans.
 - 5.3.2 *Engagement with Enhancement Themes*: the University has successfully embedded learning from the national Enhancement Themes, particularly in relation to institutional policy and practice.
 - 5.3.3 *An Inclusive Approach to Blended Education/Learning and Teaching*: the University has made significant progress with its vision for blended education, effectively using learning and recommendations from its in-depth review and evaluation of blended and online learning to develop the vision for education.
 - 5.3.4 *Student Partnership*: the University and Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) have a long-standing, embedded and collaborative relationship based on partnership working across all aspects of University life.
- 5.4 In terms of identified recommendations, the QESR report identified the following:
- 5.4.1 *Student Access to External Examiner Reports*: ensuring the publication of External Examiner reports by the end of the academic year 2022/23. Progress is being made to develop communications to Schools and to students in this regard.
 - 5.4.2 *Personal Tutoring*: continuing work to finalise the University's approach to personal tutoring arrangements, ensuring the provision of equity of experience for all students, and that the support is clearly communicated by the end of the academic year 2022/23. Progress is being made to consolidate this information and to present it to students in a meaningful way.
- 5.5 Next steps include the development of an action plan, which will follow from the recommendations made by the review team and will be approved through the University Education Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee, with ongoing monitoring taking place. The Institutional Liaison Meeting (ILM) which forms part of the follow-up to the QESR visit will take place on 23 January 2024.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 6.1 Further information is available from Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education (ruth.taylor@abdn.ac.uk) Steve Tucker, Dean for Quality Assurance and Enhancement (s.j.tucker@abdn.ac.uk), and Gillian Mackintosh, Director of Academic Services and Online Education (g.mackintosh@abdn.ac.uk)

4 April 2023

Confidentiality Status: Open

Quality Enhancement and Standards Review

University of Aberdeen

Review Report

February 2023



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Introduction

This is a report of a review under the [Quality Enhancement and Standards Review](#) (QESR) method conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) as part of Phase 1 of the Scottish Quality Enhancement arrangements at the University of Aberdeen.

The review took place on 14 February 2023 and was conducted by a review team, as follows:

- Mr Rory O'Neill (Student Reviewer)
- Ms Katrina Swanton (Coordinating Reviewer)
- Dr Gillian Thomson (Academic Reviewer)

QESR is Phase 1 of a two-phase approach that enables the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to fulfil its statutory obligation under Section 13 of the *Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005* to ensure that provision is made for assessing and enhancing the quality of fundable higher education provided by fundable bodies for academic quality and enhancement between 2022-24.

The main purpose of the review was to:

- provide assurance about the provider's management of its responsibilities for academic standards to inform an enhancement-led full institutional review in Phase 2
- provide assurance about the provider's management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities for students to inform an enhancement-led full review in Phase 2
- report on any features of good practice
- make recommendations for action.

About the University of Aberdeen

Founded in 1495, the University of Aberdeen is one of Scotland's four ancient universities.

The Aberdeen 2040 Strategy states that the University remains committed to its foundational purpose of being open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others. The University achieves its purpose through excellence in its core activities of education and research. The 20 Commitments in Aberdeen 2040 are underpinned by its four Strategic Themes which, over the next 20 years, will shape the University's learning, discovery and actions. The Themes are inclusive, interdisciplinary, international and sustainable.

The University describes itself as offering a flexible undergraduate curriculum that encourages students to grow as independent learners, with its degree programmes combining breadth and depth. The postgraduate curriculum is growing and, as with the undergraduate curriculum, draws from the University's research.

The University currently offers over 600 undergraduate and over 380 taught postgraduate degree programmes, many of which are professionally accredited, across a wide range of disciplines, with the latest statistics showing it has approximately 21,500 students, with approximately 685 studying on transnational campuses and 1055 studying online. The University currently has 3,600 staff.

The University has two campuses: one is at King's College in Old Aberdeen; and a second campus, accommodating Medicine, Dentistry, Medical Science and Nutrition, is located

adjacent to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. The University established a partnership with Al Faleh Group (AFG) College in Doha in 2017 which sits alongside other transnational education partnerships.

Findings

From the evidence presented, the review team is **confident** that the University of Aberdeen is making effective progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision to enable effective arrangements to be in place for managing academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience.

Good practice

The QESR team found the following **features of good practice**:

- **Effective implementation of University strategies:** The University has an effective approach to strategic planning in relation to learning and teaching, with a particular strength being the widespread engagement with, and ownership of, the University Strategy and its underpinning action plans, by staff and students. Among all staff there is a clear understanding of how the strategy and action plans inform institutional priorities, supported by appropriate monitoring and evaluation of impact to ensure the achievement of strategic goals (paragraph 13).
- **Engagement with the Enhancement Themes:** The University has successfully embedded learning from the national Enhancement Themes, enabling Theme priorities to be realised in a wide range of institutional policy and practice including ongoing work to decolonise the curriculum. Student interns play active roles in the delivery of the University's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP) of Themes-related projects and the institution adopts a range of approaches to effectively share practice including a cross-institutional community of practice which is valued by staff (paragraph 14).
- **An inclusive approach to blended education/learning and teaching:** The University has made significant progress with its vision for blended education. It has effectively used the learning and recommendations from its in-depth review and evaluation of blended and online learning and assessment practice to support the development of its vision for Education, its Principles for the Delivery of Education and a comprehensive suite of support materials and resources for both students and staff (paragraph 36).
- **Student partnership:** The University and Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) have a long-standing, embedded and collaborative relationship which is based on genuine and effective partnership working across all aspects of university life. This relationship brings a wide range of benefits including representative structures that support the diversity of the student population, students as engaged members of strategic Task and Finish Groups, and the successful development of the student intern role which provides effective opportunities for students to play a full part in the development of university policy and practice associated with learning, teaching and the wider student experience (paragraph 20).

Recommendations for action

The QESR team makes the following recommendations for action:

- **Student access to external examiner reports:** Ensure that all students have access to external examiner reports for their programme of study by the end of academic year 2022-23 (paragraph 30).
- **Personal tutoring:** Continue work to finalise the University's approach to personal tutoring arrangements, to ensure it provides equity of experience for the University's changing student population, particularly postgraduate taught students, and the support provided is clearly communicated to all students by the end of academic year 2022-23 (paragraph 29).

Institutional approach to quality enhancement

Strategic approach to enhancement

1 The QESR team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to appropriately monitor and review its strategic approach to enhancement. The team considered a range of documents, including the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy and its implementation plan, the Education Action Plan, Principles for the Delivery of Education, SFC Outcome Agreement report, and minutes from meetings of key institutional committees with responsibility for quality and standards, and for learning, teaching and the wider student experience. In addition, the team met with staff and students during the review visit.

2 The University's Strategy - Aberdeen 2040 - sets out the direction of the University for the next 20 years and is focused on four strategic themes: 'inclusive, interdisciplinary, international and sustainable'. The Strategy also responds to five interdisciplinary challenges which the University is committed to tackling. Aberdeen 2040 sets out a range of commitments with respect to each of the strategic themes, with a core set of strategic themes for education and research. A comprehensive implementation plan to 2025 has been developed to facilitate the delivery of Aberdeen 2040 over an initial five-year period, along with a detailed action plan, which is updated on a rolling annual basis. The University Senior Management Team (SMT) has responsibility for the implementation plan and detailed action plan with progress reviewed at least twice per year. Each of the academic schools and professional services also produce annual plans with a focus on delivery and support for education and research.

3 Staff and students confirmed that a comprehensive and collaborative consultation was carried out to support the development of the Strategy with appropriate opportunities provided to contribute. Students who met the QESR team had a clear understanding of the aims of the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy and its four strategic themes, and provided the QESR team with a number of examples where its implementation was already impacting positively on aspects of their studies and student life. These include students being involved in the University's project to decolonise the curriculum and the use of student interns in a number of the Task and Finish Groups (paragraph 6) which have been established to support the delivery of the University's vision for education.

4 The staff met by the QESR team also had a clear understanding of the aims and themes of the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy and spoke very positively about the impact that the Principles for the Delivery of Education are having on their approaches to teaching and learning (paragraph 7). The team heard from staff that the themes contained within Aberdeen 2040 were, in a number of instances, seen as directly aligning with professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements for those disciplines undergoing accreditation. Staff also confirmed that the themes within the Strategy are being used by the academic schools during the Internal Teaching Review (ITR) process, where staff found them useful to align to in order to effectively communicate work being done (paragraph 41).

5 The University's vision for education, aligning with the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy, is set out in a five-year, high-level Education Action Plan (to 2025), which has been developed to 'recognise that Education at the University of Aberdeen encompasses a broad range of areas and some of which go beyond the Aberdeen 2040 aims and actions'. In addition the University has developed a more detailed annual plan of activities which is updated on a rolling annual basis. This suite of documents explains the University's 'Education Strategy'. The Vice-Principal Education has responsibility for delivery of the Education Strategy, with oversight and monitoring provided by the University Education Committee (UEC). The University's vision for Education is based on five principles: 'Nurture active learning; Make

most effective use of in-person teaching; Assessment should be authentic and efficient; Provide timely and meaningful feedback; Ensure accessibility and inclusivity'. The QESR team notes the comprehensive nature of both the Education and Annual Action Plans which clearly set out the University's approach, and that their development has usefully drawn on reviews of the institution's practice implemented during the pandemic (paragraphs 32-36).

6 A number of Task and Finish Groups (TFGs) and Steering Groups, involving both staff and student interns (paragraph 17) from across the University, have been established to support the implementation of the Education Action Plan. These groups report progress and findings to a range of committees including UEC, and are used as an effective mechanism to share good practice across the University. The QESR team learned from staff that the Aberdeen 2040 Delivery of Education has been, and the Graduate Attributes and Skills TFGs will be, instrumental in the delivery of the education strategic objectives. The International Experience TFG is working in conjunction with other TFGs, to develop approaches to support virtual student mobility with the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) pilot being an early example of developing practice. In addition, the Transforming Experience of Students through Assessment (TESTA) pilot is already generating a real eagerness among the staff involved to try different forms of assessment. Staff outlined that the TESTA pilots are already starting to deliver practical changes including approaches to formative feedback, and inclusivity and accessibility within assessment design.

7 The QESR team learned that during 2020-21, a range of approaches was used to capture student and staff views on the blended delivery of teaching, learning and assessment, and the Evaluation of Blended Learning report was produced (paragraphs 3 and 32). The QESR team is impressed by how the University has used this information to develop its Principles for the Delivery of Education for Academic Year 2022-23, which have been designed to align to and support the education strand of the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy (paragraph 2).

8 School Directors of Education play a key role, along with staff and student members of each School Education Committee, in embedding the University's vision for education and its associated action plans, including monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes. The School Director of Education role is an effective conduit for supporting the implementation of institutional strategy within the academic schools and supporting the sharing of good practice.

9 The QESR team can confirm that the University has appropriate plans and mechanisms in place to support it to effectively engage with the Scottish Enhancement Themes, including the current Resilient Learning Communities Theme, for which the University's Vice-Principal Education is Deputy Theme Leader and a member of the QAA Scotland Theme Leadership Team, providing strategic leadership to support the delivery of the Theme. The Dean for Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement and the student Vice-President Education are also members of the Theme Leaders' Group (TLG). The University's Year 3 plan outlines the University's cross-institutional approach to the delivery of its Themes' work, which is aligned to the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy (paragraphs 2-5), its approach to digital/online learning (paragraphs 32-36), and involves staff and students working in partnership.

10 At the time of this review, the University's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP) was funding over 20 active projects related to the current Enhancement Theme including staff and student mental wellbeing and accessibility for all, with more projects planned for the final year of the Theme (2022-23). Many of the LTEP projects involve student interns, who are also part of the University's wider student intern network

(paragraph 17). Staff who met the QESR team discussed the specific example of a project where student interns were developing an evidence base on how care-experience students use the University student services.

11 The QESR team understands that outcomes from the LTEP projects will be presented at the University's annual Academic Symposium on Resilient Learning Communities in April 2023. Both the annual Academic Symposium and an institution Community of Practice (with representation from all the academic schools and the professional services areas) are being used to share developments in policy and practice related to the University's Enhancement Themes work and the implementation of the Education Strategy.

12 The University also contributes to wider Themes work including the 'Understanding Micro-credentials and Small Qualifications in Scotland' project, the 'Anti-Racist Curriculum Project' and the 'Valuing and Recognising Prior Learning and Experience' project. The QESR team heard that staff have been actively encouraged to share the Enhancement Themes projects and resources they are working on by submitting proposals to conferences, and in June 2023 the University will host an international sector conference which aims to share practice and celebrate higher education, focusing on compassionate approaches to education, and will positively promote the achievements of the current Resilient Learning Communities Enhancement Theme. The team understands that through linkages with the sector-wide Anti-Racist Curriculum Project, the University's Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group is developing a set of principles and working on a suite of resources to support the academic schools to make changes to their curriculums. The University is also continuing to work on the development of a toolkit of case studies and resources from its Theme-related projects.

13 The QESR team has identified as **good practice** the University's effective approach to strategic planning in relation to learning and teaching, with a particular strength being the widespread engagement with, and ownership of, the University Strategy and its underpinning action plans, by staff and students. Among all staff there is a clear understanding of how the strategy and action plans inform institutional priorities, supported by appropriate monitoring and evaluation of impact to ensure the achievement of strategic goals (paragraphs 2-5).

14 The University has successfully embedded learning from the national Enhancement Themes, enabling Theme priorities to be realised in a wide range of institutional policy and practice including ongoing work to decolonise the curriculum. Student interns play active roles in the delivery of the University's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme (LTEP) of Themes-related projects. The institution also adopts a range of approaches to effectively share practice including a cross-institutional community of practice, as part of its annual Academic Symposium and through the production of a range of toolkits and resources. The University actively contributes to a range of sector-level Theme work including the 'Understanding Micro-credentials and Small Qualifications in Scotland' project, the 'Anti-Racist Curriculum Project' and the 'Valuing and Recognising Prior Learning and Experience' project. The QESR team has identified the University's approach as **good practice**.

Student partnership

15 The QESR team is confident that the University has an effective approach to developing and maintaining student engagement and partnership arrangements. The team considered the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) for session 2021-22, the review documents for the SPA, key committee minutes, and meetings with staff and students. The team noted that, at the time of this visit, the SPA was being reviewed by a joint working group consisting of representatives from the University and the Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA). In meeting staff involved in the SPA development, the team learned that AUSA and the University are currently working together to ensure that, in the future, the SPA is more objective-focused and identifies priority actions. In meetings with the team, student representatives recognised the value of the SPA as a tool for embedding the ethos of partnership with the University and the associated engagement in supporting student partnership working between both organisations.

16 The QESR team considers the University of Aberdeen's approach to student engagement to be a particular strength, with evidence of student feedback and participation across all key processes linked to the management of quality and standards. The University has in place appropriate policies and procedures to ensure appropriate representation of students on key university committees related to quality assurance and enhancement including University Court, and Senate and its sub-committees including the University Education and Quality Assurance Committees. Students have ex-officio membership of these committees from the AUSA President and Vice-President (Education) or their nominees. Students confirmed that the University provides appropriate training to support students undertaking committee representation roles.

17 From the documentation supplied by the University on its Education Strategy (paragraphs 5 and 6), the QESR team view student involvement in each of the Task and Finish Groups (TFGs) and working groups, and the establishment of the role of student intern as particularly positive because this allows students to be equals in the decision-making associated with these groups. The team heard in meetings with staff and students, that student engagement in this way is supporting a strong culture of partnership working - for example, in areas such as Decolonising the Curriculum (paragraph 12), and appointing student interns to support on aspects of developments such as the Principles for Delivery of Education (paragraphs 33 and 34) and the TESTA pilot project (paragraph 6). Student interns who met the team expressed a great amount of ownership for the work that they are engaged with including, for example, running student focus groups, and staff also commented positively on the levels of student engagement that the institution is currently experiencing in key enhancement projects.

18 At academic school level, undergraduate and postgraduate taught student representation is through elected Class Reps who attend the Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs), and elected Student Association School Convenors who are the lead student representative for each School. Student Association School Convenors support elected class representatives and attend academic school-level committees - for example, School Education Committees. The QESR team understands that elected Postgraduate Research (PGR) student representatives are also members of the Doctoral Reps Group, which meets regularly with the PGR School to discuss PGR matters. The Doctoral Reps group provides a platform for School PGR representatives to collectively represent the PGR community. It provides a direct line of engagement between all PGR students, the PGR School and university committees. Members of the Doctoral Reps Group attend various university committees and working groups including the PGR Committee, Research Policy Committee and the PGR Task and Finish Group. Based on evidence from committee minutes and meetings with staff and students, academic staff clearly demonstrated an

openness to receiving feedback from students and addressing issues raised quickly and fully. Students commented positively on their experience as representatives, confirmed they had appropriate opportunities to give feedback on strategy and policy development and on key decisions. Students also confirmed that the class representative training provided by the AUSA had been useful and accessible to engage with and had effectively prepared them for their role.

19 The QESR team can confirm that the University offers an appropriate range of formal and informal mechanisms to allow all students, regardless of place, mode and stage of study, to feed back on their experience including participating in the National Student Survey (NSS), the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (ASES), SSLCs, focus groups and Course Feedback Forms. Students confirmed that they are confident that this data is effectively used in decision-making across the University to improve the student experience.

20 The University and AUSA have a long-standing, embedded and collaborative relationship which is based on genuine and effective partnership working across all aspects of university life and was identified by the QESR team as **good practice**. This relationship brings a wide range of benefits to the student experience including representative structures that support the diversity of the student population and students as engaged members of strategic Task and Finish Groups. The development of the student intern role provides effective opportunities for students to play a full part in the development of university policy and practice associated with learning, teaching and the wider student experience with students often taking leadership roles in the work with which they engage. Students are clear that their contributions are valued and acted upon.

Action taken since ELIR 4

21 The QESR team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to monitor and review the actions taken in response to ELIR 4. The team considered the ELIR 4 follow-up report, action plan and minutes from key university committees and followed up on key areas in meetings with staff and students.

22 The evidence submitted allowed the QESR team to conclude that the University has continued to enhance and embed the commendations made during the last ELIR. For example, the University remains dedicated to its commitment to fair access and supporting student transition, linking their overarching strategic direction to their strategy for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as outlined in the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy. Examples of successfully completed initiatives include the North of Scotland University Collaborative Project and the University of Aberdeen Business School Outreach Project.

23 The QESR team learned, through meeting with senior staff, that progress with the recommendations from ELIR 4 was considered by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and presented to University Senate. The University Education Committee (UEC) has been responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the changes made in response to ELIR 4 and has ongoing responsibility to monitor and evaluate the implementation of further actions arising.

24 ELIR 4 identified seven recommendations, on each of which it is evident that the University has taken action in a systematic way, with the University's action plan providing a detailed record of progress and the status of each action. The QESR team note that three recommendations remain ongoing and no specific completion dates for these were provided in the documentation supplied. Senior university staff acknowledged that these recommendations remain ongoing and that an action plan has been compiled to ensure these would be completed by the end of this academic year.

25 Based on the evidence supplied by the University, the QESR team are content that the four completed ELIR recommendations have been appropriately addressed. The relationship between the Postgraduate Research School and the academic schools has been further developed through a range of changes including: harmonising and improving processes for recruitment, induction, training and monitoring the progress of PGR students; rebuilding the PGR website; the establishment of a 'Doctoral Researchers Group (DRG)'; a professional development programme for PGR supervisors; a supervisor's handbook; a workshop for those who are new to the supervision of PGR students; and regular update training sessions for experienced supervisors. The team heard that these developments, particularly the training for PGR supervisors, has been very positively received by academic staff.

26 The QESR team is satisfied, based on the information provided, that appropriate progress has been made with respect to the management of arrangements for collaborative partnerships to allow the University to ensure that the Register of Partnerships and Collaborative Provision is current and complete. The University's Academic Services team has responsibility for maintaining this register. The team learned that all collaborative agreements are approved by the Programme Management Committee before progressing through standard university quality processes for programme approval, annual monitoring and Internal Teaching Review (ITR). Staff involved in supporting the delivery of collaborative partner programmes confirmed that external examiners have responsibilities for both home and collaborative partner versions of programmes.

27 The University has established appropriate mechanisms to ensure that all new staff complete its 'Learning and Teaching in HE' course within one year of joining the institution and receive a range of support information from the Centre for Academic Development (CAD). PGR students who teach are also required to complete a professional development programme. Finally, the QESR team concluded having considered a range of documented evidence, including a sample of ITR reports and school Critical Analysis reports, that the role of professional services has been strengthened within the University's ITR process and is consistent with sector expectations (paragraph 41).

28 In response to the ELIR 4 recommendation, the University is currently undertaking an extensive review of its personal tutoring system, which senior university staff recognised had taken longer to carry out than expected. Early positive outcomes of this review have been greater clarity of, and support for, the role of the Senior Personal Tutor and a website containing support information for staff and students, which has been well received by those who met the QESR team. The current personal tutor arrangements for undergraduate (UG) students are well understood by staff and students. However, arrangements for postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students appear to be more bespoke and vary depending on subject area. The ELIR team noted that the term 'personal tutor' is not consistently adopted with a variety of other roles used to fulfil the function of a personal tutor.

29 While all students assured the team that they knew they could approach academic staff and access the University's centralised student support services when they needed help, the QESR team **recommends** that the University continues work to finalise its approach to personal tutoring arrangements, to ensure it provides equity of experience for the University's changing student population - particularly postgraduate taught students - and the support provided is clearly communicated to all students by the end of academic year 2022-23.

30 Since ELIR 4, the University has reviewed its arrangements for the monitoring, training and induction of external examiners (EEs), setting out a model where training delivery is split, carried out centrally for university-wide aspects of the role and followed by

training in academic schools for specific discipline requirements. Further clarification has been provided to EEs regarding training responsibilities and there is now a dedicated area within the University's virtual learning environment which contains policy and institutional information and training requirements. The QESR team understands that providing students with access to EE reports for their programmes is an ongoing matter. The team found in meeting with students, they had some knowledge of the role of external examiners through their course handbooks but very little understanding of the external examiners reports for their programmes - that these reports should be available to them, how to access the reports and how external examiner feedback informs practice. The QESR team therefore **recommends** that the University ensures that all students have access to external examiner reports for their programme of study by the end of academic year 2022-23.

Sector-wide enhancement topic

31 The QESR team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to monitor and review its approach to defining and delivering effective and inclusive digital/blended learning. The team considered the update paper provided by the University, the Evaluation of Blended Learning report, minutes from key institutional committees, and met with staff and students.

32 The QESR team is able to confirm that the University has been further developing its online and blended learning approaches as a result of digital developments accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The University's approach is grounded in the recommendations made following a wide-ranging and comprehensive evaluation of blended teaching, learning and assessment across the institution conducted in 2021. The resulting evaluation report is comprehensive in its consideration of data, including feedback from both students and staff, and informed by sector-wide practice and evidence. Work to action all of the recommendations in the evaluation report remains ongoing.

33 The QESR team was impressed by the manner in which the University has effectively used this evaluation information to support the development of its 'Principles for the Delivery of Education for Academic Year 2022-23', which have been designed to align to and support the education strand of the Aberdeen 2040 Strategy. The team note that these Principles were developed through work supported by one of the student interns (paragraphs 10 and 17), discussed across all the academic schools through mechanisms like School Education Committees, were formalised through the University committee structure, and are framed in terms of commitments to learning and teaching from both staff and students.

34 These Principles have been designed to be both student and staff-facing, and a set of resources and toolkits has been developed for both groups to facilitate a community of learning, with the University setting out its commitment to delivery and outlining the expectations for student engagement with the process. Staff spoke positively about the support that had been developed for them and outlined a number of specific resources that have influenced and supported changes in their learning and teaching practice. These include a micro-credentials upskilling course (Delivering Tutoring for Online Courses) which has been offered in advance of each academic year since the pandemic, focusing on the Principles for the Delivery of Education, and a range of detailed case study examples to support implementation of the evaluation recommendations.

35 The Aberdeen 2040 Strategy and the Principles for the Delivery of Education make clear the importance of embedding inclusivity and accessibility throughout the overarching strategy. The Digital Accessibility Working Group supports the institution to be compliant with regulations in this area. Regular Equality and Diversity Impact assessments will continue as part of the delivery of learning and teaching across the institution. Working groups have also

been established to embed work-integrated learning opportunities for students incorporating online delivery methods and to raise the awareness of contract cheating among students and provide additional support.

36 The University has made significant progress with its vision for blended education. It has effectively used the learning and recommendations from its in-depth review and evaluation of blended and online learning and assessment practice to support the development of its vision for Education, its Principles for the Delivery of Education and a comprehensive suite of support materials and resources for both students and staff. The QESR team considers this to be a feature of **good practice**. Staff and students spoke about the positive impact on the learning, teaching and assessment experience of students and provided a range of examples of changes to practice including more variety of assessment formats, direct linkage of teaching material to the four pillars of the Strategy, and students in Aberdeen working collaboratively with students in international partner campuses and with professionals overseas.

Academic standards and quality processes

Key features of the institution's approach to managing quality and setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards

37 The QESR team is confident that the University has effective arrangements for the monitoring and review of its approach to managing quality and to setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards. The team considered the University's Academic Quality Handbook; samples from the annual monitoring process; internal teaching review documentation; papers and minutes from institutional committees; and met with staff and students. There was a high level of consistency across the sources of evidence considered by the team, which demonstrates processes that are well understood and had clear outcomes.

38 The QESR team found that the University's arrangements for managing quality and setting standards meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and align with the guidance issued by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Institutional policies relating to programme and course development and approval are aligned to sector expectations expressed in the Quality Code, take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (SCQF) and relevant qualification frameworks. The team was assured that the University had a robust plan for reviewing and updating the policies under the remit of UEC up to 2024-25, including incorporating recommendations from current Task and Finish Groups (paragraph 6). In addition, a new working group (Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG)) is responsible for the development and regular review of education policy and regulations and for ensuring their alignment with the Quality Code and wider academic infrastructure. Any recommended changes to the University's education policies and regulations arising from APRG's work would be approved by the University Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).

39 The University's Academic Quality Handbook contains the University's policies, procedures and regulations relating to all aspects of teaching and learning. The effectiveness of these policies and procedures is overseen by the QAC chaired by the Dean of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, which has representation from each school and the student body. The University uses three processes to monitor and review academic standards across all its taught provision: Annual Course Review (ACR), Annual Programme Review (APR) and Internal Teaching Review (ITR).

40 Each of the academic schools manage the ACR process, reviewing these forms internally. All ACR forms are also submitted to QAC and a sample of these are considered, typically targeting higher risk courses - such as those delivered by a partner, new courses or courses where problems have been previously identified. APRs are submitted by the academic schools to QAC and are discussed, with the sample of minutes considered by the QESR team demonstrating that any policy issues identified are referred to relevant committees for consideration, as appropriate.

41 ITR is conducted at school-level by panels comprising internal and external academic peers and student members, informed by an evidence-based critical analysis, and supported by the school's quality assurance repository (which is prepopulated with course and programme annual monitoring reports and their responses; professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) reports and responses; past ITR submissions and follow-up reporting; and the School Plan, quality assurance metrics and action plans). Since the last ELIR, the ITR process has been amended to integrate professional services review and reflect the extent and quality of interactions between student-facing professional services, and the academic school and its students to identify areas for enhancement (paragraph 27). Staff from relevant professional services, including Registry, the Careers and Employability Service, Student Experience and Student Support engage in each school's ITR. Based on the sample of ILR documents supplied, the QESR team is assured that the ITR process is robust and effectively supported by the University.

42 The University has effective arrangements in place for the management of assessment. The University's Academic Quality Handbook details the Code of Practice on Assessment which lists the University's Common Grading Scale and undergraduate degree classifications and awards within postgraduate programmes. The QESR team was assured that students knew how to access information relating to assessment and degree outcomes. The University has recently begun piloting TESTA (paragraph 6) in two of its Schools and the team was assured that the University has been moving to incorporate more authentic and flexible assessment approaches through the Principles for the Delivery of Education as part of the Education Strategy overseen by the University Education Committee (UEC) (paragraphs 33 and 34). External examiners are required to comment on the appropriateness of assessment processes and the comparability of provision at other institutions. Based on the sample of reports supplied, the team can confirm that EEs are generally positive about the University's management of assessment. The external examiner report template clearly allows for responses to be made at school and university level and returned to the examiner to close the loop on their feedback.

43 The University has recently completed a Senate Effectiveness Review undertaken by Advance HE. This Review recommended changes to the remit and memberships of UEC and its sub-committees, and recommended that the QAC be established as a direct Committee of Senate, rather than as a sub-committee of UEC. Documents provided by the University qualify that UEC will have focus on the strategic oversight of education provision and its alignment to Aberdeen 2040. The committee will also have oversight of innovation, academic development and enhancement, together with focus on the wider student experience including employability and entrepreneurship, student mobility and student support. QAC will have focus on the quality assurance of UG, PGT and taught elements of PGR provision together with oversight of the development, review and monitoring of university policy relating to education provision. This change came into effect in academic session 2022-23, and the QESR team noted that it was already being positively received by staff; in particular, the development of a new Academic Regulations and Policy Group, and the support being provided to QAC members by the Academic Services team in helping to summarise and produce university-wide thematic information for consideration by QAC (paragraph 46).

44 Collaborative programmes are subject to the same quality processes as on-campus programmes. In addition to this, further detailed reports related to the University's transnational education (TNE) and partnerships are presented and discussed at QAC annually, allowing greater institutional oversight of any themes or concerns that might emerge across the University's collaborative provision. The University has signed up to QAA's new TNE quality evaluation and enhancement scheme - 'QE-TNE'. It was reported to UEC that, by registering for the QAA QE-TNE Scheme, the University is investing in the quality of the students' academic experience and demonstrating its commitment to the advancement of UK higher education delivered overseas.

Use of external reference points in quality processes

45 The QESR team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to monitor and regularly review its approach to the use of external reference points in quality processes. As part of the review, the team considered the mapping of policies, procedures and quality processes against the Quality Code, minutes of key committees, external examiner reports, annual SFC reporting and met with staff.

46 The QESR team noted the comprehensive and clear mapping of the University's policies, procedures and quality processes against the Quality Code, and this mapping is published on the University website. The team heard that the mapping is intended to be a 'live' document and can confirm that plans are in place to ensure that the Academic Regulations and Policy Group considers and updates one mapping section at each meeting to ensure that it remains up-to-date (paragraph 43). Staff confirmed that the mapping exercise had usefully highlighted areas of practice which would benefit from improvement - for example, enhancements to the University's placement policy, which are subsequently being incorporated into the work of the Student Placement Task and Finish Group.

47 The University's programme development, monitoring and review processes take account of, and remain current with, key external reference points, including the Quality Code, Subject Benchmark Statements and the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (SCQF). Programmes are also expected to align with PSRB requirements where appropriate. The QESR team saw evidence of the use of key reference points in ITR processes. In meeting with staff with recent experience of the University's ITR process, the Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) in particular, were highlighted as a useful reference point in devising the structures for programmes.

48 The QESR team noted in the evidence provided that, as part of the University's ITR process, course-level curriculum maps to the relevant SBS are produced by programme teams and these mappings also detail how students will meet the University's Graduate Attributes. Feedback from external examiners, in addition to industry experts and other key external stakeholders, is gathered as part of programme development and review, and also where programme teams are progressing significant amendments to existing courses and programmes.

49 External examiners comment on academic standards and assessment arrangements, in addition to drawing comparisons with provision at other institutions, providing ongoing assurance on the use of external reference points. Staff spoke positively about how external examiner reports are used during the Annual Programme Review (APR) process to support enhancements to programmes and courses. The QESR team understands that, at the time of this review, the University's analysis of external examiner reports was underway for session 2020-21 with the final report scheduled to be considered by the QAC in March 2023.

Use of data and evidence to inform self-evaluation and decision-making

50 The QESR team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to monitor and review its approach to the use of data and evidence to inform self-evaluation and decision-making. The team considered evidence from the institution including the Outcome Agreement Self-Evaluation, the University's use of data on continuation, degree outcomes/classifications, academic complaints and appeals, samples of Annual Programme and Course Review forms, feedback from students through survey responses to the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Aberdeen Student Experience Survey (ASES), and meetings with staff and students.

51 The University has clear processes for considering student survey and feedback information that is monitored and used to enhance practice. The University uses a range of survey mechanisms including course-level feedback forms which are administered during each term, the ASES and NSS. The University's analysis of its NSS results is benchmarked against the sector and compared with previous results, with issues arising discussed at the University Education Committee (UEC), along with an action plan to take forward enhancements across the University. The data from the ASES is considered by both UEC and its sub-committee - the Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC) - and the academic schools are asked to prepare responses to matters arising from this survey. In meeting with staff and students from across the institution, the QESR team learned that additional informal approaches were being used to gather student feedback including discussion boards. Staff viewed these informal approaches as helpful mechanisms for 'identifying quick wins' in terms of responding to student feedback in session (paragraph 19).

52 Course Feedback forms, along with student performance information, feedback from Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) and focus groups, external examiners, Programme Advisory Boards and, where applicable, PSRBs are considered and reported on in key university quality processes including Annual Course and Programme Review (ACR and APR) and Internal Teaching Review (ITR). The sample of documents provided to the team demonstrated that this information is reflected on by staff and used to support enhancements to courses and programmes - for example, subsequent amendments to assessment formats. As part of the University's annual monitoring processes, ACRs and APRs are considered at school level and at university level by the QAC, which provides feedback to the academic schools on the sample of ACRs it considers and identifies areas for development and good practice from across the APRs.

53 The UEC is responsible for oversight of academic appeals and complaints, academic misconduct and continuation data. It is evident to the QESR team that such overview reports are used to identify and action areas to enhance the student experience. For example, the QESR team noted from the documents provided that University Senate had received an analysis of degree classifications which illustrated an increase in the numbers of first or upper-second-class honours classifications awarded by the University since 2016-17. The team explored with senior staff the University's understanding of possible reasons for this and how the University intends to continue to monitor this. Senior staff outlined that based on its analysis, its high standard of applicants, and its use of Grade Point Average (GPA) and Grade Spectrum during the COVID-19 pandemic - as part of the 'no detriment' policies for students, have influenced the increase. However, the introduction of the new GPA system as the only measure of degree classification is likely to impact on the number of good honours going forward. Staff also discussed how having information on degree outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups (BAME) had identified an awarding gap for these students, with the University currently working on plans to address this. The QESR team views this development positively and understands that this

information will continue to be kept under review by the University Senate.

54 The QESR team also explored with senior staff, the University's response to an increase in Academic Misconduct Cases, which will involve working in partnership with students to understand how these situations arise, in order to develop further support for students. The team heard that a student intern is currently working on improving understanding of students' attitudes to misconduct and views around contract cheating and artificial intelligence (AI).

55 The QESR team learned from staff that a project is ongoing to extend access and use of the new business intelligence platform across the University. Priority has been given to the development of university-level information, analysis and reporting such as NSS and degree classifications. The team understands that a recent development means Directors of Education can access data pertinent to their own school on areas such as non-continuation, student progress and enrolments.

QAA2749 - R13440 - Mar 2023

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18 Bothwell Street, Glasgow G2 6NU
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

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UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
UNIVERSITY COURT
PREVENT DUTY ANNUAL REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

- 1.1 This paper is to provide an update on University’s activities relating to the Prevent Duty, since March 2021, including an update on the roll out of revised Prevent training.**
- 1.2 This paper is provided for information.**

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER CONSIDERATION REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered by	Senior Management Team	November 2022
Further consideration required by	University Court	26 April 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 3.1 Court is invited to note the contents of this report.**

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on higher education institutions to engage with the UK Government’s Prevent agenda. This report provides an update on changes to how this is being managed.
- 4.2 The responsibility for keeping the University of Aberdeen’s Prevent policy, and associated guidance, under review and updated as necessary, rests with the Head of Health, Safety and Resilience. Operational and day to day matters are covered by the Prevent Co-ordinator (part of the job role of the Business Continuity Advisers) and the Head of Security.
- 4.3 An internal audit of the University of Aberdeen’s arrangements for the Prevent duty was undertaken during in 2019. All the recommendations in the resulting report were implemented by April 2021. The current policy, guidance and forms are available [here](#).
- 4.4 No referrals have been made of any students or staff causing concern under the Prevent duty since the previous report. One potential concern was raised by

another HE institution in England in relation to a student coming to the University. This is being monitored but is not a current active case at the time of writing.

- 4.5 The Head of Security does due diligence with respect to events or controversial speakers, via open-source research and, if he has any concerns, makes further enquiries with the Police. However, no concerns have been raised during this period nor has there been a need to decline a controversial speaker.
- 4.6 Work was previously done on analysing previous training records, to identify gaps in coverage from the Schools and Directorates, with the development of a training plan put on hold due to anticipated changes to Prevent training at a UK wide level and in Scotland specifically. Progress on this was also put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.7 The following new “Prevent duty training: Learn how to support people vulnerable to radicalisation” e-learning courses are now available on the [gov.uk/prevent-duty-training](https://www.gov.uk/prevent-duty-training):
- Course 1 – Awareness course (30-40 mins)
 - Course 2 – Referrals course (30-40 mins)
 - Course 3 – Chanel or Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) course (50-60 mins)
 - Course – Refresher Awareness course (20-30 mins)

Each includes initial questions to ensure the appropriate course for Scotland (or other part of the UK) is selected; each includes a test, and a certificate can be downloaded as proof it has been completed.

- 4.8 The following proposal, for roll out the above training, was agreed by the Senior Management Team:
- i. All staff are made aware of Course 1 and encouraged to complete it as well as are sent the link to the Prevent information on StaffNet.
 - ii. All staff with front line teaching and service delivery roles, and/or all line management responsibilities, are strongly encouraged to complete Course 1
 - iii. The Designated Safeguarding Officers are encouraged to complete Course 2
 - iv. The Lead Safeguarding Officer, Principal Safeguarding Officer and Prevent Single Point of Contact (SPOC) are required to complete Courses 2 and 3
 - v. The courses are loaded onto a UoA e-learning platform, to enable collection of data of who has completed each course, (It has been confirmed with IT that this can be done).
 - vi. The Prevent Co-ordinator maintains the records of the Prevent training records.

Notes:

- a) The courses must be completed in sequence and the refresher awareness course can only be completed if the awareness course has been completed previously.

- b) The content of the above takes into account the recommendations of the recently published report following the [Independent Review of Prevent](#) in the UK.

4.9 The training was launched on 1st March 2023 with completion monitored as proposed above. A deadline of 1st May 2023 was set for completion of the training by those with specific safeguarding roles. The table below summarises progress at the halfway point of 1st April 2023.

Course	Numbers of staff expected to complete the course	Numbers of staff who have completed the courses
1. Awareness	N/A - optional	470+
2. Referrals	20 (named individuals)	67
3. Chanel or Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP)	3 (named individuals)	35

4.10 AUSA has, historically, been opposed to the Prevent duty. They were made aware of the proposed roll out of the training. To date no adverse comments have been received on the new training.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

5.1 Further information is available from Garry Fisher, Assistant Director and Head of Health, Safety and Resilience (01224 272783), garry.fisher@abdn.ac.uk.

03/04/2022, Version 2, Open

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (NON-ACADEMIC)

1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

1.1 **This paper (i) provides Court with a report on the outcome of the statutory process of consultation regarding the Resolution to give effect to amendments to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline; and (ii) invites the Court to formally approve the Resolution – Appendix 1.**

1.2 The Court previously received the draft Resolution at its November meeting and approved the proposals subject to the further consultation required by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 being undertaken.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by	Senate Court Business Committee of the General Council	2 November 2022 22 November 2022 2 March 2023
Further consideration/ approval required by	University Court	26 April 2023

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

3.1 The Court is invited to:

(1) Note the outcome of the statutory process of consultation, from which no s changes are proposed to the draft Resolution;

(2) Formally approve the Resolution – Appendix 1

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 This new version of the non-academic discipline regulations was created, following extensive consultation, at the request of the then Student Support and Experience Committee. Having not been updated since 2012, the current Code is out of touch with many developments in both operational practice and specific areas of misconduct that now represent a regular part of the work in relation to maintaining good student conduct and managing poor conduct.

4.2 Once approved, the implementation of the new Code will be accompanied by a communication plan focused on the positive behaviours expected from students,

and linked documents for survivor/victims of Gender Based Violence and the perpetrators of misconduct. It is intended to produce several student-facing documents to clarify the Code and its operation in clear, student-focused, language prior to its launch. The new Code is expected to be fully operational for the 2023/24 Academic Year and will form part of the registration process undertaken by new and returning students from August 2023.

5. OUTCOME OF THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Court received, on the recommendation of the Senate, the draft Resolution at its 22 November 2022 meeting and approved the proposals subject to the further consultation required by the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 being undertaken (through the Business Committee of the General Council and making publicly available for comment).
- 5.2 That process has now been concluded, with the outcome being as follows. The Business Committee of the General Council received the draft Resolution positively and welcomed the significant movements made to bring the document up to date since the current Code, from 2012. Clarification was provided to the Business Committee on a number of areas relating to support for students involved in cases; the position linked to Alumni and misconduct; and comments about the definition of Harassment. Following this input no changes are being suggested to the Code, which is presented as last seen by Court in November 2022.
- 5.3 No further comments were received from the draft Resolution being made available to the public.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 6.1 Further information is available from Nick Edwards, Deputy Director of People, n.edwards@abdn.ac.uk or Bruce Purdon, Clerk to the Court b.purdon@abdn.ac.uk

17 April 2023 v1

Confidentiality Status: Open

Resolution No XXX of 2023

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (NON-ACADEMIC)

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

1. Resolution No 212 of 2012, Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Non-Academic), of the University Court is hereby revoked.
2. The procedures to be followed in the exercise of the University's powers regarding student discipline in non-academic matters shall be as set out below.
3. This Resolution shall come into force on the date on which it is passed by the University Court.

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (NON-ACADEMIC)

1. OVERRIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.1. The University of Aberdeen is a community that is dedicated to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge through research and education. We want to foster a safe and inclusive environment for learning and working and we are committed to having a fair and transparent process for all parties when resolving issues that may arise. These objectives can only be achieved if all members of the University community can live and work beside each other in conditions of safety and security. We expect all members of our community to behave in a positive and inclusive manner and respect the rights of others.
- 1.2. All our students (regardless of their programme of study, level, or location) are expected to uphold the values of the University and to represent the University as positive ambassadors. We expect them to treat others with respect, demonstrate positive behaviours, and to adhere to all relevant regulations and policies. In the event of a student not doing so, we expect them to take responsibility for any misconduct identified and reflect on their behaviours and actions.
- 1.3. This Code of Practice on Student Discipline (non-academic) (called throughout this document the **Code**) outlines examples of what constitutes student misconduct; the process through which reports of misconduct by students will be considered; and the possible outcomes that may be applied where reports of misconduct are upheld.
- 1.4. Throughout the Code and its supporting documents reference is made to behaviours, some of which may also constitute possible criminal behaviours, including gender-based-violence, assault, harassment, and bullying. Anyone impacted by such behaviour can find details of the support available to them on our website - www.abdn.ac.uk/students/support and may wish to seek support in advance of reading this document to understand how they can be supported in relation to misconduct they have experienced. To find more information on the support available, or to discuss the Code, please email student.support@abdn.ac.uk.
- 1.5. A fundamental principle when applying the Code is to educate students who have been reported for alleged misconduct, to encourage positive future behaviours and, where appropriate, offer the opportunity to learn from mistakes they have made to avoid repeating them in the future.
- 1.6. While applying the Code, consideration will be given to other processes that the reported party may be required to undertake (such as Fitness to Practice processes (or similarly named processes at a School level) for students subject to these requirements). In cases where other processes may apply, and there is no clear approach for which would take priority, it will be for a Review Panel (Defined below) to decide the most appropriate process to commence. In some cases, multiple processes may be required, and we will normally prioritise completing one before commencing another.
- 1.7. In the Code we refer to the University Community to mean anyone who, at the point in question, was actively engaging in a direct connection to the University, including applicants; students; staff members; agents; partners; or alumni.
- 1.8. Throughout the Code, reference is made to staff roles/departments and terms which may change in name or structure from time to time. Where this is the case, we will read the Code to mean the person or entity who mirrors the function or role within the University at the time.
- 1.9. The “burden of proof” applied to cases of misconduct is the “balance of probabilities”. The balance of probabilities means that the University can decide if it believes, following its investigation, that something is more likely to have happened than not. Where misconduct is found, there is no expectation that behaviour is proven beyond doubt, but rather that it is reasonable to believe, based on the information we have, that it is more likely to have taken place than not.

2. WHO IS INVOLVED IN CASES OF POSSIBLE MISCONDUCT?

2.1. Several people can be involved in the process of reviewing and investigating a case of possible misconduct. The below terms are used in the Code to describe the various people and groups that can be involved:

- *The reporting party*: a person who alerted the University to the behaviour and may or may not be directly impacted by it.
- *The reported party*: the individual who has been reported as having conducted the alleged behaviour under review.
- *An impacted party*: an individual who may, or may not, have reported the behaviour but who was directly impacted by it.
- *A case manager*: a member of staff who will oversee the administration of the report from start to finish. They will coordinate the communication with parties, arrangement of investigations and Review Panel, and generally guide those involved in the process.
- *A witness*: an individual who may or may not be directly impacted by the behaviour but can provide information during a review or investigation.
- *The Investigator*: a member of staff appointed to investigate the behaviour and determine if misconduct has occurred. An investigator will be selected by the Case Manager from the list of possible investigators (Annex B).
- *The Review Panel*: the group who will hear appeals of decisions not to progress a case to the investigation stage; referrals from an investigator of cases where a possible impact on student registration is made; make decisions on the appropriate process to apply in a case where multiple policies may operate; and appeals from reporting parties. The panel will be made up of three members (including at least one Student Member) who have not been involved in the case before. Eligible members are shown in Annex A.
- *Supporters*: during any meeting conducted under the Code, anyone asked to attend may be accompanied by a single supporter. This supporter can be an AUSA representative, any member of University staff supporting the individual, or another currently registered University of Aberdeen student, if they are not involved in the case in another capacity.

3. WHAT IS MISCONDUCT

3.1. Misconduct can take many forms and its definition may evolve over time. It is not possible to provide a complete list of possible misconduct here and we have given some examples below.

3.2. Whether behaviour constitutes misconduct will be a decision for the Case Manager or, if required, a Review Panel. When deciding if behaviour could amount to misconduct under the Code the test applied will be to ask would such behaviour be reasonably investigated by another University.

3.3. Some examples of misconduct that come under this Code are below (this list is not exhaustive):

- Behaving in a violent, indecent, or threatening manner against any member of the University community.
- Carrying of an offensive weapon on University premises.
- Sexual violence or sexual harassment of any member of the University community. We refer to sexual violence or harassment as any sexually motivated act or activity that is unwanted by the person to whom it is directed and can be emotional or physical in nature, including coercive control.
- Harassing, bullying, or intimidating any member of the University community, or groups within our community. In this Code harassment, bullying or intimidating behaviour means any behaviour (including use of offensive language, "hate speech" or gestures) which would be regarded as such by any reasonable person. Harassment and bullying can be general and/or targeted against a specific background (such as colour, race, nationality, national origins, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, family circumstances, political beliefs, gender, gender reassignment, trade union membership or age) or any other unfair distinction. Harassment can also include any

- repeated, unsolicited, contact in any medium and may also include coercive control.
- Engaging in any behaviour which relates to a serious criminal offence or activity that may bring the University into disrepute.
 - Anti-social behaviour, including but not limited to excessive noise, littering on campus, or throwing items from windows on University premises.
 - Inappropriate forms of communication or engagement on a University online platform (including social media and learning platforms).
 - Inappropriate forms of communication and engagement in any group, social channel or other communications method used, or accessible, by members of our community that is focused on the University community or groups of its members.
 - Misusing, intentionally or recklessly damaging, and unauthorised use of premises or items of property (including theft) owned by the University or a member of its community, including the misuse of computer or IT equipment.
 - Infringement of copyright when copying or downloading published information.
 - Engaging in deception or other forms of dishonesty in relation to the University or a member of its community.
 - Behaving in a way which causes, or would be likely to cause, injury to any person or to impair safety. Examples will include the refusal to leave a building during a fire alarm, tampering with fire alarms, fire extinguishers, or any other fire safety device, refusing to follow the instructions of demonstrators in labs, and carrying out unauthorised experiments on University premises.
 - Deliberately doing, or failing to do, anything which causes the University to breach a statutory obligation or law.
 - Failing to follow a no contact requirement made under the Code, during the progression of an investigation or as a formal outcome of a case where misconduct is found.
 - Failing to comply with any outcome under the Code.

4. WHEN DOES THE CODE APPLY?

- 4.1. The Code will only apply to alleged misconduct that is non-academic in nature and is not otherwise dealt with in the separate Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic). Academic misconduct relates to conduct directly linked to assessments and academic work.
- 4.2. The University may consider an allegation of misconduct under the Code, provided that the behaviour in question meets at least one of the following criteria:
- 1 it takes place on a University premises; or
 - 2 is committed by a student engaged on a University activity; or
 - 3 it targets, or impacts directly, member(s) of the University community; or
 - 4 it relates to a serious criminal offence or activity that may bring the University into disrepute.

Whether behaviour falls under the remit of the Code will be a decision for a Case Manager or, if required, a Review Panel.

- 4.3. Behaviour will normally only be considered within the remit of the Code where it takes place while the reported individual is a registered student (including associate students), or while the student is actively engaging with the University with a view to become a registered student (for example while under the application process or while engaging in a university activity).
- 4.4. We will only regard behaviour that takes place during a break from study or after an individual graduates if the individual later seeks to register again with the University (as a new student on a new programme or to complete an existing programme) as coming within the scope of the Code. In such cases an investigation under the Code will need to be concluded before an individual is eligible to register again. Any delay in registration due to the need to investigate under the Code will not be a cause of appeal by the individual.
- 4.5. In cases where behaviour comes to the attention of the University after an individual has left the

University (through graduation, completion or otherwise) we will not be able to take any action under the Code unless the individual seeks registration again in the future.

- 4.6. Individuals staying in University accommodation owned or controlled by the University (as a potential applicant, pending registration or during a break from study) will still be subject to the terms of the Code. In some cases, behaviour may also constitute a breach of the accommodation contract. It will be for staff in University accommodation to decide whether a case is referred under the Code or can be actioned under their contract.
- 4.7. The University can only investigate behaviours where we have relevant information to do so effectively. Information could be provided through written statements; the ability of an investigator to speak with impacted parties; documents and photographs/videos/other media showing the behaviour or impact; or information provided by others who witnessed the behaviour or its impact.
- 4.8. Students who are undertaking a period of study at another location (including those on formal study abroad periods; work placements; internships, for example) will still be covered by the Code. It is likely they will also be subject to local rules in place at their host organisation. Where this is the case, the University reserve the right to extend the Code to include members of the host organisation as if they were a member of the University Community when determining whether to apply the Code.
- 4.9. Some behaviours may overlap with the processes of Aberdeen University Students' Association (**AUSA**), and it may be more appropriate for such behaviours to be exclusively investigated by the University or AUSA. In some cases, a joint approach will be beneficial and a decision on which approach to apply will be decided by the Case Manager with input from AUSA.
- 4.10. Some students will be covered by additional rules around their conduct, including those who are subject to Fitness to Practice processes at School level. It is possible that misconduct may be considered under both such processes, but this does not mean that the same outcome will be reached.

5. MISCONDUCT THAT MAY ALSO BE A CRIMINAL OFFENCE

- 5.1. The University reserve the right to apply the Code to any student who has engaged in a serious criminal offence, regardless of where or against whom it has been committed. Whether a crime is serious will be a decision for a Case Manager or the Review Panel.
- 5.2. Where criminal behaviour is identified and it is targeted against University property, the University may seek to report this to the Police. Where the behaviour is targeted against a member of the University community, we will always support their decision to make a report to the Police but will never do this without their express consent – unless not doing so may put others at risk or make us breach our duty of care. We will take this approach regardless of the jurisdiction in which the misconduct occurs.
- 5.3. Regardless of any ongoing Police or Criminal Justice process, the University's default position will be to apply the Code regardless of the stage such processes have reached. Only in cases where we have a strong belief that doing so may prejudice such processes will action under the Code be postponed until an outcome is made in the justice system. This will usually be due to direct input from the Police or Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.
- 5.4. In some situations, we may apply an interim outcome, pending the final decision being made following an investigation under the Code. This may be to allow additional information through the Criminal Justice process to be made available, especially in cases where we have limited access to information to make an appropriate decision (this may be particularly the case where it is important that forensic or other evidence is assessed, and the University is unable to do so through its internal processes). It may also be required to allow the University to effectively manage risk.

- 5.5. The processes outlined in this Code may be used to investigate any individuals that have been charged with a significant criminal offence, or are subject to any unspent conviction, which has occurred before their registration at the University at the point this is disclosed to us (or we become aware of this). This section of the Code will be read in conjunction with any policy related to admission and registration and can apply to applicants, offer holders and registered students.
- 5.6. For the avoidance of doubt, the University will come to a decision on the application of the Code independent of the outcome of any Criminal Justice process. The finding of guilt in the Criminal Justice process will not necessarily mean that misconduct is found, and vice-versa. It is not the role of the University to investigate crimes, or an alleged criminal offence, and our role is restricted to the investigation of potential misconduct under the Code.
- 5.7. Students are required to let the University know about any charges they receive during their period of study with us by contacting student.support@abdn.ac.uk so an assessment of risk can be completed.
- 5.8. Students who have been victim of a crime can seek support from our Student Support team regardless of the nature, or perpetrator, of the crime. You can email the team on student.support@abdn.ac.uk to seek support.

6. REPORTING MISCONDUCT

- 6.1. Reports of misconduct can come from various sources. Sometimes support may be sought from a staff member about an incident that has occurred, but to ensure it is formally recorded as alleged misconduct it must be reported using one of the methods below.
- 6.2. We use the word reported throughout the Code, though behaviour may come to the attention of the University without a named reporter.
- 6.3. Anyone wishing to make the University aware of potential student misconduct can do this in one of the following ways:
 - Directly to a member of staff in our Student Advice & Support Team.
 - By emailing student.support@abdn.ac.uk with details of the report or to request to meet a member of the team.
 - By using our [Online Reporting Tool](#).
- 6.4. When alleged misconduct is reported, we will keep the reporter updated on the process throughout. This may also include providing updates through a member of relevant support staff.
- 6.5. During the progression of a case under the Code, parties will usually be asked not to contact others, especially any impacted party. This may be restricted to discussing the case with certain people or outlined more widely resulting in a total requirement not to make contact for the time the case is being progressed under the Code. Failing to follow such requirements will be regarded as an act of misconduct itself.

7. WHO WILL BE TOLD ABOUT CASES OF MISCONDUCT AND THEIR OUTCOMES?

- 7.1. It will be the decision of the Investigator, or convener of a Review Panel, to decide which individuals need to be involved to come to a decision on whether misconduct has taken place. To have these conversations and exchanges it will be necessary to share details of the report that has been made and against whom it has been made.
- 7.2. During any Investigation or Review Panel, notes of meetings and any information that has been collected which forms part of the decision-making process will normally be shared with the reported party. Where notes of meetings are made these will be shared with the individual involved to confirm

their accuracy before they are distributed.

- 7.3. The only exception to 7.2 will be where information is raised that may prejudice a criminal process. In cases which may not be able to proceed without the use of this information, the process will automatically be referred to a Review Panel for their consideration. The Panel will be given the information in question and will be able to decide if the case can be concluded without the information at question. Where this is not possible, an interim outcome may be issued to manage risk in advance of the formal outcome of the criminal justice process.
- 7.4. Where a reporting party, or impacted party, are involved in a case they will be entitled to know the outcome of the Investigation or Review Panel, including details of any formal outcome levied. These will normally be communicated shortly after the appeal period has ended.
- 7.5. Formal outcome letters will be copied to the Head of the relevant School(s) in which the reported party studies and any other staff member that needs to support the outcomes put in place.
- 7.6. For cases that interplay with other processes, including Fitness to Practice and cases that involve AUSA, the appropriate School lead/AUSA CEO will be informed of the situation as it progresses through the Code. Outcomes will then be shared with them to inform any subsequent processes that need to be followed. We will share information, and documents, that form part of any of the steps in the Code to ensure consistency of information across these separate processes. Such information can then be used by the staff investigating the Fitness to Practice processes/linked AUSA processes, as they see fit.

8. PROCEDURE IN CASES OF REPORTED MISCONDUCT

8.1. Alleged misconduct can progress through four possible stages:

- Initial Review;
- Investigation;
- Review Panel; and
- Appeal.

8.2. **Initial Review**

- 1 The Initial Review will consider the reported behaviour and establish if it falls under the Code. It is possible that a case will not progress past this stage where it does not meet the requirements of the Code.
- 2 It is possible that a referral to an alternative, or additional, process may be made at this stage, including to our Complaints Handling Process; Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic); Fitness to Practice Processes; AUSA processes; or our Support for Study process, amongst others.
- 3 The Initial Review will be conducted by the Case Manager and an outcome as to whether the Code applies will be reached by them, in conjunction with a Review Panel where required.
- 4 The decision of the Case Manager can be appealed to a Review Panel (and if one was used in reaching the initial decision, a new panel will be convened to hear the appeal by circulation).
- 5 The Initial Review will normally be concluded within 5 working days of the case being raised with a Case Manager.
- 6 The Case Manager will also consider any risk or safety issues during their review and will liaise with senior staff in Student Support should they believe that a formal risk assessment is needed or any emergency action under the Code may be required.

- 7 It may also be required that parties be instructed to limit their interaction with other individuals as part of this review, especially if input from a reported party is required. If such requirement is ignored by a student, this will be a form of misconduct itself.
- 8 Where a case has been put forward by a reporting individual, they will be entitled to know the outcome of the Initial Review and receive confirmation about whether a case is being progressed to investigation or not. They will also be offered the opportunity to appeal the decision to a Review Panel.

8.3. Investigation

- 1 Where an Initial Review identifies that a case falls under the Code, an Investigation will be carried out by an Investigator. The purpose of the investigation is to establish the facts of what has happened; collect information relating to the situation; and to speak with any parties the Investigator feels appropriate to conclude their investigation.
- 2 The Investigation will be conducted as informally as possible and will normally be concluded within 10 working days of the initial referral from a Case Manager.
- 3 In arranging meetings during an Investigation, it is possible for the Investigator to invite a notetaker to support the meeting. Anyone being met with under this process can bring a supporter as outlined in Section 2. Support can be sought throughout these processes from Student Support (student.support@abdn.ac.uk) and AUSA (ausaadvic@abdn.ac.uk) and students will be signposted to these support services in correspondence issued about the investigation.
- 4 Following the conclusion of their investigation, the Investigator may:
 - Dismiss the report of misconduct and close the case.
 - Decide that, although misconduct is likely to have occurred, the matter has now been resolved through actions taken by the reported party since the alleged behaviour took place. Usually, any impacted party will directly input to this outcome.
 - Decide that misconduct did occur (especially if the reported party admits this during the process) and recommend an outcome to the reported party (Annex C). Where the reported party accepts this outcome, the case will be completed. Where the reported party does not accept this outcome, the case will be referred to a Review Panel.
 - In cases where the Investigator believes that an outcome that interrupts the reported party's student registration is required (including suspension, or exclusion of more than 1 month, and expulsion) the Investigator must refer the case to a Review Panel for ratification of the outcome.

8.4. Review Panel – General Points

- 1 Where a Review Panel is required, this shall be arranged as soon as possible and normally within 10 working days of it being requested by an Investigator.
- 2 At least 72 hours before the Review Panel, the reported party will be given a copy of the papers that will be provided to the Panel, including the formal outcome from the Investigation, together with any documents that were reviewed and formed part of the outcome.
- 3 The reported party will be able to submit a written statement to the Panel in advance of the review meeting, though this must be provided at least 24 hours before the Panel convenes.

- 4 The University will not provide legal or other representation for any party involved in the proceedings brought under this Code.
- 5 Review Panels will be convened by an appropriate member of the Disciplinary Investigation Group who will always be supported by two other panel members, one of whom will be a student representative. In addition, staff members will be present to clerk the hearings and support the Panel as required by the Convener. Details on Panel membership, and the Convener, is in Annex A. Consideration to diversity of the panel will be given when selecting members, and we will ensure a gender balance on all Panels.
- 6 Panels can be conducted in person or virtually and will be designed to maximise the ability for parties to engage.
- 7 Panel membership will be shared with all parties attending the Review meeting in advance, including any additional parties that are asked to attend at the discretion of the Convener. Requests for witnesses and reporting/impacted parties to attend can be made by any member of the Panel, the Investigator, and the reported party but it will be for the Convener to decide if it is suitable for them to attend.
- 8 Where an impacted party or witness is not able to attend a Review Panel the Convener may consider an alternative method of getting their input. This could be through a meeting at an alternative time with the Panel or the provision of a written statement.
- 9 Following the Review Panel, the Panel will consider the information and reach a decision, including the appropriate outcome. The decision will be communicated to the reported party in writing, normally within 5 working days. After the appeal period has ended, and any appeal has been concluded, information will then be shared with other parties as outlined in Section 7.

8.5. **Review Panel – On the Day**

- 1 The Convener will introduce the parties present and provide an overview of the procedures below. Initially the Panel members, a clerk, the reported party, and the investigator can be present at the Panel.
- 2 The Convener will invite the Investigator to make an opening statement outlining the conclusion of their investigation. This statement will include reference to the information they collected as part of their investigation, which will have been provided to the Panel and reported party in advance of the meeting. The Panel may ask questions of the Investigator following their statement through the Convener.
- 3 The Convener will then clarify the precise allegation of non-academic misconduct under investigation to all parties. At this point the Convener will invite the reported party to state whether they admit or deny the case of misconduct put forward by the investigator.
- 4 The Convener will invite the reported party to make a statement. The Panel may ask questions of the reported party following their statement and the reported party may also ask questions of the Investigator at this time. Questions will always be addressed through the Convener.
- 5 Any input required from witnesses or reporting/impacted parties will be sought directly by the Panel and, depending on the case, may not include the presence of the reported party. This decision will rest with the Convener. Where a case of misconduct involves alleged sexual or personal violence, an impacted party will not be expected to share space with the reported party.
- 6 There will be a chance for all parties to ask final questions and seek clarifications on any

matters with the reported party or Investigator.

- 7 The reported party will be invited to give a concluding statement at which point there will be no further opportunity to ask or respond to questions, or to provide additional information.
- 8 The Convener will conclude the hearing by outlining any next steps that the Panel need to take (which may include meeting separately with other parties) and will tell the reported party the expected timeframe for an outcome to be issued. Details of possible outcomes are contained in Annex C.

9. APPEALING A DECISION

- 9.1. A reported party can appeal against the decision of a Case Manager; Investigator or Review Panel, but only if there are valid *grounds to appeal*. The possible grounds for appeal, which must be evidenced when making an appeal, are:
 - the University's procedures were not followed (without the reported parties' prior approval); or
 - the person or body making the decision did not have the authority to do so; or
 - the person or body making the decision did not act impartially; or
 - the penalty imposed was unreasonable, that is, that it is one which no reasonable person, properly advised, would have imposed under this Code.
- 9.2. An appeal against a decision of the Case Manager or Investigator should be made in writing to the Case Manager within 10 working days of the decision taking place. The Case Manager will pass the appeal to a Review Panel for consideration.
- 9.3. An appeal against the decision of a Review Panel must be made in accordance with the prevailing University appeal process available on the University Website. This process is managed by our Academic Services team.
- 9.4. When an appeal is received by Registry, a Case Officer for the appeal will be appointed and receipt of the appeal will be acknowledged.
- 9.5. On receipt of the appeal, a Grounds to Proceed panel, composed of the Case Officer and two senior academic or administrative staff members (depending on the nature of the case), will review the case to determine whether there are grounds for the appeal to proceed.
- 9.6. If the appeal is deemed not to contain grounds to proceed, the appellant will be advised of this outcome within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal. The appellant will be informed of his or her right to seek independent review of the University's decision by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.
- 9.7. If the Grounds to Proceed Panel consider that the appeal should proceed, the original Investigator/Panel will be asked whether they wish to review their decision. If they do not wish to amend the original decision taken, the matter is to be referred to an Appeal Panel, in accordance with the University's Policy and Procedure on Student Appeals. The people who form the Appeal will not be the same as those involved in the original decision.

10. MANAGING CASES INVOLVING RISK OR URGENCY

- 10.1 In cases of urgency, usually determined following an assessment of risk and recommendation from a senior member of staff in Student Support Services, the Principal (or in their absence the Senior Vice-Principal or University Secretary) shall have the power to authorise immediate action to temporarily exclude or suspend the reported party from accessing campus locations (including University accommodation) or to limit their ability to remain a registered student. These powers will only be

applied where the Principal believes this action is necessary to protect members of the University community (including a reporting or reported party or impacted party) or members of the public in general.

10.2 Cases where such a request may be made to the Principal will include:

- Where bail conditions levied by a law enforcement agency restrict access to campus locations (even if this is restricted to a local area, we may consider expanding this to include the whole campus);
- Where bail conditions levied by a law enforcement agency require that a reported party does not contact another member of our community; or
- Where a risk assessment has established that the reported party's presence on campus causes, or could likely cause, harm to members of the University community (either specific individuals or wider groups) including the reported party

10.3 Reasons for the decision shall be communicated in writing, usually by email, to the reported party.

10.4 In cases where such exclusion is required, the case will immediately progress to the Investigation Stage of the Code. In the first instance the exclusion, or suspension, will normally be for a period of 10 working days to allow the Investigation to conclude. A request for an extension to this period may be made to the Principal if this is needed to conclude the investigation, or if the case needs to progress to a Review Panel.

10.5 During any period of temporary suspension or exclusion, all reasonable efforts will be taken to minimise any academic disadvantage to the reported party (e.g., provision of lecture notes, sitting exams away from the main examination locations etc.) and ensure as quick a resolution as practicable.

Annex A: Possible Members of a Review Panel

- A.1 **Staff Member or Convener:**
Any Vice Principal, normally the Vice Principal for Education.
- A.2 **Staff Member:**
Any Head of School
Any staff member of Senate
Any member of School or Professional Services staff at Grade 9
- A.3 **Student Member:**
The AUSA Student President or a nominee of their choosing (who is a member of AUSA).

Annex B: List of Possible Investigators

- B.1 In most cases, Investigations will be carried out by a member of staff in the School to which the reported party belongs, appointed by the Head of School. Where alleged misconduct takes place in University accommodation, this will normally be conducted by a member of staff in working within the accommodation environment.
- B.2 Any member of University staff at Grade 6 or above can investigate allegations of misconduct if the allegations do not involve violence; sexual harassment; or sexual violence.
- B.3 A member of University staff at Grade 8 or above can investigate any case of misconduct.

Annex C: Possible Outcomes following an Investigation or Review Panel

- C.1 Following an Investigation or Review Panel, which finds that misconduct has occurred, the Investigator may apply one or more of the penalties noted below. In all cases a formal recording that misconduct took place will be made on the reported party's record for the duration of their programme of study. We will also issue an outcome letter with a formal warning about the behaviour and, at a minimum, recommendations for avoiding such incidents in the future.
- C.2 For a repeated instance of similar misconduct it is usual for higher penalties to be levied, which may involve interruption to a reported party's student status.
- C.3 Where a recommendation to interrupt a reported party's student status is made, this will be automatically referred to a Review Panel for review and confirmation. The Review Panel will have the power to authorise any recommended outcome referred to them or decide that an alternative, or additional, outcome is required.
- C.4 This section outlines different outcomes that can be issued following a finding of misconduct. In some cases, the Review Panel may suggest an alternative outcome which is not noted below. In such cases the reported party will be asked to accept this alternative outcome, which in most cases will be a less severe version of a listed penalty.
- C.5 Where a reported party fails to take the steps required by their outcome, the case will be referred to a Review Panel (ideally the same composition of the original Panel) for consideration on next steps.
- C.6 A Review Panel can always decide to change a recommended outcome and their decision is final as to the ultimate outcome issued.
- C.7 An Investigator or Review Panel may decide that more information is needed before they can reach an ultimate decision or outcome. Normally this will be the need to await the outcome from a Criminal Justice Process. In such cases it will be possible for an Investigator to recommend, or a Review Panel to

apply, interim outcomes for a set period. This will normally include suspension of study and a requirement not to contact named parties in the case until a decision can be made. At the point an ultimate decision can be reached the Review Panel will reconvene (with alternative panel members if needed) to consider an outcome. It will be for the Convener to decide what, if any, additional input is needed from parties to the case and the format such input will take.

C.8 Where a student must pay costs because of an outcome being applied this will be the responsibility of the student. This also applies to any costs they incur in a return to study following a suspension or period away from campus. Costs may include, but aren't limited to, travel, visas, and accommodation costs.

C.9 Possible Outcomes:

- Reflect on their behaviour and to write a reflective letter or essay summarising their behaviour and the steps they will take to ensure it will not happen again. Approaches could take the form of an apology letter or general essay. Such work should be appropriate with the misconduct in question and will need to be deemed acceptable to the Investigator;
- Make payments to cover the cost of any damage made to property, or fees incurred by the University, because of their misconduct;
- Make a payment to another party where they have directly suffered loss as result of the Reported Party's action, and this can be clearly evidenced (for example damage to property);
- Undertake a training course or programme linked to the behaviours at question. Where this carries a cost, these will be met by the University. A period will be set by which completion of the training must be evidenced, normally not exceeding two months;
- A temporary exclusion from access to elements of University locations, activities or services for a period lasting no longer than 1 month;
- If staying within University accommodation, require the reported party to move rooms, or buildings, where this is required to support the wellbeing of flatmates/other residents;
- If staying in University accommodation, confirm that a fee may be payable (as outlined locally) for certain behaviours;
- In the academic environment, require the reported party to change arrangements to ensure they are not interacting with named individuals (this could apply for a single course, or at a Programme level, for a fixed period or the duration of the programme);
- Instruct the reported party to cease contact with another named individual, individuals, or group of people, or to direct their contact through a particular method;
- Put in place a requirement to engage in a community service activity to benefit the wider University community;
- Ask that a Review Panel be convened with the recommendation that the reported party be excluded from access to elements of the University locations, activities, or services for a period longer than one month;
- Ask that that a Review Panel be convened with the recommendation that the reported party be suspended from study for a reasonable period, normally up to 12 months. Approval from the Principal (or their nominee) can be sought where the Review Panel authorises a period that exceeds 12 months.
- Ask that a Review Panel be convened with the recommendation that the reported party be expelled from study due to the severity of their conduct. Approval from the Principal (or their nominee) will be needed for all expulsions from study;
- For cases within University accommodation, an exclusion can be recommended to apply only to their ability to reside in their accommodation. In such cases a Panel will not normally be required to ratify this outcome, and this will be actioned using the accommodation contract.

Annex D - Definition of expulsion, suspension, or exclusion

D.1 **Expulsion** is the termination of matriculated student status involving a total prohibition on attendance at, or access to, the University and on any participation in University activities. A student who has been expelled will not normally be eligible for re-admittance to the University. All requests for re-admittance following expulsion must be approved by the Senior Management Team.

- D.2 **Suspension** of matriculated student status involves a total prohibition on attendance at or access to the University and on any participation in University activities; but it may be subject to qualification, such as permission to attend for the purpose of an examination. Suspension will be used where exclusion from specified activities or facilities is considered to be inadequate.
- D.3 **Exclusion** involves selective restriction on attendance at or access to the University or any of its services, locations, or activities. Exclusion from participation as a member of AUSA or one of its associated groups is also possible. It may also extend to restriction on access to other places such as hospital wards or school premises (where access to such places is integral to the student's programme of study or professional training). The exact details of such exclusion will be specified in writing.
- D.4 An order of expulsion, suspension or exclusion may also include a requirement that the reported party should have no contact of any kind with a named person or persons.

Annex E - Determination of the case in the absence of the reported party

- E.1 Where a reported party cannot attend the first offered time for a meeting that is required of them under this Code, they can ask for an alternative time to be offered on a different day. Given the importance of proceedings under the Code, attendance at meetings required under it will take precedence over all other University activity.
- E.2 If the reported party is unable to attend the rescheduled meeting, the case can be considered, and a decision reached in the absence of the reported party. The reported party will be invited to provide a written statement in advance where this is the case.
- E.3 Where a reported party has requested that a meeting's timing be changed to allow them to attend, they cannot subsequently use the impact that changing the time has had on their academic performance as grounds for an appeal or complaint.
- E.4 Where a reported party has not informed the Case Manager, or another staff member liaising with them about the case, in advance that they are unable to attend a meeting, it will be at the Investigator or Panel Convener's discretion to consider whether the meeting should proceed in their absence.