**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN**

**PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY REPORT 2023**

**3.1.1 COURT DIVERSITY AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE GENDER REPRESENTATION ON PUBLIC BOARDS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2018**

1. The University has continued to improve the diversity profile of Court, its governing body, since the last report in 2021, consistent with the commitment articulated in the Court Statement of Intent on Diversity. This sets out the Court’s commitment for its own membership to reflect the diverse nature of the University community insofar as is possible and practicable.
2. Across its membership, the Court’s gender balance on 31 July 2022 was 48% female, 52% male and the Court has continued to achieve gender balance in its appointed independent membership consistent with the objective of the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018. The diversity of the Court’s ethnicity has also been enhanced with 12% of its membership identifying as Black ethnic origin as of 31 July 2022.
3. In support of recent recruitment processes to independent member positions, the University undertook measures to increase awareness of the vacant positions among under-represented groups. The Court’s Governance and Nominations Committee identified the need to be proactive in encouraging more female candidates and candidates from racialised groups. The role description, person specification and advertisement were reviewed to ensure they were inclusive and to emphasise the diversity of the University community and the Court’s wish to encourage applications from women and individuals from protected characteristic groups that were under-represented on Court. The range of advertising networks used beyond mainstream print media was also reviewed to include professional networks for women and other under-represented groups. The prioritisation of encouraging a diverse field of applicants was a key part of the project brief to the recruitment consultants used by the University and interviews were conducted through a gender balanced panel.
4. A further recent initiative has since been the Court’s participation since July 2022 in the *Governance Apprenticeship Programme* in partnership with Perrett Laver. The programme aims to address one of the barriers to improving board diversity, namely the limited pipeline of individuals from underrepresented backgrounds with the required board level experience. It provides the opportunity for one individual to shadow the Court for a year, offering the skills, insights, and networks, that can build a solid foundation for future board roles.
5. These steps have helped the Court to achieve the progress noted above in terms of gender balance, ethnic diversity and age profile. It is recognised, however, by the Court’s Governance and Nominations Committee that there remains further progress to be made in enhancing the wider diversity of the Court in terms of the aspirations set out in its Statement of Intent on Diversity. This remains a priority for action in forthcoming recruitment processes as new vacancies on Court arise.
6. **Gender Profile of the Court**

The University Court has a composition of twenty-five. The following figures are based on the membership in office as at the following dates since 2021:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | 31 July 2021 | 31 July 2022 |
| Women | 11 | 12 |
| Men | 12 | 13 |
| % of membership | 44% Female48% Male2 vacancies | 48% Female52% Male |

**Table 3**: Gender profile of Court 2021 and 2022

1. **Reporting Information Specific to Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act**
2. This section reports on theinformation required by Section 8 of the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018. It covers the period since August 2020 to 31 July 2022.

1. The Act applies to members who are appointed by the Court but excludes members who are elected or nominated. For the University Court, this translates to being twelve of the thirteen independent members of Court (the Senior Governor who, while independent, is elected and therefore excluded).
2. As of 31 July 2022, the objective of the legislation has been achieved with six of the twelve independent members of Court being female. This has been achieved through the steps outlined above. Furthermore, as at the time of writing (February 2023) the Court continues to meet the objective of the legislation.

As required by the Act, the following further information is provided:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | 31 July 2021 | 31 July 2022 |
| Women | 6 | 6 |
| Men | 5 | 6 |
| % of membership | 50% Female42% Male1 Vacancy | 50% Female50% Male |

**Table 4**: Gender profile of Independent Members Appointed by Court 2021 and 2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of Vacancies | Number of Recruitment Processes Undertaken | Number of Applications | % of Applications from Women | Number of Appointments Made  | Number of Appointments Female |
| 4 | 1 | 64\* | 24%\* | 4 | 2 |

**Table 5**: Recruitment of Independent Members 1 Aug 2020 to 31 July 2022

Note \*: While 64 applications were received, only 38 disclosed their gender. The percentage of applications from women given above, therefore, represents the percentage of those 64 applications.

1. The Court composition by ethnicity can be seen in Table 6 below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ETHNICITY**  | **PERCENTAGE** |
| White British | 40% |
| White Scottish | 16% |
| Other White Background | 4% |
| Black or Black British - Caribbean | 4% |
| Black or Black British - African | 4% |
| Other Black Background | 4% |
| Other Mixed Background | 4% |
| Not known | 16% |
| Prefer not to disclose | 8% |

**Table 6:** Court composition by ethnicity