

Statement of Primary Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is the governing body of the University. As such, it has a collective responsibility to promote the University's well-being and to ensure its sustainability. In a nutshell, the Council is responsible for approving corporate strategy and associated plans and budgets; for determining major business decisions and corporate policy; for the framework of governance and management; for confirming the quality of the education provided by the University; and for monitoring institutional and executive performance. Within the framework laid down by the Charter and Statutes, the primary responsibilities of the Council are as follows.

1. Having regard to the interests of stakeholders
 - (a) to approve or modify the University's mission and objectives, the strategic and operational plans designed to secure those objectives (including academic, financial, physical, staffing and capital strategies), and the underlying values and principles that shape the work of the University;
 - (b) to approve the University's annual general revenue budget and the main features of the mechanisms for allocating resources within that budget; and to ensure that the University remains solvent and that, taking one accounting period with another, its total expenditure is not greater than its total income;
 - (c) to take steps to ensure that all individuals within the University are treated fairly, with dignity and respect; that the opportunities the University provides are open to all; and that the University provides a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for staff, students and visitors;
 - (d) to make such provision as it thinks fit for the general welfare of students, in consultation with the Senate;
 - (e) to initiate remedial action in the event of a systematic failure within the institution to respond adequately to a deterioration in the University's performance, management or reputation.
2. To exercise overall responsibility for the well-being of staff and students, for the education of students, and for the University's assets, property and estate, and specifically
 - (a) as the employing authority for all staff within the institution, to approve or modify the main features of the University's employment policies and procedures;
 - (b) to approve or modify the University's policy on health and safety, and other significant University policies and to satisfy itself that arrangements are in place for the implementation of those policies;
 - (c) to review annually a report from the Senate on the assurance of the quality of the education provided to the University's students;
 - (d) to approve major projects and business proposals, including in particular
 - (i) any projects or proposals with a value of over £3 million (or £5 million with respect to the University's estate);
 - (ii) any proposals for educational provision overseas;
 - (e) to approve the annual statement of accounts; and
 - (f) to act as trustees for, or to make appropriate alternative arrangements for the trusteeship of, any property, legacy, endowment, bequest or gift in support of the work and welfare of the University.
3. To approve or modify the main features of the University's overall governance and management structures, its systems of risk management, internal financial management and control and accountability, and its financial regulations and procedures; and in that regard

- (a) to approve or modify the overall constitutional and organisational structure and shape of the University, including, subject to the approval of the Privy Council, amendments to the Charter and Statutes;
 - (b) to ensure that systems are in place for meeting all of the University's legal obligations, including those arising from contracts and other commitments made in the University's name;
 - (c) to direct the form, use and custody of the common seal;
 - (d) to appoint the Vice-Chancellor; and, where necessary, to propose his or her removal from office in accordance with the provisions of Statute VII;
 - (e) to make nominations to the office of Chancellor;
 - (f) to appoint the Pro-Chancellor and Deputy Pro-Chancellors;
 - (g) to appoint – and where appropriate, remove from office – the Deputy Vice-Chancellors and the pro-vice-chancellors;
 - (h) to appoint – and where appropriate, remove from office – a secretary to the Council, to safeguard the secretary's ability to carry out the responsibilities of that office, and, having regard to any other managerial responsibilities undertaken by the secretary, to ensure an appropriate separation in the lines of accountability;
 - (i) to appoint lay members of the Council¹;
 - (j) to remove members of the Council on the basis set out in Statute II;
 - (k) to ensure that University business is conducted in accordance with best practice in corporate governance within higher education, and with the principles of public life laid down by the Committee on Standards in Public Life;
 - (l) to ensure that funds provided by the Funding Council are used in accordance with the terms and conditions specified in the Memorandum of Assurance and Accountability;
 - (m) to ensure that reasonable arrangements are in place
 - (i) to safeguard the good name and values of the University;
 - (ii) to ensure compliance with the University's constitution;
 - (iii) to manage risk;
 - (n) to ensure that proper books of accounts are kept, to appoint the University's external and internal auditors and the University's bankers, and to approve the University's banking mandates;
 - (o) to establish, and as necessary review, procedures for handling internal grievances and for managing conflicts of interest;
 - (p) to approve or to amend, as necessary, the terms of the Trust Deeds of any University trusts;
 - (q) to determine the basis on which any of the Council's functions shall be delegated to committees and individuals, and thereafter to satisfy itself as to the proper and effective discharge of any delegated functions.
4. To monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the University against approved plans, key performance indicators agreed by the Council and benchmarking data for comparable institutions, and also
- (a) to monitor the progress of major business projects;
 - (b) to confirm that the performance of the Vice-Chancellor and other executive officers is systematically monitored against institutional objectives and plans; and likewise
 - (c) to establish processes to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the Council itself.

March 2006 (Updated July 2007, April 2008, July 2013, March 2015, October 2016, February 2017, November 2017)

¹ Excepting lay members nominated by third parties.