

The Role of the Principal

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ABERTAY UNIVERSITY

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Introduction

The Principal is responsible for the strategic leadership of the University, in fulfilment of its mission. In carrying this out, the Principal will manage the University's executive team, ensure the quality of the student learning experience, and effectively communicate to all stakeholders the institution's mission, vision and values. The Principal is also responsible for delivering the University's strategic objectives, as agreed with the University Court.

The role of the Principal

The Principal is the University's Chief Executive with formal responsibilities for the leadership and management of the University as delegated by the University Court. The Principal has responsibility for the implementation of the relevant decisions of the University Court.

1. Leadership and Management

In exercising the above responsibilities as Principal the post-holder will:

- a. Observe the highest standards of integrity, objectivity and honesty in the execution of his/her responsibilities.
- b. Fulfil the duty as the University's designated officer under the Financial Regulations, ensuring that financial and other management controls are sufficient to safeguard funds, and as well as being directly accountable to the governing body, be accountable to the chief executive officer of the Scottish Funding Council under the terms of the Financial Memorandum.
- c. Articulate a vision and a strategic agenda that combine ambition for the University with sensitivity to the needs of students, staff and other stakeholders.
- d. Communicate and embed the vision and strategy across the University, translate these into aims, objectives and plan, and motivate and engage staff in its delivery.
- e. Have a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning and to world-class research.
- f. Undertake stewardship of the human, physical and financial resources of the University, including setting and managing budgets with proper regard for financial propriety.
- g. Motivate senior teams to achieve high performance.
- h. Work with the University Court to ensure high standards of corporate governance.
- i. Represent the University at home and abroad, engaging in sector-wide endeavours, and be a visible and compelling advocate for Abertay.
- j. Work collaboratively with other institutions, industry, commerce and others with due regard for the Scottish Government's policies for economic growth and education.
- k. Engage positively with elected student representatives and with the wider student body.

- I. Foster constructive relationships with politicians, alumni, benefactors and anyone with an interest in Abertay.

2. Personal attributes

The Principal must demonstrate the following personal attributes:

- a. Personal integrity and high ethical standards and strong commitment to equality, diversity, and widening access to higher education
- b. The intellectual credibility to command respect and inspire staff and students.
- c. The ability and willingness to build constructive relationships and work collaboratively with other educational institutions, business, commerce and relevant public bodies and to be an effective advocate and ambassador for the University.
- d. Sensitivity to the Scottish political context and willingness to relate to, and interact with, politicians and the political process.
- e. Willingness to work with others to influence and shape policy and other developments affecting Higher Education in Scotland and more widely.
- f. A desire to engage with alumni, potential benefactors and others with an interest in the University.

3. Delegation of Authority

Under the Abertay University (Scotland) Order of Council 2019 (the Governing Order), the Principal is 'to carry out any of its functions relating to the organisation, management and discipline of the University as the University Court may prescribe.....' and in doing so 'has all the powers and duties of the University Court in relation to those functions but is subject to the University Court's general control and direction...'

Given the nature and range of the Principal's role and responsibilities, it is appropriate that the Principal has the authority to direct the University on a day-to-day basis. In particular, the Principal has the delegated authority, within the limits approved by the University Court, to:

- a. Authorise capital and reserve expenditure when setting the University's annual budget.
- b. Authorise the virement of budgets as deemed appropriate and within the financial framework approved by Court.
- c. Authorise the engagement of staff, determine their number and their terms and conditions of employment and vary any individual contract of employment.
- d. Authorise the University's engagement with legal and other agreements and affiliations with academic and other partners.
- e. Oversee the processes associated with the maintenance of good order in the University, including those associated with staff and student discipline.

Important decisions - involving, for example, major staffing changes or the commitment of significant funds such as large capital projects – that are borderline in terms of the delegated authority of Court should nonetheless be discussed with Court to ensure transparency.

4. Monitoring performance

The performance of the Principal will be evaluated by the Chair of Court. The basis of evaluation, to be conducted annually, will be based on the University's Strategic Plan and approved key performance indicators. The particular metrics used by the Chair of Court will vary according to the planning cycle and institutional circumstances. However, the following list comprises indicative measures that might be used:

- a. Leadership and relationship building.
- b. Student recruitment, progression, performance and experience.
- c. Reputational activities.
- d. Quality of provision.
- e. Delivery of strategic objectives.
- f. Infrastructure development
- g. Organisational development and people management.
- h. University research activity; and
- i. Income and financial management.

More frequent monitoring by Court is effected through the range of reports submitted by the Principal to Court at each of its formal meetings. They provide an opportunity not only for debriefing but also for critical discussion. In addition, the Principal engages with Court at the Court Conference held annually, and the five meetings of the Chair's Committee held each academic session.

Approved by Court on 15 April 2020

Version Control Table

Version number	Purpose / Changes	Author	Date
1.0	Approved by Court	University Secretary	15 October 2005
2.0	Periodic review informed by the independent review of the effectiveness of Court completed during 2011/2012. Revised version approved by Court.	University Secretary/ Governance Committee	15 March 2013
2.1	Coversheet amendments	F. Caldwell, Policy Officer	27 February 2014
2.2 draft	Updated to take account of the revised Scottish Code of Good HE Governance 2017	S Stewart, University Secretary	1 May 2018
2.3 draft	Further revised to take account of suggestions made by the Governance & Nominations Committee	S Stewart, University Secretary	12 June 2018
2.3	Court approved the above changes	University Secretary	20 June 2018

2.4 Draft	Reviewed and revised to take account of revised governing order and one or two minor changes	University Secretary	13 February 2020
2.5 Draft	Further minor revisions agreed by Governance & Nominations Committee	GNC	25 February 2020
2.5 Approved	Approved by Court	GNC	15 April 2020