



## **The Role of the Secretary to Court**

## **Introduction**

The University Secretary is the head of the University's academic administration and works closely with other senior members of academic and administrative staff to achieve the efficient and effective management of the University and, in this context they report directly to the Principal & Vice-Chancellor.

As Secretary to Court, appointed to this role by Court and having a direct reporting line to the Chair of Court, the University Secretary plays a key role in the operation and conduct of the University Court, ensuring that Court acts within its powers and follows proper procedures. The Secretary is the principal officer of Court and acts on the instructions of the governing body.

## **1. Appointment and Reporting**

- a) The Secretary to Court is appointed to that post by Court itself, and in accordance with the provisions of the University's governing Order of Council.
- b) Irrespective of any other responsibilities the appointee may hold, in relation to their responsibilities as Secretary, the Secretary is responsible solely to Court and reports direct to the Chair of Court in relation to Court business.

## **2. The Business of Court**

- a) The Secretary is required to provide Court with authoritative guidance about its responsibilities under the charter, statutes, articles, ordinances and regulations to which it is subject, including legislation and the requirements of the Funding Council, and on how these responsibilities should be discharged.
- b) The Secretary should ensure that new or revised responsibilities for Court (e.g. arising from new legislation) are drawn to Court's attention.
- c) The Secretary has a responsibility to alert Court if they believe that any proposed action would exceed Court's powers or be contrary to legislation or to the Funding Council's Financial Memorandum.
- d) The Secretary has sole responsibility for providing legal advice to or obtaining it for Court and shall be provided with a budget for that purpose, and for advising Court on all matters of procedure.
- e) The Secretary shall ensure that all documentation provided to members of Court is concise and its content is appropriate.

- f) The Secretary will also act as Secretary to Committees of Court or be responsible for ensuring that adequate administrative support is provided to them and shall be provided with a budget for that purpose.
- g) The Secretary shall maintain the Register of the Interests of the members of Court.
- h) The Secretary shall be responsible for the custody of the University Seal and for its proper use.
- i) The Secretary shall be responsible for arranging an induction programme for new members of Court, and shall draw the attention of Court members to training activities arranged by the Advance HE and other appropriate providers.
- j) The Secretary shall arrange for the re-imbursement to Court members of the expenses they incur in carrying out Court business, and shall be provided with a budget for the purpose.

### **3. Working Relationships and Conflict of Interest**

- a) The Secretary will combine the function of Secretary with a senior management role in the University. They must exercise care in separating these two functions.
- b) If the Secretary perceives any conflict of interest between their separate functions, they should report it forthwith to Court. If Court believes it has identified a conflict of interest of this nature, the Secretary will be offered an opportunity to respond to any such question.
- c) The Secretary will be required to form effective working relationships with the Chair of Court and the Principal & Vice Chancellor of the University. The Secretary is required to consult the Principal and keep them fully informed on any matter relating to Court business (other than in relation to the Remuneration Committee's consideration of the Principal's emoluments).
- d) The Secretary is required to advise the Chair in respect to any matters where conflict, potential or real, may occur between Court and the Principal & Vice-Chancellor.

- e) The Secretary will be required to form effective working relationships with other senior managers in the University in order to facilitate the effective conduct of Court business. The Secretary is a member of the Executive Group of the University and the Senior Management Team.
- f) The Secretary shall make a full and timely disclosure of their personal interests in the Register.
- g) Court will safeguard the Secretary's ability to carry out their duties.

#### **4. Personal attributes**

- a) The Secretary will have a strong personal commitment to higher education and the values, aims and objectives of the University.
- b) The Secretary will at all times regulate their personal conduct in relation to Court and the University in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life, embracing selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership, and maintain confidentiality as appropriate.
- c) The Secretary will participate in procedures established by Court for the regular appraisal/review of their performance as Secretary. These procedures will be separate from procedures for the appraisal/review of any other responsibilities the Secretary may hold.
- d) The Secretary is required to maintain a high standard of personal and professional self-development and will be appointed by the University a member of the Association of Heads of University Administration.

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