



# Further information on the Chair of Court role, University of Stirling

**BE THE DIFFERENCE**







# CONTENTS

- 4 Foreword
- 6 Introduction
- 10 About Court
- 12 The role of the Chair of Court
- 13 Membership of Court
- 15 Terms of appointment
- 17 How to Apply

# APPENDICES

- 1 The Chair of Court responsibilities
- 2 Role specification
- 3 Links to useful information









# FOREWORD

## Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair of Court at the University of Stirling.

Court, the University's governing body, is seeking to appoint a new Chair to take up post in the Summer of 2025. The Chair will lead Court in ensuring the highest standards of corporate governance, as laid out in the Scottish Code for Higher Education Governance and in accordance with the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016.

We are an international university with a pioneering spirit and a global reputation for high-quality teaching and research. We are passionate about creating impact in everything we do. The University has a new Strategic Plan which sets out its direction through to 2030, and the Chair will work closely with the Principal and Vice Chancellor and other University stakeholders in helping to ensure its implementation.

The objective of this Strategic Plan is to build on our successes, it empowers our people to go further and encourages a culture where they can produce work which is considered the best in the world.

This is an exciting time to be joining the University of Stirling. I would welcome informal enquiries, which may be directed to me at [university.secretary@stir.ac.uk](mailto:university.secretary@stir.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely,



**Eileen Schofield**

Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary  
University of Stirling





SCOTLAND'S  
UNIVERSITY  
FOR SPORTING  
EXCELLENCE



# INTRODUCTION

## The University of Stirling has started a new and exciting chapter in its history following the launch of our new institutional Strategic Plan.

The objective of the new Strategic Plan is to strengthen the University's established reputation as a groundbreaking institution whose interdisciplinary research makes a difference to society and benefits communities worldwide.

Stirling is renowned for research that makes a positive impact on people's health, education and wellbeing. The University collaborates with international governments and policymakers, businesses, industry, and charitable organisations, to tackle and provide the solutions to some of the toughest global societal challenges.

Success will be measured by our enhanced research profile; through quantifiable improvements in learning and teaching outcomes, including graduate employability; and by recognition that we have made a material difference to our community and the wider world.

Our governing body, the University Court, plays a crucial role in defining our strategic direction and ensuring we achieve our mission through strong leadership and governance. The Chair is responsible for the leadership and effectiveness of Court and shall ensure that the University is well connected with its stakeholders, including its staff and students.

We are looking for an individual with substantial leadership experience, the ability to represent the University externally, an appreciation of the Higher Education sector and a strong commitment to the principles of good governance.









# EDUCATION FOUNDED ON INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

Founded by Royal Charter in 1967, being the difference is in our DNA – providing education with a purpose and carrying out research which has a positive impact on communities across the globe.

18,500+ students study with the University of Stirling globally, with over 140 nationalities represented on our scenic central Scotland campus alone. We have five faculties, and our structure allows us to collaborate across disciplines, bringing fresh ideas and creativity to our research and thinking.

As a global institution we have established a diverse portfolio of innovative and productive partnerships with organisations across the world. These partnerships are fundamental in helping the University meet its strategic objectives through enhancing our international links with institutions that share our values.

The University, also home to 1,800+ staff, is ranked first in the UK and top three in the world for its campus environment (International Student Barometer 2022, wave two).

Grounded in the success delivered under the Strategic Plan 2016-2023, the University has been **shortlisted in the University of the Year category of the Times Higher Education Awards 2024**. The awards celebrate institutions that have demonstrated exceptional performance across a range of areas, and our shortlisting reflects the hard work and dedication of staff working in partnership across faculties and professional services to deliver success in learning and teaching, the student experience, research and innovation, internationalisation and sport.

Ranked first in the UK and top five in the world for its sports facilities (International Student Barometer 2022, wave two). Stirling is Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence. Its world-class facilities provide the perfect training environment for the University's sports scholars – many of whom compete at the highest level, including at the Olympics and Commonwealth Games – and for students, staff, and the wider community.

Led by Stirling Management School, **AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accreditation** was achieved in April 2024. AACSB is one of the most prestigious and recognisable accolades afforded to just 6% of business schools globally. The University also successfully **retained its QS 5 stars accreditation**. A five-star evaluation, classified as excellent, was achieved across all aspects of the assessment: teaching, internationalisation, research, facilities, employability, environmental impact, and programme strength.

The University is a central partner of the Forth Valley University College Health Partnership and is a signatory to the £214 million Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal. The University's City Region and Growth Deal initiatives include **Scotland's International Environment Centre (SIEC)** which is making significant strides in its mission to combat the global climate emergency and foster inclusive growth. Key achievements include the installation of the Forth Environmental Resilience Array (Forth-ERA) sensor network, success of the Young Pathfinders Climate Competition, and strategic collaborations with the Futures Institute at Dollar Academy. The **Intergenerational Living and Innovation Hub (ILIH)** and SIEC phase 2 have combined with Clackmannanshire's Digital Hub to create the Alloa Innovation Campus, with a collective focus of addressing two of society's most pressing challenges: an aging population and climate change, and the **National Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Hub (NATIH)** has reached a major milestone with the formal endorsement of its Full Business Case by both the UK and Scottish Governments.







# ABOUT COURT

## Court is the governing body of the University, with responsibility for determining its strategic direction, institutional values and overall sustainability.

The overarching purpose of governance in Higher Education is to promote the enduring success, integrity and probity of institutions, as set out in the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance. Higher Education Institutions are legally independent corporate bodies that have a common purpose to provide teaching and research. They also have an important role in helping to drive economic growth through their world-class research, partnerships with business and industry, and provision of a skilled graduate workforce. Court has ultimate responsibility for all of the affairs of the institution. Specifically, this entails:

- (i) Determining the University's future direction, strategy and policy;
- (ii) Ensuring its long-term sustainability;
- (iii) Conducting its affairs according to specified ethical standards, and with due regard to equality and diversity;
- (iv) Ensuring the protection of academic freedom;
- (v) Having due regard to the interests of its stakeholders and the wider public;
- (vi) Fostering an environment whereby knowledge may be advanced and the potential of learners fulfilled;
- (vii) Taking all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the University.



Members of Court, including the Chair, are also charity trustees and as such are expected to act in the interests of the University as a charity and ensure that the University complies with charities legislation. Under legislation the following are disqualified from acting as a charity trustee: someone with unspent convictions for dishonesty; an undischarged bankrupt; someone who has been removed under either Scottish or English law or the courts from being a charity trustee, or a person disqualified from being a company director.

Court is supported by a framework of governance committees through which its business and responsibilities are discharged, including an Academic Council which (subject to the powers of Court) is responsible for the academic work of the University. The primary activities of the University Court include:

- (i) Ensuring business is conducted in accordance with best practice in Higher Education corporate governance;
- (ii) Approving the mission and strategic vision of the institution, long-term academic and business plans and key performance indicators, and ensuring that these meet the interests of stakeholders;
- (iii) Monitoring and evaluating the performance and effectiveness of the University against its planned strategies and approved key performance indicators;
- (iv) Acting as the principal financial authority to approve the annual budget, financial statements and operating plans which reflect the institution's strategic priorities and to safeguard the University's assets;
- (v) Ensuring that public funds are used in accordance with the terms and conditions in the Scottish Funding Council's Financial Memorandum;
- (vi) Ensuring the existence and integrity of financial systems of control and accountability and monitoring these through the Audit Committee;
- (vii) Directing and overseeing the University's arrangements for internal and external audit;
- (viii) Overseeing the strategic management of the University estates;
- (ix) Considering, approving and keeping under review an estate strategy which identifies the property and space requirements needed to fulfil the objectives of the University's Strategic Plan, and also provides for a planned programme of maintenance;
- (x) Ensuring that the property and income of the University are applied only in support of purposes which are charitable in law.







# THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR OF COURT

**The Chair is responsible for the leadership and effectiveness of Court and shall ensure that the University is well connected with its stakeholders, including its staff and students.**

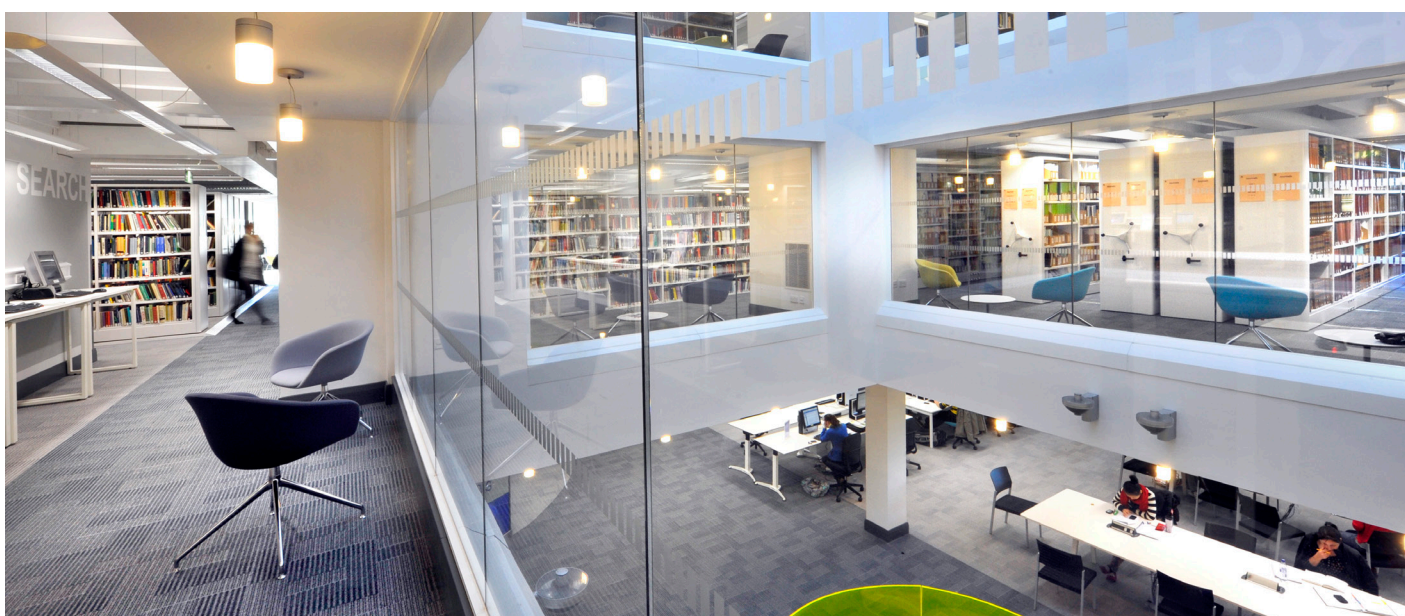
In overseeing the discharge of duties, the Chair should ensure that Court members work together effectively and efficiently and have confidence in the procedures laid down for the conduct of business. It is incumbent on the Chair that, both individually and collectively, Members of Court observe the nine principles of public life in Scotland as defined by the Scottish Government's Model Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies. These are: duty; selflessness; integrity; accountability and stewardship; objectivity; openness; honesty; leadership and respect.

The Chair of Court plays a key leadership role in University business but should not be drawn into the day-to-day executive management of the institution. A critical component of institutional effectiveness is the establishment of a constructive working relationship between the Chair of Court and the Principal. The relationship should be mutually supportive but respectful of the checks and balances imposed by the different roles within the University's constitutional framework.

There is also a close working relationship between the Chair of Court and the University Secretary with whom there is a direct reporting link in relation to the conduct of Court business. The University Secretary provides guidance to the Court in terms of its responsibilities and discharge of duties under the University's Charter, Statutes and Ordinances.

The performance of the Chair is reviewed annually by Court in accordance with the Scottish Code for Good Higher Education Governance.

Previous Chairs and Members of Court have commented on the personal and professional enrichment that involvement in governance within higher education can bring. More details about Chair of Court responsibilities can be found in Appendix 1.





# MEMBERSHIP OF COURT

The Court comprises external, independent (lay) members and internal members of the University community.

Whilst independent members are in the majority, internal University members are a significant minority. This exposes Lay Members to a range of perceptions and opinions from across the University community.

The membership of Court is being reviewed in light of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. The membership of Court will be:

- (i) The Chair of Court elected by members of Court, staff and students;
- (ii) Up to twelve external members appointed by Court on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee including one member representing the alumni body and one of whom is appointed as Vice-Chair of Court;
- (iii) The Principal and Vice-Chancellor;
- (iv) The Senior Deputy Principal;
- (v) Three members appointed by the Academic Council from among their own number;
- (vi) The Provost of Stirling;
- (vii) Two students nominated by the Students' Union;
- (viii) One member of academic staff elected by staff;

- (ix) One member of professional services staff elected by staff;
- (x) One member of academic staff nominated by a trade union;
- (xi) One member of professional services staff nominated by a trade union.

All the categories of membership are fixed by the Statutes and cannot be varied without the consent of the Privy Council.

The Court has 25 members and meets four times a year with an additional strategy day to focus on strategic issues.

Members of Court are asked to provide information to the University including equality and diversity details, completing a skills register, a register of interests, records of gifts and hospitality received and biographical details. Members will be asked to update records annually. Court member biographies and a summary of the register of interests will be published on the University's website.









# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

**Under the Charter and Statutes, the Chair of Court holds office for four years. The Chair may be eligible for re-appointment for a further four years.**

## **Time commitment**

This is an important role which requires commitment and flexibility. The time commitment will vary from week to week, but is likely to amount to not less than one day per week on average, with some additional time for reading. The Chair of Court must be available to provide informal support to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, the University Secretary and members of Court. There may be occasions when the Chair is required to attend meetings at short notice.

## **Remuneration**

The role of Chair of Court will be entitled to non-pensionable remuneration in the form of an honorarium per annum. Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses can be claimed for attendance at Court and Committee meetings or other duties carried out at the request of Court. The rates of expenses claimable are the same as for members of staff under the University's Travel Policy.









# HOW TO APPLY

## Application

**Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the University of Stirling on this appointment.**

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code **IAMXI**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Tuesday 12 November 2024**.

\* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

## Interview

Shortlisting and interviews will be conducted by a selection panel appointed by the Governance and Nominations Committee. Those applicants invited for interview will meet with the panel for a traditional interview that will explore each candidate's qualities, attributes and experience to determine whether they can demonstrate that they fulfil the criteria for appointment. In addition, shortlisted applicants will be invited to meet groups of students and staff, all of whose views will contribute to those of the selection panel.

Candidates who satisfactorily meet the relevant criteria of the selection panel will be entitled to stand as a candidate in an election process.



The University values and embraces diversity and inclusion among staff and students by encouraging all individuals to realise their full potential and contribute as fully as possible to the University community. It aims to create conditions whereby the treatment of students, staff and other stakeholders is on the basis of their relative merits, abilities and potential.

The University would welcome applications from all suitably experienced individuals. Applications would be particularly welcomed from individuals from protected characteristic groups currently underrepresented on the Court who would further enhance its diversity. Reasonable adjustments for disability will be implemented for those who may require them.

## Election

The final stage of the process will be an election between those individuals declared as candidates. The election will be managed by a third party and the electorate will comprise students, staff and members of University Court. Candidates will have the opportunity to set out an election message that will be available to the electors as part of the voting process.

The election process is "first-past-the-post". The candidate who receives the most votes will be declared the winner and will be appointed as Chair of Court.

## GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

## Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.



# Chair of Court responsibilities

## Effective and Inclusive Meetings

- To preside at meetings of Court;
- To ensure that members work together effectively, cohesively and in good spirit and have confidence in the procedures laid down;
- To ensure that Court discusses all of the key issues affecting the University and that its business is conducted smoothly and in accordance with Standing Orders;
- To contribute to collective decision-making and act only in the interests of the University;
- To ensure that Court operates efficiently and effectively, with all members having the opportunity to express their views and to participate in, and contribute to, decision-making;
- To monitor on an ongoing basis the performance of Court, and ensure that it both observes the principles of public life and operates in a manner consistent with the concepts of good practice in corporate governance in Higher Education;
- To Chair the Governance and Nominations Committee, and be involved as a member of such other committees and working groups as Court may determine from time to time including the Remunerations Committee;
- To ensure that Court committees report appropriately on their work, and in particular on their use of delegated powers.

## Personal Integrity

- To act at all times in ways that are consistent with the University's values and especially its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- To be answerable to Court for actions taken on its behalf.

## Governance

- To ensure that the effectiveness of Court and its members are regularly reviewed;
- To take delegated action when agreed by Court and to report back to Court on any action taken on its behalf;
- To work with Officers to ensure the induction of new members.

## Interface with Management and the Executive

- To ensure that there is an appropriate balance of authority between the Court and the Principal and Vice-Chancellor and to develop and maintain a constructive, but appropriately challenging, relationship with the Principal and Vice-Chancellor which is mutually supportive but properly distinct;
- To develop and maintain a constructive, but appropriately challenging, relationship with the University Secretary and those officers that support the work of Court whilst maintaining a distinction between the role of management and governors;
- To appraise, on an annual basis, the performance of the Principal and Vice-Chancellor including seeking and considering the views of each member of Court.

## Ambassadorial Role

- To act as an ambassador for the University at internal and external meetings, events and other occasions as appropriate;
- To represent the University on the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) and on such other bodies as Court may determine from time to time;
- To be responsible to the University's stakeholders for the leadership and effectiveness of the University Court.



# Role specification

## Experience and knowledge

### Essential

- A track record as a successful executive or non-executive leader with substantial board level experience working within an organisation of comparable size and complexity to the University.
- Professional expertise in matters relevant to the successful operations of a large, diverse organisation, e.g. commercial acumen, human resources, risk management, organisational change;
- Experience of chairing high level, strategic board and committee meetings;
- Excellent communication skills
- Knowledge or understanding of governance in organisations;
- Understanding and experience of strategic planning, financial planning and budgetary processes.

### Desirable

- Knowledge of the University of Stirling or equivalent research-led universities.
- Knowledge of philanthropic fundraising;
- Knowledge of the international environment, particularly in relation to Higher Education;

## Personal attributes and qualities

The following represent key, essential attributes for the role of Chair:

- Integrity;
- Independence and objectivity;
- Tact, diplomacy and sensitivity;
- Sound judgement;
- Demonstrable authority;
- The ability to command the trust and respect of Court, Academic Council and the staff and students of the University;
- The ability to address and resolve conflicting views in a constructive manner;
- The ability to constructively challenge;
- Calm, measured approach;
- The skills of networking, influencing and advocacy;
- The ability to establish cordial relationships with a diverse range of people across all of the University's stakeholder groups;
- A strong personal commitment to Higher Education and empathy with the values and aims of the University of Stirling;
- Demonstrable commitment to equality and diversity.



## Links to useful information

**Governance Handbook** (including committee structure)

[Governance-Handbook](#)

**Senior Officers**

[Senior Officers](#) | [About](#) | [University of Stirling](#)

**Current Membership of Court**

[University Court](#) | [About](#) | [University of Stirling](#)

**Strategic Plan**

[University of Stirling Strategic Plan 2030](#)

**Financial Statements**

[Finance Office](#) | [Financial statements](#) | [About](#) | [University of Stirling](#)

**The University Calendar** (including the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances)

[University calendar](#) | [About](#) | [University of Stirling](#)

**Court Standing Orders**

[Standing Orders](#)

**Schedule of Reservations and Delegations**

[Schedule of reservations and delegations](#)

**Statement of Primary Responsibilities**

[Statement of primary responsibilities](#)

**Scottish Code of Higher Education Governance 2023**

[Scottish Code for Good Higher Education Governance](#)

**Financial Memorandum**

[Institutional sustainability and governance - Scottish Funding Council \(sfc.ac.uk\)](#)

**Key Research Themes**

[Research themes](#) | [Research](#) | [University of Stirling](#)

**Nine Principles of Public Life in Scotland**

[Members of devolved public bodies: model code of conduct](#)











Disclaimer of Liability: The University of Stirling accordingly reserves the right without notice to vary the content of the information described in this publication and to modify as seems appropriate. The University of Stirling is a registered trademark. All information is correct at time of going to print. © University of Stirling (2024). All rights reserved. The University of Stirling is a charity registered in Scotland, number SC 011159