

Heriot-Watt University

THE COURT

Minutes: 12 February 2026

In the Chair:	Mr Bruce Pritchard, Chair of Court	
Present:	Professor Paul Dalgarno, Senate Member	Professor Steve McLaughlin, Vice-Principal
	Dr Louise Delicato, Senate Member	Mr Rodney Miller, Lay Member
	Mr Graeme Dickson, Lay Member	Mr Jürgen Munz, Trade Union Member
	Mr Cameron Fields, Student Union (SU) President	Ms Marta Phillips, Lay Member
	Ms Hilary Hansen, Lay Member	Mr Alan Robertson, Lay Member
	Mr Steve Heathcote, Lay Member	Mr Ian Stevenson, Lay Member
	Dr Brian Henderson, Alumni Member	Ms Denise Thomas, Lay Member
	Professor David Jenkins, Trade Union Member	Mr Mike Tumilty, Deputy Chair of Court (<i>until 11.55am</i>)
	Mr Paul Lewis, Lay Member	Dr Laura Wicks, Staff Member
	Ms Holly McAdams, SU Vice-President (Academic)	Professor Richard Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor
Dr Yvonne McLaren-Hankin, Dean of the University	Ms Dorothy Wright, Lay Member	
Member apologies:	Mr Gary Kildare, Lay Member	Mr Bruce Roberts, Staff Member
	In attendance: Ms Ruth Moir, University Secretary and Vice-Principal (Governance and Operations) Ms Sue Collier, Global Director of Governance and Legal Services (GALS) Professor Lynne Jack, Deputy Vice-Principal (Dubai) Ms Suzie Lyons, General Counsel Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer, Deputy Principal (Global Sustainability) Professor Dame Heather McGregor, Provost and Vice-Principal (Dubai) Ms Penny McIntyre, Global Director of HR Professor Gill Murray, Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business) Professor Tadhg O'Donovan, Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) Mr Martin Pringle, Global Chief Financial Officer (GCFO) Professor Chris Turney, Deputy Principal (Research and Impact) Ms Lisa Herlihy, Clerk to the Court Ms Megan Morgan, Senior Governance Officer	

Attendees absent: Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi, Provost and Vice-Principal (Malaysia)

MINUTE
REF
M26/05

WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and noted the apologies. No interests were declared.

M26/06

TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION EXPANSION PROJECT IN THE MIDDLE EAST: PARTNERSHIP IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA (Ct/26/01)

[The Court **approved** the proposal to establish a partnership in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) with an investment partner.] The proposal was presented by the Principal and the Provost and Vice-Principal (Dubai), along with other members of the University Executive.

At the outset, the Chair asked for confirmation that the Court had sufficient information to make a decision. This was confirmed by the Court. The Chair reported that previous discussions on this topic had highlighted a range of views amongst Court members, and that the matter remained contentious. The Chair had therefore decided, in line with the Court Standing Orders, to take this particular decision by means of an anonymous electronic vote. Only Court members were eligible to take part in this vote, and a simple majority of the Court

members present would be required for approval. The vote would be conducted following the final, requested updates on the proposal.

The Principal presented the comprehensive report and proposal with the full support of the University Executive.

XXX Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.30c.

The Chair of Court invited the student members of the Court to provide any comments they wished to make prior to moving to a vote. The Student Union President reported that he felt student and staff concerns about the proposal were significant and that these should be a key factor in the Court's decision-making.

The Chair of Court then re-confirmed with the Court that all members who wished to comment on the proposal had had opportunity to do so, and reminded members of their responsibility within the Standing Orders to vote objectively and dispassionately, to make a decision based on the evidence shared and discussed, and to respect and comply with the decision made.

The Court voted to approve the proposal. 22 members were present, with a simple majority being 12 members. 17 voted to approve and 5 voted not to approve.

The Chair noted, given the number of votes against the proposal, that there would be sensitivity within the Institution to the decision. This had to be respected and the Chair asked the University Executive to work to ensure such difference of opinion was handled diligently and sensitively.

In addition, given the difference of opinion, the Chair asked the Court to confirm that it was content that due process had been appropriately followed in allowing Court to reach its decision, to which it agreed. It was noted that going forward, non-contentious decisions would be reached by consensus and, whilst voting would be used in the case of contentious issues, it was not intended to use it routinely.

M26/07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 26 March 2026 via Microsoft Teams from 8:30 – 12:30 (UK time); 12:30 – 16:30 (Dubai time); and 16:30 – 20:30 (Malaysia time).