

THE COURT

Minutes: 20 March 2025

In the Chair:	Mr Bruce Pritchard, Chair of Court <i>(except for the item regarding the renewal of the Chair of Court)</i> Mr Mike Tumilty, Deputy Chair of Court <i>(for the item regarding the renewal of the Chair of Court)</i>	
Present:	Professor Paul Dalgarno, Senate Member Mr Graeme Dickson, Lay Member Mr Cameron Fields, Student Union (SU) President Ms Hilary Hansen, Lay Member Mr Steve Heathcote, Lay Member Dr Brian Henderson, Alumni Member Professor David Jenkins, Trade Union Member Mr Gary Kildare, Lay Member Mr Paul Lewis, Lay Member Dr Bill MacPherson, Senate Member Ms Holly McAdams, SU Vice-President (Academic)	Dr Yvonne McLaren-Hankin, Dean of the University Professor Steve McLaughlin, Vice-Principal Mr Jürgen Munz, Trade Union Member Ms Marta Phillips, Lay Member Mr Bruce Roberts, Staff Member Mr Alan Robertson, Lay Member Mr Ian Stevenson, Lay Member Ms Denise Thomas, Lay Member Dr Laura Wicks, Staff Member Professor Richard Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor Ms Dorothy Wright, Lay Member
In attendance:	Ms Ruth Moir, University Secretary and Vice-Principal (Governance and Operations) Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi, Vice-Principal and Provost (Malaysia) Professor Malcolm Chrisp, Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) Ms Sue Collier, Global Director of Governance and Legal Services (GALS) Ms Suzie Lyons, General Counsel Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer, Deputy Principal (Global Sustainability) Professor Dame Heather McGregor, Vice-Principal and Provost (Dubai) <i>(from 10.30am – 12.10pm)</i> Ms Penny McIntyre, Global Director of HR Professor Gill Murray, Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business) Mr Martin Pringle, Global Chief Financial Officer (GCFO) Ms Lisa Herlihy, Clerk to the Court	

MINUTE
REF**M25/01 WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and congratulated Mr Cameron Fields and Ms Holly McAdams on being re-elected to their Student Union roles.

Members of the Court whose renewal or appointment was considered under M25/16 noted an interest in those decisions. The Chair confirmed that each member would step out of the meeting when their membership was considered. The Deputy Chair of Court would Chair the meeting whilst the Chair was absent. Dr Laura Wicks noted an interest in M25/15; the proposed gift would support programmes at Panmure House and Dr Wicks line managed the Panmure House team. This would not prevent Dr Wicks taking part in decision-making.

The Chair thanked both Court members and the University Executive (UE) for the rigorous and constructive approach to governance taken in recent years, which was vital during a challenging period for the sector.

The Chair reported that Court members would be asked to raise their electronic hand to confirm approval of each item presented for approval. Items would be considered approved when there was a majority show of hands.

M25/02 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS ON 5 DECEMBER 2024

The Court received and **approved** the minutes of the meeting on 5 December 2024.

MINUTE
REF**M25/03 REPORT FROM THE COURT INTERIM BUSINESS COMMITTEE (CIBC)
(Ct1/25/01)**

The Court received and **noted** the report from the CIBC, presented by the Chair. The Court noted that CIBC had approved, on behalf the Court, the appointment of Mr Mike Bruce as Acting Executive Dean of the Global College for a period of up to three months from 3 February 2025 until 2 May 2025.

M25/04 ACTIONS LOG, MATTERS ARISING AND COURT AGENDA TRACKER

The Court received and **noted** the Actions Log and Agenda Tracker, presented by the Chair. The Court agreed that those items marked as complete would now be removed from the Log.

M25/05 STRATEGIC SUMMARY REPORT (PRESENTATION)

The Court received and **discussed** a Strategic Summary Report focused on current issues for the University, presented by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor.

The Principal provided the half-year updates on the UE's seven primary objectives for 2024-25. The University was on track to meet its agreed operating deficit **XXX Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.33**. The University was on track to meet its £59m target for research income.

A number of actions were being taken to meet the target of a 10% increase in staff satisfaction regarding Change Management and Communications, including the development of a Change Assurance Framework, monthly communications to staff regarding finances and Strategy development, and a pulse survey to be issued ahead of the full Staff Survey. An action plan was in place to achieve the target of 80% positivity for all academic activity in the National Student Survey, as well as an overall student satisfaction score of 87%. Dashboards were being used to monitor progress.

The development of Strategy 2035 was on track for approval in June 2025 and the UE had recently completed training around AI, with a follow up session planned. Climate-related training would also be completed.

The Principal provided updates on recent activity around International Women's Day and the Fundraising Campaign. The Court noted that the General Counsel had provided advice on drafting gift agreements and related governance, with some significant donations recently received.

The Court noted that there continued to be considerable flux in the UK Higher Education (HE) sector. A new White Paper was expected, and the Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Bill would have an impact on HE and Further Education that was currently unclear. This was leading to sector uncertainty and enhanced scrutiny. Heriot-Watt would continue to use a challenging, data-based approach to governance to ensure good practice. This was particularly true when addressing the University's financial position. Financial control regimes were being enhanced and data used to reduce costs and maximise income, with reserves being used to maintain required expenditure. Feedback from staff was that the systematic approach was appreciated and led to increased confidence in the process. Maintaining this confidence in both staff and current and prospective students was key to ensuring recruitment remained on track. The Court observed that the University was now in a strong position relating to MI.

The Chair of Court reported that the Committee of Scottish Chairs would be meeting with the Scottish Minister for Education shortly. Court members could contact the Chair if there were questions they wished him to ask.

During discussion, the Court noted that challenging periods often led to difficulties in industrial relations. The Chair of the Staff Committee confirmed that the

Committee was monitoring relationships with the recognised Trade Unions. The Court recognised that disputes could take place at both a local and national level, with a different impact on relationships in each case. Respect between the Trade Unions and employers would always be key, particularly as Heriot-Watt aimed to keep excellent staff and student experiences at the heart of Strategy 2035.

A member of the Court queried how the University was using PR to communicate the work that Heriot-Watt did around economic growth and competitiveness. The Principal clarified that Scottish Ministers had engaged well with, for example, the National Robotarium and the Dubai Campus and that this allowed the University to showcase its work. Such links would continue to be developed to ensure that updated messages were shared.

The Court agreed that, for future meetings, it would receive a RAG-rated report on each of the four key priorities that had been identified by the Court Interim Business Committee (overall financial sustainability, senior executive succession planning, the development of a debt management plan, and the development and operationalisation of Strategy 2035).

In response to a question, the Principal confirmed that the University was considering the justification for any expenditure very carefully. The University had improved its financial outturn in 2023-24 but this did not negate the need to ensure that robust decision-making could be evidenced.

M25/06 PRINCIPALS REPORT TO COURT (Ct1/25/02)

The Court received and **noted** the Principal's Report, presented by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor. This included updates on delivery of the strategic themes and milestones for each of the University's SPIs, as well as cross-campus news.

M25/07 GLOBAL UPDATE FROM THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE BODIES (SRBs) (PRESENTATION)

The Court received and **discussed** a global update from the SRBs, presented by the SU President and the SU Vice-President (Academic).

The SU President reported on recent trends in Advice Hub cases, noting that the release of results from two exam diets had led to an increase in the number of students seeking support regarding academic appeals. During discussion, the Court noted that lecturers and personal tutors needed to be clear on when and how to advise students regarding academic appeals so that these were made in a timely manner. The Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) confirmed that Student Advisor roles had been piloted this year and were able to provide support with academic appeals and related matters. These roles now needed to be rolled out across the University to provide further support.

There had also been an increase in students seeking support regarding academic misconduct, particularly around Generative AI. The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) had recently received a presentation on AI and had agreed that a set of principles for the use of Generative AI was required to help students avoid academic misconduct issues. Following advice from the Senate, training events were being rolled out regarding how to support students to use AI positively and avoid academic misconduct.

The Advice Hub was supporting students enduring financial hardship through its voucher scheme in cases where applications to the Student Hardship Fund were taking several weeks to process. The Secretary agreed to meet with the Student Union Representatives to identify reasons for the delay in dealing with applications. The Court agreed that the Secretary would report back on actions taken to resolve the delay.

The Court noted that the summary of Advice Hub cases focused solely on the Edinburgh Campus and requested that future reports include a related summary of student support issues at the Dubai and Malaysia campuses.

The SU President and SU Vice-President (Academic) provided a presentation on student employability, which was a key issue for students due to concerns regarding the state of the job market. The University had a role in developing transferrable skills and preparing students for current challenges such as the use of AI. The SRBs had identified a shift towards students expecting their degree to provide valuable real-world experiences to bridge the gap between university and work. Excellent experiences were provided across the University via industry partnerships and placements, but work was needed to ensure consistency and to embed employability into every part of the student journey. The Court noted that a recent change to Academic Regulations would allow year-long placements during Undergraduate programmes and that this was beginning to be implemented during programme development.

The Court noted that 90% of students felt more confident about securing a job after using career support services; these services therefore needed to be boosted, and students encouraged to make use of them.

During discussion, the Court also raised the following points:

- that it would be helpful to see case studies for how employability was embedded into the student journey, perhaps via the Global Student Life Committee;
- that the University's position as 1st in Scotland and 2nd in the UK for employability was a significant USP and should be communicated very clearly to students as well as being a focus during the development of Strategy 2035; and
- that the University should work with industry to identify how technology was disrupting employment, so that this could be addressed during study.

M25/08

UPDATE FROM THE VICE-PRINCIPAL WITH INPUT FROM THE CAMPUS VICE-PRINCIPALS AND PROVOSTS (VERBAL)

The Court received and **noted** the verbal update, presented by the Vice-Principal of the University.

The Vice-Principal noted that the Resource Management Group continued to manage delivery of the target deficit, including via a 75% reduction in the University's travel budget. Whilst travel savings were being sought, the Court recognised the importance of travel to Heriot-Watt as a global university and that cuts should be made strategically. The Vice-Principal confirmed that budget holders had been provided with data regarding their current expenditure so they could ensure necessary travel continued and optional travel was reduced. Where appropriate, staff were being encouraged to consider developing online communities to assist the University with both its efficiency and sustainability goals. Staff recruitment was also being assessed against a clear set of criteria to help manage costs.

The Portfolio Review process had completed for the Dubai and Malaysia Campuses, with work ongoing at the Edinburgh Campus. Market opportunities were being identified in addition to programmes that were not aligned to market needs. **XXX Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.33.**

During discussion, the Court queried whether the existing governance and organisational structure allowed the University to be sufficiently agile. The Vice-Principal confirmed that the University was working to increase the agility of its academic governance, and that the Portfolio Review was one way of doing this. The Chair of Court also noted that there was ongoing work to increase agility

within corporate governance via, for example, clear delegations. The development of Strategy 2035 was considering how to shape the University to be fit for the future and this would be presented to the Court for consideration following Strategy approval.

M25/09 UNIVERSITY SECRETARY UPDATE (Ct1/25/03)

The Court received and **noted** an update on governance matters, presented by the University Secretary.

The Secretary reported that the paper had been provided to address a question arising from the Annual Effectiveness Surveys around the role of trustees in stakeholder engagement. A simple set of guidelines had been provided to clarify that trustees were expected to act as ambassadors for the University, but this role was not prescriptive and each trustee would have a different level of engagement with stakeholders. The main role was to communicate key messages regarding the University when the opportunity arose.

The Secretary thanked Court members for their attendance at the recent Joint Meeting of the Court and the Senate on 12 March 2025. The Secretary agreed to seek feedback from all attendees on the format and content of the meeting, and to report this back to the Court alongside the report of the meeting.

The Secretary reported that recruitment for a vacancy on the Court and for three vacancies on Court Committees was upcoming. Two Court Committee Chairs would also need to be appointed. Relevant communications would be issued shortly, and members were asked to share the vacancies with their networks.

Legal dispute in Dubai

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

M25/10 STRATEGY 2025 SPRINT 3: OUTCOMES (Ct1/25/04)

The Court received and **noted** the outcomes of Strategy 2035 Sprint 3, presented by the Vice-Principal and the University Secretary. The Court noted that this item had been discussed in detail at the Joint Meeting of the Court and the Senate.

M25/11 REPORT FROM THE SENATE (Ct1/25/05)

The Court received the report from the Senate, presented by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor (Chair of the Senate), and **approved** the Researcher Concordat Annual Report for publication.

The Principal reported that the Senate had discussed briefings on the University's strategic and financial position, the Big Six student surveys, Widening Access and Support, and Graduate Outcomes and Employability. The Senate had also endorsed a series of Ordinances for Court approval (see M25/12).

The Court noted that the Researcher Concordat Annual Report had been endorsed for Court approval by the University Committee for Research and Innovation, which reported to the Senate. The Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business) reported that the Researcher Concordat was an agreement between universities, research institutes and funders to support the career development of researchers in the UK. For 2024-25, the Annual Report had been updated to reference the work of the Research Futures Hub and on developing an enterprising research culture.

The Court agreed that, in future, the cover sheet for the Report should clarify its purpose because this was helpful context.

The Court also observed that the section regarding governance approvals should be amended to indicate that each of the approvals had now taken place.

The Court agreed that the Global Director of Research Engagement would issue a communication to staff regarding the current status of the Graduate School.

In response to feedback from a Court member, the Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business) agreed to develop a summary of the various concordats that the University had signed up to and communicate this to staff to develop visibility.

M25/12 REPORT FROM THE ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE (ORC) (Ct1/25/06)

The Court received the report from the ORC, presented by the Global Director of Governance and Legal Services (on behalf of the Chair of the ORC).

The Court **approved** the following items:

- the proposed amendments to Ordinance P2: *Requirements for Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates*, which would ensure an eight-year maximum duration for distance learning and online MBA students. Students would remain eligible for Temporary Suspension of Studies, if required, and the change would only apply to new registrations and so would be fully transparent. In response to a question, the Vice-Principal confirmed that an eight-year maximum was consistent with the sector;
- the proposed amendments to Ordinance E1: *Fees, Charges, Fines and Debts*, which had undergone a thorough review to ensure it was consistent with current practice and Regulations. The four underpinning policies had also been revised. Key points were adjusting the timing of IT holds that prevented students accessing materials and so disincentivised them from addressing their debts, and ensuring that the Court could only vary fees and charges with notice;
- the proposed changes to the Ordinances B2, B3, B10, C1 and L1 to make provisions for electoral ties. The same amendment had been proposed for each Ordinance, stating that the process for resolving a tie would be published online when elections were being run so that there was clarity for candidates and the electorate; and
- the Committee Terms of Reference (subject to the approval of the Senate in April 2025). The Court noted that the Ordinances and Regulations Committee had been working, in recent years, to ensure that the University had maximum flexibility in its governing documents whilst also providing clarity for stakeholders.

M25/13 REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (Ct1/25/07)

The Court received and **noted** the report from the Finance Committee, presented by Mr Steve Heathcote, Chair of the Finance Committee.

The Committee Chair reported that the Committee was focused on oversight of financial sustainability, cash and liquidity, and preparedness for delivering Strategy 2035. The deficit position had been higher than planned at the 6-month point; this was partly due to phasing, and there was a plan in place to return to the agreed position. The 6-month forecast had been approved by the Committee for issue to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and work on the forecast for 2025-26 was ongoing. **XXX Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.33**

The Committee had received a summary of the financial position across the Scottish sector, noting that Heriot-Watt had a comparatively strong cash position and a lower percentage deficit in relation to total spend. The Committee was confident that reaching a surplus position was therefore realistic.

The Committee had considered a proposal regarding a new ground lease in the Research Park and had requested further information regarding the real estate proposal's relationship to the overall Strategy and the Edinburgh Campus Built

Environment Development Framework. The Committee had delegated approval to a sub-group of Finance Committee members and had agreed that future proposals would be framed in the same context. The Chair reported that, in error, some contracts relating to the Dubai Campus Expansion Project had been signed without the appropriate governance approvals (see M25/14). The Committee was comfortable that lessons had been learned and that the University could proceed with the contracts.

The Court discussed the financial position of the Global Research Institutes (GRIs) and whether this was being overseen by Finance Committee. The Vice-Principal clarified that there was currently work being done regarding how research income and costs were attributed to the GRIs because income was currently attributed to the Schools. However, it was clear that commercial income was not being driven at the desired rate and this was being addressed. In line with the University-wide approach, investment in the GRIs was only being released where targets had been met. The Court noted that there would be an Internal Audit of the GRIs, focused on return on investment and maximising investment, which would be reported to the ARC. In addition, the Finance Committee intended to have deep dives into areas of the University that required more attention, and this would include the GRIs.

The Court agreed that the return on investment for all recent major initiatives needed to be explored and reported to the Court via the Finance Committee, to provide reassurance that the right investments were being made. The Court requested a timeline for presentation of this work.

The Court queried a section of the Finance Committee minutes indicating that a deeper analysis of staff costs was required in a governance forum. The Chair clarified that the Committee had discussed the need to consider staff costs in a holistic and balanced way. This would include, for example, the Staff Committee as well as the Finance Committee because any changes would impact on staff as well as on the University's finances. It was agreed that the minutes would be amended to ensure this point was properly reflected.

The Court congratulated the GCFO on his nomination as CFO of the Year in the Not-For-Profit category at the Scottish CFO Awards.

M25/14 CONTRACT APPROVAL – DUBAI CAMPUS EXPANSION GENERAL CONTRACTOR (Ct1/25/07 Appendix 1)

The Court received and **retroactively approved** the contract to appoint a General Contractor for the Dubai Campus Expansion Project. The proposal was presented by the Vice-Principal and Provost (Dubai).

The Court noted that this approval was being dealt with as a separate item because Finance Committee endorsement had not been requested at its March 2025 meeting. The Vice-Principal and Provost (Dubai) apologised for a misunderstanding that had conflated prior approval of the Dubai Campus Expansion Business Case with approval of the required contracts.. **XXX Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.33**

M25/15 GIFT ACCEPTANCE - BAILLIE GIFFORD PARTNERSHIP II (Ct1/25/08)

The Court received and **approved** acceptance of a gift from Baillie Gifford, presented by the Vice-Principal and Provost (Dubai).

The Vice-Principal and Provost (Dubai) reported that this was a renewal of a gift to support programmes at Panmure House, with £1.25m to be available over five years. Baillie Gifford was a long-term University partner based in Scotland and recent due diligence had been undertaken. Acceptance of the gift was in line with the University's *Charitable Gift Acceptance Policy*. In response to a question, the Vice-Principal and Provost (Dubai) clarified that the cost of delivering programmes

was likely to rise over the five-year period. The intention was to invest any surplus funds to mitigate cost increases in later years.

M25/16 REPORT FROM THE GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (GNC) (Ct1/25/09)

The Court received the report from the GNC, presented by Mr Bruce Pritchard, Chair of the GNC.

The Court **approved** the following items that had been endorsed by the Committee:

- the renewal of Mr Bruce Pritchard as Chair of Court from 1 August 2026 until 31 July 2030. Prior feedback from Court members had demonstrated positivity around the Chair of Court's leadership. The Court noted that feedback from staff regarding the Chair's contribution had also been very positive and that continuity in the Chair of Court would be vital as Strategy 2035 was implemented;
- the renewal of Mr Mike Tumilty as Deputy Chair of Court from 1 August 2026 until 31 July 2027, which would provide further continuity in a key Court position;
- the appointment of Dr Brian Henderson to the Court from 1 August 2026 until 31 July 2029, and his renewal as Chair of the Donations and Investments Committee (DIC) for the same period. The Court noted that Dr Henderson was being appointed to an upcoming independent lay member vacancy; currently he was the member appointed by the Watt Club. The change of category would ensure continuity in the Chair of DIC role, and the University would work with the Watt Club to appoint a new member from 1 August 2026;
- the appointment of Dr Brian Henderson to the Long-Term Financing Group, which the Court had established as a sub-group of the Finance Committee, for the duration of the Group;
- the appointment of Ms Hilary Hansen to the Heriot-Watt University Malaysia (HWUM) Board from 1 April 2025 until 31 July 2027, concurrent with her membership of the Court; and
- the revised Court Schedule of Delegations, which was in line with the new Financial Regulations. The Court queried where the level of debt write-off for each year would be captured and the GCFO confirmed that it would be presented annually to the Joint Meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance Committee. The Court agreed that the Financial Regulations should clarify the thresholds for reporting write-off of individual debts, matching this to the governance approval thresholds.

The Court noted that the Committee had discussed the future operation of the Infrastructure Committee, including a direct reporting line to the Court from September 2025. Work would now be done on the Terms of Reference for consideration by the relevant committees.

M25/17 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE (ARC) (Ct1/25/10)

The Court received the report from the ARC, presented by Mr Mike Tumilty, Chair of the ARC.

Revised Risk Appetite Statement

The Court **approved** the revised Risk Appetite Statement, which referenced the University's four strategic priorities as well as the Strategic Risk Register. Underpinning statements had been included as guidance and context for each risk appetite. The Court noted the importance of ensuring that the Statement was translated into business cases and approval papers so that the Court had a clear view of risks being taken and the reasons. The Court noted that the University was risk averse where a proposal would compromise financial sustainability, and

agreed that the Head of Assurance and Legal Services would work with the Chair of the Finance Committee to consider whether financial values could be provided in this section to make it more objective.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

The Court **approved** the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, offering its thanks to Ms Hansen for her advice regarding improvements and noting that further improvements would be made to the next version of the Statement.

The Court noted that the Committee had received an update on the financial controls that had been implemented and had welcomed these further enhancements to the control environment.

M25/18 REPORT FROM THE STAFF COMMITTEE (Ct1/25/11)

The Court received the report from the Staff Committee, presented by Ms Dorothy Wright, Chair of the Committee, and **approved** revised Terms of Reference for the Committee.

The Committee Chair reported that the Terms of Reference had been amended to focus on culture and organisational development, which were strategically important for Heriot-Watt. The Committee would oversee the People strategy, workforce planning, talent, capacity and capability, reward, performance and culture, wellbeing, organisational change, and relevant policies. It was proposed to change the Committee's title to Global People and Culture Committee.

Some Court members raised concerns about the change of Committee title, suggesting that there would be less clarity regarding the role of the Committee and its focus on staff matters. The Court had a full discussion of this issue, noting that HR had some responsibility for students in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and culture, and also that the title Staff Committee was out of line with the sector and with current HR practice. The Court agreed to proceed with the change of title, noting that clear communications were needed for staff.

The Committee had discussed the draft Change Assurance Framework, which was designed to strengthen internal governance around change and ensure lessons were learned from previous change programmes. In future, the Committee would receive reports on organisational change programmes and work to improve leadership capacity and capability.

The Committee had agreed that the Dubai Pay Policy should be decoupled from the UK Pay Policy to reflect the sector position in Dubai. The Committee had also received the Annual Discipline and Grievance Report as part of a range of people MI. The Court considered the Annual Discipline and Grievance Report, noting that more grievances were being raised by female staff and that there was an overall increase in the number of cases, as well as in the number that were not upheld. The Court queried the reasons for these trends and the Global Director of HR clarified that work to understand these patterns had begun, led by the new Employee Relations Manager, and would be reported back to the Staff Committee.

The Court noted the importance having positive role models who demonstrated the University's values and Respect agenda, and that there was an obligation on Court and Executive members to be those role models.

M25/19 REPORT FROM THE GLOBAL STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE (GSLC) (Ct1/25/12)

The Court received the report from the GSLC, presented by Ms Marta Phillips, Chair of the GSLC, and **approved** revised Terms of Reference for the Committee.

The Court noted that the revised Terms of Reference ensured a greater focus on the link between the Committee and the Student Partnership Agreement. The

Committee Chair reported that positive feedback had been received from students studying via the University's partnership in Kazakhstan. The academic review that was currently ongoing would validate this feedback and report back to the University Executive and relevant academic governance committees.

M25/20 GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY AND PROGRESS TRACKER (Ct1/25/14)

The Court received and **approved** the Global Environmental Sustainability Policy, presented by the Deputy Principal (Global Sustainability), subject to amendments as below. The Court **noted** the Progress Tracker.

The Deputy Principal reported that the Global Environmental Sustainability Policy was based on existing documents such as the University's 10 Institutional Commitments, the Global Environmental Sustainability Strategy and the Climate Action Framework. The Policy would continue to be developed over time.

The Court suggested the following amendments to the Policy:

1. to focus on the most relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) rather than trying to reference each SDG;
2. to consider whether use of the term 'Environmental, Social and Governance' (ESG) was helpful or whether an alternative should be used;
3. to reference the Infrastructure Committee in Section 4 because the intention was for that Committee to receive reporting from the University Committee for Global Environmental Sustainability in future; and
4. to consider referencing the new Risk Appetite Statement in the Policy.

A track changed version of the Policy would be circulated after the meeting.

The Progress Tracker aimed to assist the Court in monitoring delivery of the Commitments and provide key highlights that could be celebrated. Work was being done with the Project Management Office to develop a dashboard that monitored progress on all activities agreed in the Climate Action Framework, how these aligned with the Commitments and where action was needed. There would also be annual global reporting on the University's carbon emissions.

The Court noted that decarbonisation of the Edinburgh Campus' heating would be key to reaching the University's Net Zero goal and queried how the budget for this work would be made available. The Principal clarified that the University could work in partnership on decarbonisation and would need to prioritise these efforts. The University had an opportunity to provide fresh thought leadership regarding environmental sustainability and to consider future technologies that would be helpful in achieving Net Zero.

The Court agreed that a further discussion regarding sustainability would be scheduled for a future meeting.

M25/21 REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE GLOBAL COLLEGE (Ct1/25/15)

The Court received and **noted** the report on the progress of Global College, presented by the University Secretary.

The Secretary reported that the Global College had been established in 2022 as a key strategic initiative. The Court had previously advised on two contracts with the recruitment partner, Shorelight, that had strengthened them significantly.

XXX Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.33

Good progress was being made on other targets, with strong recruitment of Scottish students to the Edinburgh Campus and growth at the Dubai Campus. The

Court observed that the recruitment of Scottish students who could progress into the second year of an Undergraduate degree after completing the foundation year was an excellent message for the University to communicate.

M25/22 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Court agreed that the Clerk would circulate a link to the recent meeting of the Scottish Parliament's Education, Children and Young People Committee where evidence from Dundee University had been heard.

The Court observed that many of the items considered at this meeting had included 'Global' in the title and this was increasingly used in Committee titles; it was suggested that this might be unnecessary considering that the University's global approach was expected to be embedded in all aspects of its business. This feedback was noted for consideration in future.

M25/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair offered his thanks to all governors for their contributions.

The Chair noted that the next regular meeting of the Court would be on 23 June 2025 via Microsoft Teams from 8:30 – 12:30 (UK time); 11:30 – 15:30 (Dubai time); and 15:30 – 19:30 (Malaysia time).

At this point in the meeting, Court members took part in an in-camera session.