

## THE COURT

Minutes: 7 December 2022

- In the Chair: Mr Bruce Pritchard, Chair of Court
- Present: Professor Scott Arthur, Dean  
 Professor Mark Biggs, Vice-Principal and Provost  
 Professor Marc Desmulliez, Staff Member  
 Mr Graeme Dickson, Lay Member  
 Mr Brian Henderson, Alumni Member  
 Ms Molly Knight, Student Union Vice-President (Education)  
 Mr Sanjit Krishnakumar, Student Union President  
 Dr Bill MacPherson, Senate Member
- Ms Morag McNeill, Deputy Chair of Court  
 Mr Cameron Millar, Lay Member  
 Mr Jürgen Munz, Trade Union Member  
 Ms Marta Phillips, Lay Member  
 Mr Chris Pirie, Staff Member  
 Mr Mike Tumilty, Lay Member (*from 9am*)  
 Professor Richard Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor  
 Ms Dorothy Wright, Lay Member
- In attendance: Ms Ruth Moir, University Secretary  
 Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi, Vice-Principal and Provost (Malaysia)  
 Professor Malcolm Chrisp, Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life)  
 Mr Richard Claughton, Global Director of HR  
 Ms Sue Collier, Global Director of Governance and Legal Services (GALS)  
 Ms Lucy Everest, Global Chief Operating Officer (GCOO)  
 Mr Andrew Jefferson, Global Chief Financial Officer (GCFO)  
 Professor Heather McGregor, Vice-Principal and Provost (Dubai)  
 Professor Steve McLaughlin, Deputy Principal (Research and Impact)  
 Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer, Deputy Principal (Global Sustainability)  
 Dr Gill Murray, Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business)  
 Ms Lisa Herlihy, Clerk to the Court
- Invited: Ms Kirsty Scanlan, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance (*for M22/98*)
- Apologies: Dr Richard Armour, Lay Member  
 Professor Lynne Baillie, Trade Union Member  
 Dr Fadi Ghaith, Senate Member  
 Mr Steve Heathcote, Lay Member  
 Mr Gary Kildare, Lay Member  
 Mr Paul Lewis, Lay Member  
 Mr Alan Robertson, Lay Member  
 Mr Graham Watson, Lay Member

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**WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair welcomed all present to the regular business meeting of the Court, which had been convened on the same day as the Court Strategy Day in order to consider a small number of business items. The apologies for absence were noted.

No declarations of interest were reported.

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**INTERIM OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2022-23 (Ct9/22/59)**

The Court received and approved the Interim Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for 2022-23. The Outcome Agreement was presented by the Director of Strategic Planning and Performance.

The Director of Strategic Planning and Performance reported that sign-off of the Outcome Agreement was required annually, and that the version presented had been endorsed by the University Executive. During the pandemic, one-year Interim Outcome Agreements had replaced the usual three-year format, to allow greater flexibility for universities. The document presented therefore covered the 2022-23 academic year.

A member of the Court suggested that an infographic which highlighted the key points would be useful at the beginning of the report. The Director of Strategic Planning and Performance clarified that the interim report had a prescribed format but that there would be more flexibility with the full Outcome Agreement and so use of an infographic would be considered in future.

## **M22/98 SCOTTISH CAMPUSES HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (INCL. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT) (Ct9/22/60)**

The Court received and approved the Scottish Campuses Health and Safety Committee Annual Report, presented by the Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life), who was Chair of the Committee.

The Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) gave an overview of the report, noting that a review of health and safety governance had established an overarching University committee to consider health and safety and wellbeing, which was underpinned by three local committees. These included the Scottish Campuses Health and Safety Committee.

Local sub-committees had been introduced for each School and Professional Services Directorate in 2021-22, to address issues such as student travel for study purposes. A lessons learned culture was being developed across all campuses to ensure that any incidents led to improved practice.

Three incidents had been identified under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). This included two incidents which resulted in a greater than 7-day absence and one visit to hospital. Heriot-Watt was below the national trend data for student incidents, with a recent reduction in incidents that was likely due to the pandemic. Staff data was also below the national trend and had been reducing. The Global Director of Governance and Legal Services confirmed that further benchmarking data had now been made available and a benchmarking exercise was planned.

The Court observed that student reporting was considerably lower than staff reporting and queried whether this meant that students were not reporting incidents. The Global Director of Governance and Legal Services clarified that reporting tools were provided for students, including the SafeZone app, a 24/7 control room in SafeGuarding Services and the inclusion of SafeGuarding in student induction. However, more work could perhaps be done culturally to encourage reporting.

The Court discussed the training provided for staff and queried whether further data could be provided in future regarding completion rates. The Court received clarification that much of the training was very specialist and only relevant to staff in specific areas. The return to campus had changed training requirements as staff relocated to new buildings. Work had been undertaken to ensure that the correct number of fire marshals and first aiders were available. Take up of mandatory training was monitored, as well as training around risk assessments for both on and off-campus working.

The Court agreed that, in future, it would be helpful for the RIDDOR data to provide previous years for comparison.

The Court also agreed that consideration would be given to a mechanism for ensuring RIDDOR incidents were reported to the Court promptly, including any correspondence with the Health and Safety Executive.

The Court congratulated the Health and Safety team and the Committee on a very good report and noted the importance of succession planning to ensure that expertise in health and safety was maintained.

## **M22/99 UPDATE ON DUBAI BRANCH ACCOUNTS (Ct9/22/61)**

The Court received and noted an update report regarding the Dubai Branch Accounts, presented by the Principal on behalf of the GCFO.

The Principal reported that the Dubai Branch Accounts had now been signed off and lodged with TECOM, the University's landlord in Dubai. EY Scotland had visited the Dubai Campus and had affirmed the accounts as part of their work on the group accounts. It had been agreed with the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) that the risk of any material misstatement was small given the nature of the EY Dubai audit, which had used iFRS standards. As a consequence, the Dubai branch accounts had

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been reviewed and signed off by the GCFO and the Dubai Provost, without a requirement for these accounts to be approved by ARC.

In future years, the Audit and Risk Committee would have sight of the accounts prior to sign off.

The Court queried whether there had been any changes to the expected position within the Dubai branch accounts. The executive was not aware of any changes and would request confirmation from the GCFO.

**M22/100      DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

2 February 2023, 8.30am (UK time), 12.30pm (Dubai time), 4.30pm (Malaysia time).