

Heriot-Watt University

## THE COURT

Minutes: 26 June 2023

In the Chair:	Mr Bruce Pritchard, Chair of Court ( <i>until 10am</i> )	Ms Morag McNeill, Deputy Chair of Court ( <i>from 10am</i> )
Present:	Mr Scott Anderson, Student Union President Dr Richard Armour, Lay Member Professor Lynne Baillie, Trade Union Member Professor Mark Biggs, Vice-Principal and Provost Mr Graeme Dickson, Lay Member Dr Brian Henderson, Alumni Member Dr Fadi Ghaith, Senate Member Mr Connel Greenhorn, Student Union Vice-President (Education) Mr Paul Lewis, Lay Member Dr Bill MacPherson, Senate Member	Mr Cameron Millar, Lay Member Mr Jürgen Munz, Trade Union Member Ms Marta Phillips, Lay Member Mr Chris Pirie, Staff Member  Mr Alan Robertson, Lay Member Professor Mathini Sellathurai, Dean Mr Mike Tumilty, Lay Member Professor Richard Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor Ms Dorothy Wright, Lay Member Mr Graham Watson, Lay Member
In attendance:	Ms Ruth Moir, University Secretary 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) Professor Peter Cummings, Co-Academic Lead (Net Zero Global Research Institute) ( <i>for item M23/56</i> ) Ms Lucy Everest, Global Chief Operating Officer (GCOO) Reverend Jane Howitt, University Chaplain ( <i>for item M23/60</i> ) Mr Andrew Jefferson, Global Chief Financial Officer (GCFO) Professor Dame Heather McGregor, Vice-Principal and Provost (Dubai) Professor Gill Murray, Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business) Professor Eddie Owens, Co-Academic Lead (Net Zero Global Research Institute) ( <i>for item M23/56</i> ) Mr Martin Pringle, Interim Global Finance Director (IGFD) Ms Kirsty Scanlan, Director of Strategic Planning and Performance ( <i>for item M23/52</i> ) Imam Hassan Rabbani, Muslim Chaplain ( <i>for item M23/60</i> ) Ms Lisa Herlihy, Clerk to the Court	
Apologies:	Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi, Vice-Principal and Provost (Malaysia) Professor Marc Desmulliez, Staff Member Mr Steve Heathcote, Lay Member Mr Gary Kildare, Lay Member Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer, Deputy Principal (Global Sustainability) Professor Steve McLaughlin, Deputy Principal (Research and Impact)	

MINUTE  
REF  
M23/45

### WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting, making specific mention of Professor Mathini Sellathurai (Dean of the University) and Mr Connel Greenhorn (Student Union Vice-President Education) who were attending their first meetings since joining the Court membership. The apologies for absence were noted and the Chair reported that they would need to leave the meeting at 10am; the Deputy Chair of Court would take the chair at that point.

The Chair noted that Mr Cameron Millar, Mr Mike Tumilty, Dr Richard Armour and Mr Jürgen Munz would briefly exit the meeting when their memberships were under discussion. No other declarations of interest were reported.

The Chair offered the Court's thanks to the following members, who would retire from the Court on 31 July 2023, for all their contributions:

MINUTE  
REF

- Mr Graham Watson, Chair of the Finance Committee, whose significant service to the University over the course of eight years was very much appreciated by all Court and Executive members;
- Professor Lynne Baillie, Trade Union nominee, who had served 18 months as a Court and Staff Committee member and whose support and input had been greatly valued; and
- Professor Marc Desmulliez, elected Staff member of Court, who had made key contributions to the Court, Staff Committee and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Oversight Group during his three-year term.

The Court also noted that Ms Morag McNeill would step down as Deputy Chair of Court on 31 July 2023, remaining a Court member until 31 July 2024. Ms McNeill had been appointed as Deputy Chair in January 2019 and had served as Chair of Court from 1 August 2021 until 30 September 2022. The Court was grateful for all Ms McNeill's many contributions during her term.

The Chair also reported that this would be Mr Andrew Jefferson's last meeting of the Court prior to his retirement from the role of GCFO in mid-July 2023. The Court offered its thanks to Mr Jefferson for all his efforts on behalf of the University.

#### **M23/46 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 23 MARCH 2023, AND COURT STRATEGY DAY REPORT FROM 18 MAY 2023**

The Court received and approved the minutes of the meetings held on 23 March 2023, and the report of the Court Strategy Day on 18 May 2023.

The Court Strategy Day report summarised discussion outcomes and these would now be converted into work on Strategy 2035 and used to prepare for the November 2023 Court Strategy Day. The Court noted that the University Executive would be considering the development of Strategy 2035 during its Strategy Day in August 2023. A strategic think tank, including Court and Executive members, would be set up to help with the development process.

#### **M23/47 ACTIONS LOG AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Court received and noted the Actions Log, presented by the Chair of Court. The Court agreed that actions marked as complete would now be removed from the Log.

**Study World Court Case**  
**XXX Reserved Section – Ref. FOI(S)A, s.33**

#### **M23/48 BUSINESS REPORTED BY THE CHAIR**

The Chair reported that the University had held graduations at the Borders and Edinburgh Campuses recently, providing a wonderful opportunity to celebrate student success.

An election for a new Staff member of the Court had recently closed and Ms Sharan Virdee, Equality and Diversity Partner, had been appointed from 1 August 2023 until 31 July 2026.

The University Secretary reported that the Annual Stakeholder Meeting in May 2023 had been attended by approximately 70 people in person and 125 people online. A technical issue had affected online attendance on the day, but 130 people had since watched the recording. Lessons had been learned for future events.

#### **M23/49 STRATEGIC SUMMARY REPORT (Presentation)**

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

### **SPI Updates**

The Principal reported that one of the University's SPI targets was to be within the top 250 of the QS World Rankings and indications were that this would be met when the Rankings were published later in June 2023. [*Addendum: following the meeting, Court members were advised that the University now ranked 235<sup>th</sup>.*]

The Court also noted excellent news from the recent Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data on positive Graduate Outcomes. Heriot-Watt was top in Scotland for both Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) outcomes. This exceeded the top decile target. For the UK, the University was fifth for UG and second for PG.

### **Scottish Policy Landscape**

The Principal informed the Court that the education landscape was currently in flux, with a new Education Minister and Cabinet Secretary, as well as four major reports being published. This included Scotland's *National Innovation Strategy*, James Withers' *Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape*, Professor Hayward's *Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment*, and the Scottish Government's *Purpose and Principles for Post-School Education, Research and Skills*. There were some radical changes to the skills agenda and other issues contained within the reports, and there had been a suggestion that the Scottish Funding Council would be abolished and a single funding body developed for schools, colleges and universities. However, there was currently no connectivity between the reports and no plans had been confirmed.

The Court queried how the University sector would be able to input on plans as these developed, and the Principal clarified that Universities Scotland were producing a separate document on the purpose and principles of education in response to the Scottish Government document. The Education Minister and Cabinet Secretary were organising meetings with University Principals and other education leaders to inform future decisions. However, the uncertainty over future funding arrangements was causing some concern within the sector, particularly as it was unclear what impact this would have on research.

### **Industrial Relations**

The Court noted that the sector was formally in dispute with the three major Trade Unions over the 2022 pay award, though part of the 2023 pay award had already been implemented. A marking and assessment boycott by the University and College Union (UCU) was currently underway at Heriot-Watt, with approximately 40 staff participating. Discussions with the local UCU branch had been held to avoid strike action over pay deductions for partial performance. The University had agreed to end the 50% deduction to pay once exam boards were complete, as this would also mark the end of partial performance.

The University had joined calls to resume talks over the current boycott, though this would not include a resumption of pay negotiations. There was hope that joint Acas Terms of Reference could be established but there was no clear way to end the national dispute.

The Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) reported that all exam boards had taken place in May and June 2023 as planned and these had been well attended, with their independence and integrity upheld. Students had been able to graduate as planned. The Senate had held a discussion to address concerns about the integrity of the exam board process and had received a detailed update on the process, as well as an annual report on academic quality for 2022-23. The Senate had been content for the Principal to sign an assurance statement regarding academic quality on its behalf. The University was now focused on progression for students in years 1-3.

The Court discussed the annual assurance statement regarding academic quality, noting that this was usually received by the Audit and Risk Committee in order to fulfil part of their remit. The Court agreed that presentation of this statement would be supported, on this occasion, by presentation of the annual report on academic

quality. This provided full details of the arrangements to ensure academic quality and would therefore provide additional assurance to the Committee.

The Court noted that members had recently received a communication from a student regarding the marking and assessment boycott. The Chair of Court and the University Secretary had agreed that they would develop a statement of fact setting out the Court's role in University governance oversight and that otherwise intervening would exceed the Court's remit. In terms of communication with students, the University had published FAQs and reissued these as exam results were published. Any student who contacted the University directly received an individual response to their query.

### **Strategy 2035 Priorities**

Following discussions at the Court Strategy Day, the Principal had identified the following priorities for Strategy 2035:

- that it would be an evolution of Strategy 2025 with a clear focus on Heriot-Watt's priorities, excellence and distinctive strengths;
- that it was critical to identify the future size and shape of the University and assure financial sustainability;
- that people would continue to be at the heart of everything the University did;
- that strong strategic and operational planning and tracking would underpin the Strategy; and
- that digital transformation and process improvements in effectiveness and efficiency would be critically important.

### **M23/50 PRINCIPALS REPORT TO COURT (Ct5/23/32)**

The Court received and noted the Principal's Report, presented by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor. This included an update on delivery of the strategic themes, as well as cross-campus news, including a summary of recent activities during the global Celebration Week.

### **M23/51 GLOBAL UPDATE FROM THE STUDENT UNION (Ct5/23/33)**

The Court received and discussed a global update from the Student Union, presented by the Student Union President.

The Student Union President reported that the annual reports of the student representative bodies were included within the Report from the Global Student Life Committee (M23/62 below). Since those reports were finalised, a Global Student Officer Induction had been held, with support from Registry and Academic Support, in order to build a collaborative approach across campuses. Four priorities had been agreed, which complemented the Student Partnership Agreement: reducing student isolation; relieving financial pressures; limiting student confusion; and increasing global connectivity.

The Court welcomed these priorities and thanked the Student Union President for a very helpful update.

### **M23/52 STRATEGIC PLAN FORECAST (THREE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN 2023-26) (Ct5/23/34)**

The Court received and approved the Three-Year Financial Plan for 2023-26, presented by the Vice-Principal and the IGF.

### Overview of Plan

The Court noted that the Plan had been endorsed by the Finance Committee following detailed scrutiny. The Committee recognised that the University was heavily reliant on the volatile PG market, and that there were challenges regarding accommodation and staff-student ratios (SSRs). However, the Executive had identified levers that could be used if needed and the Committee would monitor these issues during the lifespan of the Plan.

The Vice-Principal and the IGFD provided the Court with an overview of the Plan, including the challenges being faced across the sector and the University's current performance. The framework of *Stabilise and Support; Transform; Grow* was linked into the Plan, with new initiatives being carefully managed to ensure that there was sufficient resource to progress existing projects, such as realising the benefits from the new ERP system and managing satisfaction and retention amongst students and staff. Initiatives to transform University operation included improvements to the student experience and supporting digitalisation. Growth would focus on research and enterprise investment and reputation, including relationships with industry, as well as access to education and sustainable margin.

The Court noted the key risks identified within the Plan and the mitigations in place to manage these risks. For example, the risks around growing the University's international cohort would be mitigated by robust planning around student numbers, diversifying pathways and adapting plans depending on performance. Investment would be phased in alignment with key dates in the income generation cycle.

The Plan indicated that the University would return to profitability in 2025-26 and would continue to meet its covenants. The Court noted that the funding to improve SSRs was not included within the Plan and that this could impact on the return to profitability. Upside and downside scenarios had been undertaken to ensure the robustness of the Plan and identify the levers that could be used if needed. Management information was also being enhanced to ensure clear measurement of KPIs, which would then inform decision-making. The Court emphasised the importance of light, frequent management information in allowing the Court to support the Executive team.

### Discussion

In response to feedback from a Court member, the Vice-Principal agreed to develop a summary of the University's top ten levers in order of priority, so that Court could understand which would be the most impactful.

The Court also agreed to receive an update on the outcome of the 2019 Portfolio Review, which was currently being revisited. Portfolio review would be an annual feature in future years.

The Court observed that improving student facilities on the Edinburgh Campus would be key to improving National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes. The Vice-Principal clarified that plans were underway in this area but these were not yet ready for consideration by the Infrastructure and Finance Committees. Similarly, the strategy for student accommodation was receiving considerable scrutiny at executive level at present, with a view to consideration by the relevant Court Committees later in 2023.

The Court discussed the feasibility of phasing capital expenditure depending on income, noting that it was extremely difficult to stop a capital project once it had been begun. The Vice-Principal clarified that only planning capital had been committed at this stage, and in some areas this had been deferred to January 2024. This would allow time for the University to fully work through the required costs and then to commit once income numbers had been confirmed. The Court noted that the University needed to fully understand the running costs of the projects it was investing in.

There was also concern regarding the use of staff costs as a lever because this would have an impact on SSRs. The Vice-Principal confirmed that plans to

address SSRs were being developed, with a key mechanism for improvement including staffing in the Global Research Institutes (GRIs). It was vitally important to develop income in order to address SSRs and to consider Professional Services staffing in addition to academic staffing.

Following a full discussion, the Court agreed that it was approving the Plan on the basis that regular financial information would be available to confirm that good progress was being made and to identify any areas where performance was not progressing in line with planned targets.

The Court approved the Three-Year Financial Plan and thanked all those involved in its development, particularly the Director of Strategic Planning and Performance, for their work. The Court also noted its appreciation to the Finance Committee for their detailed scrutiny.

#### **M23/53 RESEARCHER CONCORDAT ACTION PLAN – ANNUAL REPORT (Ct5/23/35)**

The Court received and approved the Annual Report on the Researcher Concordat Action Plan, presented by the Principal on behalf of the Deputy Principal (Research and Impact).

The Court noted that the Researcher Concordat set out the relationship between the University and its researchers, with researcher development forming a key part of this relationship. At Heriot-Watt, this would be supported by the upcoming development of a Graduate School, which would take forward a number of the related actions. The current Action Plan was designed to align the Concordat with Strategy 2025 and would continue to evolve in the future.

The Court queried whether the Plan would help to support researchers at those campuses with smaller research populations. The Principal agreed to ask the Deputy Principal to provide an update outwith the meeting.

#### **M23/54 REPORT FROM THE GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (Ct5/23/36)**

The Court received the report from Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC), presented by the Deputy Chair of Court (on behalf of the Chair of the GNC). Items were approved as below, following feedback from and endorsement by the GNC.

- The appointment of Mr Cameron Millar as Deputy Chair of Court from 1 August 2023 until 31 July 2025, concurrent with his membership of the Court.
- The Finance Improvement Plan (FIP) Oversight Group Terms of Reference, which expanded the remit of the former ERP Oversight Group to include oversight of the holistic FIP.
- The appointment of Mr Mike Tumilty as Chair of the FIP Oversight Group during its lifespan.
- The revised *Policy on Court and Court Committee Membership*, which had been considerably amended during its three-yearly review;
- Amended wording for Ordinance B6, which future-proofed against changes to the GCFO role by indicating that 'the Principal may further delegate, in writing, to the *senior global finance director* such powers as are necessary to open and close bank accounts.'
- Minor amendments to Ordinances A3: *Academic Year*; E5: *Sports Union*, C6: *Student Representatives on the Senate*, and P8: *Primary Academic Units*.

- The Sports Union Constitution, which required Court approval in accordance with Ordinance E5. The Student Union President reported that, as noted at the GNC meeting, discussions were required regarding responsibility for sport at the Borders, Orkney, Dubai and Malaysia campuses.
- The appointment of Mr Peter Ridges as Vice-Chair of the Ordinances and Regulations Committee, concurrent with his membership of the Committee.
- The extension of Dr Richard Armour's membership on the Heriot-Watt University Malaysia (HWUM) Board, from 1 August 2023 up to 31 July 2025, concurrent with his Court membership.
- The Borders Strategic Review Oversight Group Terms of Reference.
- The Global College Partnership Oversight Group Terms of Reference.
- The nominations of Mr Jürgen Munz and Professor David Jenkins as Trade Union members of the Court from 1 August 2023 until 31 July 2026.

**M23/55 REPORT FROM THE STAFF COMMITTEE (Ct5/23/37)**

The Court considered and noted the report from the Staff Committee, presented by the Chair of the Committee, and approved the University Health and Safety Policy.

The Chair of the Committee reported that there had been a deep dive into employer branding and the perception of Heriot-Watt as a potential and actual employer. An action plan was in progress to ensure consistency of messaging across the University as a result of this work. A related deep dive into talent attraction and retention was planned for September 2023.

The Court noted a correction to the Staff Committee minutes. These indicated that staff numbers in Dubai had grown from 111 in 2019 to 482 in 2023. This should state that staff numbers on the Dubai Campus had grown from a total of 111 staff in 2019 to 272 in 2023. The Dubai Campus used a number of adjunct roles to support teaching, but these were not preferred by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) and the University was currently seeking CAA accreditation. The University had therefore budgeted for further academic recruitment in Dubai.

The Court approved the University Health and Safety Policy, which had received minor amendments during its annual review.

**M23/56 REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (Ct5/23/38)**

The Court received the report from the Finance Committee, presented by the Chair of the Committee, and approved the Net Zero Global Research Institute (GRI) Business Case.

The Chair of the Committee reported that the Finance Committee had endorsed the iNetZ+ (Institute for Net Zero and Beyond) GRI Business Case at its meeting on 13 June 2023. There was significant operating and capital investment required within the Business Case, as well as the challenge of recruiting excellent academic leaders. The Committee were comfortable with the plans in these areas and were very supportive of the Business Case overall. The Committee had advised the Executive that they should now progress planning for any building works that would be required and should consider whether these could be supported by philanthropic funding. It was noted that improving existing University buildings to house the GRI was one option that would be appraised.

The aim of the GRI was to bring together expertise to address multi-disciplinary challenges around sustainability, and thereby to drive income generation in key

research areas, enhance the University's reputation, and grow its market share in relevant research grants. Sustainability was a key driver for emerging talent within the economy and a major facet of government strategy.

The Court noted that the University's international footprint would be a considerable benefit by allowing the GRI to exchange knowledge globally. The leadership of the GRI recognised the challenge of recruiting many research leaders and clarified that these would be drawn from six specialisms over the course of five years, which would make the task more manageable. Retention would be vital and so the University would need to ensure a high-quality research environment.

The Court observed that governments and institutions were beginning to focus on the idea of a 'just transition'. The Business Case was consistent with this idea, and this could be further developed in discussions with government and industry.

The Court queried how the University would develop the capacity to deliver across the five sizeable themes written into the Business Case. The Deputy Principal (Enterprise and Business) clarified that each theme would develop over time, with early focus being given to those areas where the University could make immediate impact.

The Court approved the iNetZ+ Business Case, subject to the following:

- The understanding that the building-related costs within the Business Case were not being approved at this stage and that a separate business case in this area would be presented to the Infrastructure Committee, Finance Committee and, if necessary, the Court later in 2023 (this was an existing action from the Finance Committee); and
- Further consideration being given to the name of the GRI. A member of the Court observed that there were challenges in developing a single, meaningful definition for NetZero. It was noted that the University was still in the process of setting its own timeframe and targets for Net Zero and this could potentially affect the reputation of the GRI. It was suggested that the GRI was better aligned with the sustainability agenda. Members also noted that the abbreviation 'iNetZ+' would not be easily understood outwith the GRI.

## **M23/57 REPORT FROM THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (Ct5/23/39)**

The Court received the report from the Remuneration Committee, presented by the Chair of the Committee.

The Court approved the following items which had been endorsed by the Remuneration Committee:

- the Global Reward Policy and Senior Salary Review Procedures, which had not been amended on this occasion but were approved annually for use in remuneration processes;
- the Annual Report of the Remuneration Committee, which had been developed in line with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Senior Staff Remuneration Code. Following Court approval, this would be adapted into a statement to be published on the University website. The Court noted that the shape and format of the report would be considered in the coming year to provide further assurance regarding the Committee's activities; and
- minor changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference. A review to align the remits of the Remuneration Committee and the Staff Committee was currently ongoing and revised Terms of Reference would be presented to the Court later in 2023.



MINUTE  
REF

M23/58

**ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF TEXTILES AND DESIGN  
(SoTD) (Ct5/23/40)**

The Court received and approved a proposal regarding the Acting Executive Dean of SoTD, presented by the Vice-Principal.

The Vice-Principal reported that the current Executive Dean of SoTD would demit office on 30 June 2023 and an interim appointment was required to ensure continuity during the Borders Strategic Review (see M23/59 below) and the recruitment of a permanent Executive Dean.

The Court approved the appointment of Professor Julian Malins as Acting Executive Dean for the period from 1 July 2023, when the current Executive Dean demitted office, to the end of the 2023-24 Academic Year, 31 July 2024, or as soon as possible thereafter depending on the date of arrival of the by-then identified successor to the substantive role of Executive Dean.

M23/59

**BORDERS CAMPUS REVIEW UPDATE (Ct5/23/41)**

The Court considered and noted an update on the Borders Strategic Review, presented by the Vice-Principal.

The Vice-Principal provided the Court with the structure for the Borders and Global Design Futures Programme, identifying the role of the Borders Strategic Review Oversight Group, as well as the Project Board and the eight strands of work that would form the basis of the Programme. It was noted that the eighth theme, Communications and Stakeholder Engagement, would be applicable across each of the other seven themes. These were grouped under the headings of Professional Services, Learning and Teaching, and Research, Innovation and Enterprise.

Decision-making within each theme would be based on meeting the following criteria: delivery of the Strategic Plan; being financially, academically and environmentally sustainable; addressing student satisfaction issues; meeting the staff satisfaction SPI; and being consistent with the University's Values and Risk Appetite.

In December 2023, the Court would receive a paper containing options and a recommended way forward for the portfolio, presence of other Schools, and Professional Services operating model in the Borders. The proposals would also consider space implications. Working Groups were currently being established and initial market analysis was being completed. An update would be provided to the Court in October 2023.

The Court were supportive of the planned approach to the Programme and looked forward to receiving the proposals in December 2023. The Court queried the role of the student voice in the various workstreams, and the Vice-Principal clarified that students would have a clear role within the Programme and this would be expressed more fully in future updates. It was noted that the Student Union President or their nominee would be a member of the Oversight Group and this would provide another mechanism for surfacing key student issues.

M23/60

**ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAPLAINCY (Ct5/23/42)**

The Court considered and noted the Annual Report from the Chaplaincy, presented by the University Chaplain and the Muslim Chaplain.

The University Chaplain noted that the report highlighted areas where the Chaplaincy's work supported the University's Strategy and Values. Support was provided to students, to staff and to the faith-based student societies, with the Chaplaincy providing hospitality and a listening ear. This often allowed issues to be identified and resolved at an earlier stage.

The Court noted that many students were now accessing counselling regarding spiritual questions and the Chaplaincy would become involved in these cases. In addition, those who were finding it difficult to adjust to University life could visit the Chaplaincy to find a quieter place in which to build connections. This supported the University's efforts to build a sense of community amongst students.

The Muslim Chaplain highlighted that the University's international reach could mean that geopolitical tensions between countries affected student life and interactions, and the Chaplaincy allowed students to discuss these issues so that they did not escalate. Further consideration was being given to the support that might be needed as international recruitment increased.

The Court discussed the Chaplaincy's support for the campuses in the Borders, Orkney, Dubai and Malaysia. The University Chaplain clarified that the Chaplaincy were considering how to provide a service across all campuses. 2022-23 had focused on services at the Borders, with plans to then consider Orkney, Dubai and Malaysia in the coming years.

The Court thanked the Chaplaincy for all its excellent work to support students and staff.

#### **M23/61 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE (Ct5/23/43)**

The Court considered and noted the report from the Audit and Risk Committee, presented by the Chair of the Committee.

The Chair of the Committee reported that the meeting in April 2023 had focused on the Severe risk around Finance and the Committee had requested a clear set of performance indicators that would reduce the level of risk once met. The May 2023 meeting had then focused on upcoming audit work. The Internal Auditor had provided an update on their planned audits for 2023-24, and the External Auditor had presented the External Audit Planning Report for 2022-23. The target date for approval of the Annual Accounts was now February 2024 and the Committee had supported this decision in order to ensure a more orderly year-end process than for 2021-22. The University was advising key stakeholders of the expected timeline.

The Court considered the External Audit fees contained within the Planning Report, noting that these had been impacted by inflationary increases and that two fees remained to be confirmed at this stage. There had also been an increase due to a piece of compliance work that was now required under ISA 315. Whilst it was hoped that fees would reduce once the ERP system was fully implemented, inflationary pressures meant that there was no expectation of significant reductions.

#### **M23/62 REPORT FROM THE GLOBAL STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE (Ct5/23/44)**

The Court considered and noted the report from the Global Student Life Committee, presented by the Chair of the Committee.

The Chair of the Committee reported that the GSLC meeting in May 2023 had received annual reports from each of the Student Representative Bodies and that these had been very welcome. During its meeting, the Committee had discussed the issue of maintaining stability of student representatives at the Malaysia Campus. Consideration was being given to assistance for representatives below the President level so that they could consistently attend and contribute to committees.

The Committee had also noted that there was very strong uptake for Go Global opportunities from students in Malaysia and Dubai, with UK students less likely to participate in global activities. The Deputy Principal (Education and Student Life) reported that work was being done to communicate the full range of opportunities to students, including options for shorter visits, and to consider barriers that the University might be able to address and ways of streamlining the administrative

MINUTE  
REF

processes. It was noted that upcoming fundraising could be used in part to support these opportunities. Study Global was also a key priority for the University because this provided the opportunity for students to learn from each other across campuses.

**M23/63      REPORT FROM THE COURT INTERIM BUSINESS COMMITTEE (CIBC)  
(Ct3/23/45)**

The Court considered and noted the report from the CIBC, presented by the Deputy Chair of Court on behalf of the Chair of Court. The Committee had approved the appointment of Professor Basheer Muhammed as Executive Dean of EGIS from 15 September 2023 to 14 September 2028, in the first instance.

**M23/64      COURT FORWARD AGENDA PLAN (Ct5/23/46)**

The Court received and noted the Forward Agenda Plan, presented by the Chair of Court. Court members were invited to provide comments or queries to the University Secretary and the Clerk.

**M23/65      DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 5 October 2023; 8.30am (UK time), 11.30am (Dubai time), 3.30pm (Malaysia time); Microsoft Teams