

UNIVERSITY OF BATH BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE APPOINTED MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

The University

Mission Statement

The Mission of the University is to deliver world class research and teaching, educating our graduates to become future leaders and innovators, and benefiting the wider population through our research, enterprise and influence.

The University has a strategy for 2016-21 which can be found at:
<https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-of-bath-strategy-2016-to-2021/attachments/university-of-bath-strategy-2016-2021.pdf>

Academic Goals

In furtherance of our Vision and Mission, and to deliver excellence in research and education, our key academic goals are to:

- conduct internationally-leading research of global significance
- be a centre of excellence for the development of postgraduate, post-doctoral and early career researchers
- optimise the intellectual, scientific, economic, social and cultural impact of our research
- promote external engagement, enterprise and innovation, stimulating the exchange of ideas and knowledge through partnership
- offer a research-enriched, practice-informed academic portfolio which is intellectually challenging and internationally relevant
- welcome academically gifted students from any background, creating a diverse and culturally-rich community
- sustain an inclusive, supportive, well-resourced learning environment within which independent learning flourishes and individual potential can be achieved
- provide a wide range of opportunities to learn through experience, enhancing personal development, future employability and broader contributions to society

The University recognises that there are three key pre-requisites to the delivery of its goals:

- the recruitment and retention of excellent staff, who are supported, informed and equipped to contribute fully to delivering our goals
- the ongoing development and enhancement of our physical infrastructure and our specialist facilities to increase capacity, sustainability and quality
- the achievement of financial security through the growth of income streams and rigorous control of expenditure

History

The University received its Royal Charter in 1966, but can trace its history back to the Bristol Trade School (1856-1884), Merchant Venturers' Technical College (1885-1949), Bristol College of Technology (1949-1960) and Bristol College of Science and Technology (1960-1966), which gained University status as a result of the government's acceptance of the 1963 Robbins Committee recommendations.

The city of Bath offered the University the site of its current campus in 1964, and the

first building was completed in the following year. Staff transferred from Bristol, department by department over the following decade. The University remains strongly oriented towards the sciences and technology, but now also has a successful School of Management and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Governance Structure

The governance structure of the University is set out in its Charter and Statutes.

The Council is the governing body of the University. The primary responsibilities of Council are:

- approving the mission and strategic vision of the institution, long-term business plans, key performance indicators (KPIs) and annual budgets, and ensuring these meet the interests of stakeholders
- appointing the head of the institution as chief executive of the institution and putting in place suitable arrangements for monitoring his or her performance
- ensuring the establishment and monitoring of systems of control and accountability, including financial and operational controls and risk assessment, and clear procedures for handling internal grievances and for managing conflicts of interest
- monitoring institutional performance against plans and approved KPIs, which should be, where possible and appropriate, benchmarked against other institutions

Subject to the statutory powers of Senate with respect to academic matters, Council has general responsibility for the conduct of all the University's affairs. Council has a majority of lay members who are neither staff nor students of the University. The membership and functions of the University Council are laid down in Sections 16 and 17 of the [University Statutes](<https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/statutes-of-the-university-of-bath/attachments/statutes-of-the-university-of-bath.pdf>).

The Senate is responsible for regulating and directing the academic work of the University and is regarded as the supreme authority on purely academic matters. Decisions of Senate on academic matters, which have financial or other resource implications, are subject to approval by Council. Conversely, decisions by Council, which have academic implications, (for example the creation or closure of an academic department), are subject to consultation with Senate.

The Court is the formal body representing the interests of the University's internal and external constituencies. It does not take part in the day-to-day oversight of the University's affairs or in the decision-taking process but provides a public forum where members of Court can raise any matters concerning the University. Court meets at least once a year.

Principles

Council discharges its functions with due regard to the seven principles of public life (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>) defined by the Nolan Committee. Effective management and good governance at the University are also underpinned by the following ten key principles:

1. the governing body is the ultimate decision-making body
2. the governing body is accountable for the financial health of the institution
3. roles and responsibilities of the governing body, committees and senior staff, should be defined, understood, accepted and regularly reviewed
4. competencies of the governing body, committees and senior staff should be in line with needs and should be regularly reviewed

5. the institution should have a strategic plan and an annual operating plan and budget
6. the strategic plan should be supported by a financial strategy
7. risks should be recognised, assessed and managed
8. management information should be relevant, reliable and timely
9. communication should be effective throughout the institution
10. systems should be in place which are robust and fit for purpose

The Committee of University Chairs Higher Education Code of Governance (<https://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Code-Final.pdf>) is intended to reflect good practice in a sector, which comprises a large number of very diverse institutions. Institutions are expected to state that they have had regard to the Code, and where an institution's practices are not consistent with the particular provisions of this Code, an explanation shall be published in the corporate governance statement of the annual audited financial statements. Council uses the Code in its annual self-assessment and ensures that the practices of the University are consistent with the provisions of the Code.

Duties and Responsibilities of Members of Council

The University is a legally independent corporate institution with exempt charitable status. Members of Council are formally recognised as trustees of the charity and subject to the obligations this imposes under charity law. Requirements that members of Council need to bear in mind in relation to the charitable status of the University include:

- applying the assets and income of the University only for the defined charitable purposes
- acting only within the legal powers of the University
- taking particular care in organising trading activities, which might not be regarded as charitable
- managing and protecting the property of the University
- providing information and returns to the appropriate charity regulator (the Funding Council)

It is the duty of members of Council to bring their various skills and experiences to bear in exercising their responsibilities and to play a full part in the taking of corporate decisions. Members should:

- act honestly, diligently and in good faith
- be satisfied that the course of action proposed is in accordance with the University's Charter, Statutes and Ordinances
- not bind the University to a course of action which it cannot carry out
- seek to ensure that the University does not continue to operate if it is insolvent
- seek to persuade colleagues by open debate and register dissent if they are concerned that the action would be contrary to any of the above
- avoid putting themselves in a situation where there is actual or potential conflict between their interests and those of the University

If this advice is followed, it is unlikely that personal liability could arise, particularly since the powers and responsibilities of governing bodies are exercised collectively and decisions are made by formal resolution.

Role of Senior Officers

The Chancellor (His Royal Highness The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex) is formally the lay head of the University and Chair of the Court. The Chancellor's ceremonial duties include presiding at degree congregations.

In the absence of the Chancellor, the **Pro-Chancellor** (currently Mr Roger Whorrod), may exercise all the functions of the Chancellor except for the conferring of Degrees.

The **Chair of Council** (Pamela Chesters) is responsible for the leadership of the governing body and for ensuring that its members work together effectively and have confidence in the procedures that have been laid down for the conduct of business.

The **Treasurer** (John Preston) is appointed by Council and chairs the Finance Committee. The Treasurer is responsible to Council for maintaining an overview of the University's finances. The statutory position with respect to the Treasurer is set out in Section 6 of the Statutes.

The **Vice-Chancellor** (Professor Ian White) has overall responsibility for the executive management of the University and is accountable to the Council for the exercise of these responsibilities. The statutory position with respect to the Vice-Chancellor is set out in Section 5 of the Statutes.

The **Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost** (Professor Bernie Morley) is a full-time statutory officer with primary responsibility for strategic and corporate planning. Professor Morley deputises for the Vice-Chancellor as and when necessary.

The three **Pro-Vice-Chancellors** (Professors Jeremy Bradshaw, Jonathan Knight and Peter Lambert) are full-time and have specific University-wide responsibilities for International and Doctoral, Research and Learning, and Teaching respectively.

Council Committees

The following Committees report to Council:

- Audit Committee
- Council Appeals Committee
- Finance Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Remuneration Committee
- Grievance Committee
- University Ventures Board

Further details of their membership and terms of reference are available from (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/statutory-bodies-committees/bodies-and-committees-council/index.html>).

Further information about the Council of the University can be obtained from (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/statutory-bodies-committees/bodies-and-committees-council/council/index.html>).