

COUNCIL MEMBER – ROLE DESCRIPTION

The Council is the supreme governing body of the University, responsible for setting the general strategic direction of the institution, for ensuring proper accountability, for ensuring the proper management of its finances, property and investments and the general business of the University.

The Council comprises lay, academic, executive and student members appointed under the Statutes of the University. A majority of the Council's members are from outside the University (lay members) and they contribute a wide range of experience and expertise from the public and private sectors in a role similar to that of the non-executive directors of companies.

All members exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the University as a whole rather than as representative of any constituency. The University maintains a register of interests of members of the Council, which is available for public scrutiny.

Further information is available at: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/council>

Appointments are made by the Council on the recommendation of the Nominations & Governance Committee for a period of four years in the first instance with the possibility of serving for a second term. New members are provided with an induction and both internal and external training opportunities.

Role of Council

Council has wide-ranging responsibilities including:

- to approve the mission and strategic vision, long-term academic and business plans and key performance indicators;
- to be the principal financial and business authority of the University, to ensure that proper accounts are kept, and to approve the annual budget and financial statements;
- to ensure the appropriate management and safeguarding of the University's assets and estate;
- to be the University's legal authority and to ensure that appropriate systems are in place;
- to appoint the Vice-Chancellor as head of the University, to delegate appropriate authorities to him/her for the day to day management of the University, and to monitor his/her performance;
- to make provision for the general welfare of students;
- to ensure the establishment and monitoring of systems of control and accountability, including financial and operational controls and risk assessment;
- to conduct business in accordance with best practice in higher education corporate governance;
- to be responsible for the human resources strategy;
- to ensure that the University's constitution is followed at all times and that appropriate advice is available to enable this to happen.
- to safeguard the good name and values of the University.

Council also has a number of specific responsibilities under the Terms and Conditions of Funding for Higher Education Institutions between the University and the Office for Students.

Responsibilities

- attend meetings of Council and its committees participating in discussions acting as a “critical friend”, contributing to the development, implementation and monitoring of University strategy;
- question intelligently, debate constructively, challenge rigorously and decide dispassionately, listening respectfully to the views of others, inside and outside meetings of the Council;
- attend some of the formal or informal events of the University, including degree ceremonies, as may be organised from time to time;
- act as an ambassador for the University, promoting its activities in the wider community including, for example, assisting with philanthropic activity and fund raising projects;
- attend any induction and training as may be required by the University to carry out effectively the role of a member of Council;
- submit an annual Register of Interests return.

Person Specification

- a commitment to high standards of governance and probity and the ability to operate in accordance with the Nolan Principles of Standards in Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership);
- proven interpersonal and communication skills, including critical listening, the ability to question intelligently and debate constructively;
- the confidence to challenge and hold to account the University’s executive and other senior officers;
- the ability to work within a framework of collective decision-making in the best interests of the University;
- an understanding of the need to balance conflicting factors and make objective decisions;
- an appreciation of the importance of confidentiality;
- an appreciation of the role of the higher education sector to provide high quality teaching and research and to provide economic, social and cultural value to society;
- a commitment to equal opportunities;
- the ability to meet the requirements of charity legislation for appointment as a Trustee of the University, which is an exempt charity under the Charities Act 2011.

Governance and Management

It is reasonable and appropriate for members of Council to establish working relationships with staff and students whilst always observing the proper separation between governance and management.

Accountability

Members of the Council are accountable to the Pro-Chancellor, the Chair of Council.

Commitment

Members of the Council will commit to attending all meetings (normally five a year) and Council’s annual away day, which is normally held in April. Membership of other University Committees is a matter for discussion between individuals and the Nominations & Governance Committee. Members are expected to take the time to read and digest the meeting papers in order to ensure effective contribution at meetings.

Expenses

Members of Council may claim all reasonable travel and subsistence expenses for attending meetings and University events.