



Edinburgh Napier University Court

Lay Court Member: Role Specification

1. Lay members are external persons appointed by the University's governing body, the Court, who reflect a variety of different interests and experience through which they contribute to the work of the Court in helping to shape the University's strategic direction and oversee its performance to ensure it delivers its vision, values and strategic objectives. As the University is a registered charity, Court members are also charity trustees.
2. In seeking to appoint new lay-members of the University Court, the selection panel will be mindful of the need to ensure that the Court has a well-balanced membership, supportive of the broad range of activities that are the primary responsibilities of the governing body.
3. It is expected that applicants will be able to demonstrate significant experience of operating at a senior level in any business or organisation in the private, public or voluntary sector. They bring an outside perspective, diversity of thought and help facilitate opportunities for the University.
4. Consideration may also be given to individuals who can demonstrate other experience which is relevant to the University, its vision and values and can demonstrate the capacity to develop the required skills and knowledge once they are in the role.
5. Given the nature of serving on a university's governing body, applicants should demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm for Higher Education.
6. In performing its primary responsibilities, Court requires members who can demonstrate experience across a range of areas including finance, people management, audit/risk management, digital/cyber/AI, change management, Higher Education academic leadership, educational leadership, property matters, international, governance, legal, marketing/communications/media, strategy & business planning, business development and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. Specific skillsets sought in recruitment rounds where there is an identified requirement in Court's membership will be stated in the advert.
7. The University is a large and complex organisation, reflecting considerable diversity in its staff and students. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate sensitivity to the cultural dimensions of operating in such an environment, recognising that the University has many international partners and stakeholders.
8. The Court is committed to equality and values diversity in its membership. In selecting lay members Court's goal is to appoint the best possible individual for the position on their merits, regardless of their personal characteristics, but in doing so Court will consider the balance of its lay membership in terms of equality and diversity with a view to enhancing the diversity of its lay membership where appropriate. Court welcomes applications from groups who are currently under-represented in its membership.

9. It is a clear expectation that applicants will be able to articulate their commitment to the highest principles of public life and follow the nine principles of public life in Scotland, which incorporate the seven 'Nolan Principles' these being: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty, leadership, respect and public service.
10. The ability to challenge constructively should be complemented by excellent communication and interpersonal skills, along with the ability to work collectively and effectively with other members of the Court.
11. Further information on the roles and responsibilities of governors at Edinburgh Napier University, along with key information on the Court, the University, its strategy, organisational structure and governance arrangements are contained in the Court Handbook, available at: [courthandbook.pdf](#)
12. Lay members are unpaid but may claim travel and other incidental expenses related to the conduct of Court business.
13. New members will also receive an appropriate induction to the role and be provided with opportunities and support with their ongoing development.
14. Membership of Court requires a time commitment (approximately 12 days per annum in aggregate) and applicants should be able to commit that they have sufficient time to conduct their Court responsibilities. These are normally:
 - four meetings of Court each year (meetings usually last up to three hours);
 - up to five meetings of Court Committees per year;
 - up to two governing body/executive strategy meetings.
 - Members are also expected to be available for ad hoc communication and are encouraged to attend University graduations and participate in other ad hoc University events wherever possible. They may also be asked to support the work of the University in other ways including sitting on advisory panels, steering groups, interview panels and acting as a mentor to senior staff members. It is important that members can offer the time and dedication necessary to make this contribution.
15. The four meetings of Court fall in October; December; March and June normally preceded by a round of Committee meetings. These deal with specific business on behalf of Court – for example the Finance and Property Committee provides governance for budgetary and estates aspects and the Audit and Risk Committee deals with internal and external audit and monitoring functions.
16. On appointment members may be allocated to one or more of Court's Committees, informed where possible by personal preferences, but also dependent upon relevant experience and areas of expertise, and balancing the overall requirements of the Court.

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