



## **Business Committee Meeting on Thursday 16 October 2025**

**at 5.15pm Raeburn Room, Old College**

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Presentation from EUSA Officers
3. Minutes of the Meeting of 26 June 2025 Paper 1
4. Matters arising from the Minutes of 26 June 2025

### **Items for Discussion/approval**

5. Oral observations by General Council Assessors on the Court Meeting of 6 October 2025 Agenda To follow – Paper 2
6. Business Committee Work Plan for 2025-26 Paper 3
7. Standing Committees Work Plans for 2025-26 Paper 4
8. Draft Resolutions of the University Court ( if any) [Tabled]
9. Appointment/re-appointment of General Council Secretary\*\*

### **Items for information**

10. Report from the Secretary of the General Council Paper 5
11. General Council Archive Paper 6
12. Any other competent business\*
13. Date of the next meeting - 4 December 2025

N.B. \*Notice of any matters which Members may wish to raise under item 12 should be given to the Secretary not less than 24 hours before the meeting.

\*\* Discussion of this item will be after item 13 when the Secretary has left the meeting.

**Minutes of the Business Committee Meeting held on Thursday 26 June 2025  
5.15pm in the Raeburn Room, Old College**

**Present**

Dr William Duncan, Secretary of the General Council	
Mr Gordon Cairns, Convener of the Business Committee	
Dr Bruce Nelson, Vice-Convener of the Business Committee	
Ms Alison McNulty, Assistant Secretary of the General Council	
Professor Richard Andrews (online)	Professor Judy Hardy
Mr Arron Ashton	Ms Kirsty MacGregor
Dr Lucy Blackburn	Mr Jock Millican
Ms Manya Buchan	Professor Graeme Reid
Ms Ann Cormack (online)	Mr Alan Ross (online)
Mrs Almira Delibegovic-Broome	The Rt. Rev Brian Smith
Ms Candice Donnelly	Dr Dorothy Welch
Alastair Dunlop KC (online)	
Professor John Gillies	

**In attendance**

Dr Matthew Epton - Newly Elected Member (online)  
Dr Katherine Richards - Newly Elected Member  
Mrs Jessica Williamson - Newly Elected Member (online)

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Convener welcomed everyone to the final meeting of the session and warmly welcomed the newly elected members who had been invited to attend as observers.

Apologies had been received from Nikhil Agarwal, Alice Brown, Max Browning, Mary Gunn, David Ovens, Devin Scobie and Sarah Wolffe.

**2. Observations by General Council Assessors**

Jock Millican (JM) gave an oral report the Court meeting of 23 June held in the Usher Institute (See Appendix 1 for Court agenda).

The main item, which dominated the Court meeting, was item 5 (2025-26 and 2026-27 budget and strategic cost saving proposals). Being a closed item, it was not possible to report in detail on the extensive deliberations leading up to the decision by Court to approve the proposed budgets for 2025- 26 and 2026-27. Shortly after the meeting, the Principal wrote to staff informing them of Court's decision and its implications.

In relation to the open items on the agenda it was reported:

**Item 3: Principal's Report**

- Supercomputer  
The University was confirmed as the host of the UK's new national supercomputer with an up to £750 million investment announced as part of Comprehensive Spending Review on 11 June. Professor Mark Parsons, Director of the Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre, played a fundamental role in securing the investment for Edinburgh which will give UK scientists access

to computing power on a world-leading scale and will help to drive economic growth across the UK.

- Financial Sustainability of HE sector.

As part of a Universities Scotland deputation, Sir Peter gave evidence to Holyrood Parliament's Education, Children & Young People Committee on 4 June. Unfortunately, the Committee Convener began with a personal attack on Sir Peter's conditions of employment rather than focusing on the subject of the session which was the overall financial stability of the HE sector, but the Principal was later able to give evidence covering falling funding levels for teaching and research and the consequent over dependence on international student recruitment.

The week before, the Royal Society of Edinburgh held a timely two-day conference on the Funding of Tertiary Education in Scotland. The discussions were wide-ranging, productive, and intended to inform debate ahead of the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2026.

- Student recruitment

This remains turbulent, with global student flows influenced by a variety of factors. Undergraduate (UG) applications, offers and acceptances have increased overall this year. Taught Postgraduate (PGT) applications are lower than last year (in line with comparator universities), but more and earlier offers this year have been achieved through hard work by College and School admissions teams. Applications, offers and acceptances for Postgraduate Research (PGR) programmes are at a healthy level and the main uncertainty is funding availability. Overall, there remains a high level of uncertainty around outcomes.

- Equality Act 2010

Court took note of the UK Supreme Court judgement in April with a ruling setting out the definition of the terms 'woman', 'man' and 'sex' for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. The application of this legal clarification, in particular in relation to single-sex spaces, has generated considerable debate in universities across the UK. The University is applying the law to its internal policies and guidance in a measured way, with the aim of balancing rights and needs, and is fortunate that many of its buildings have gender-neutral and single-occupancy provision.

- Senior Leadership Team appointments

Recruitment for Vice-Principal (Research & Innovation) and for the Chief Financial Officer will take place during week commencing 23 June.

- Meetings with Joint Trade Unions

Since the first communication of the financial challenges in summer 2024, staff from HR, Finance and SLT have met regularly with the joint trade unions to provide updates and context to decisions being taken. Trade Union representatives have received financial data in the form of tables and charts, depicting the emerging Q1 and Q2 positions, and have had early sight of Q3. Since January, the Interim Director of Finance, Provost and Director of HR have held three formal meetings to talk through the details of the finances and answer questions. On 12 June, Sir Peter, Dr Catherine Martin and Jo Roger met the leadership of UCU Edinburgh and UCU Scotland to seek an agreement that could avert industrial action.

UCU balloted for action and gained a mandate for discontinuous strike action on 20 June (Open Day) and 8-12 September (Welcome Week) and continuous action short of strike from 20 June onwards.

Unite and Unison branches in Edinburgh have confirmed they are not balloting for Industrial Action at this time, citing a preference to understand the scale of the changes proposed.

- Launch of the Innovation Career Pathway

This is the first of its kind in the UK and will boost development for academics wishing to focus on commercialisation and engagement with industry. One of the key features of the Research & Innovation Strategy, the Pathway elevates innovation alongside traditional research metrics such as research output and teaching contributions. It includes a new UK-first Competency Framework that sets out the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to support advancement. The Pathway has been very well received by the sector, including via a briefing with Lord Patrick Vallance where innovation and academic careers were discussed.

### Item 4: Committee Business

- Senior Lay Member. The process for appointing and electing a successor to Janet Legrand from August 2026 was agreed.
- Policy and Resources Committee. Morag Angus and David Ovens were appointed from 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2028, and David will be Convener of its Commercialisation Sub-group.
- Audit and Risk Committee. Christopher Morson was appointed from 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2028;
- Estates Committee. Sandra Cummings and Morag Angus were appointed from 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2028;
- Responsible Investments Advisory Group. Ruth Girardet will be its Convener and Alastair Laing a member.

### **Senate**

- *Financial Resilience Strategy Update and Confidence in the University Executive*  
Court was informed that Senate had by a majority vote, approved the following motion “Senate has no confidence in the University Executive’s leadership in relation to the University’s financial situation.” 91 members approved, 43 members did not approve, and 13 members abstained.

### Item 5: Finance

Following extensive robust discussion from all members of Court, the proposed Budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27 were agreed.

### Item 6: Students’ Association and Sports Union Reports

Ash Scholtz, current President of the Students’ Association presented a report from Dora Herndon, former President, based on the past year. Two Key points emerged:

- *The relationship we’ve built with the University. We inherited generations of sabbatical officers’ growing frustrations with the University and made a conscious decision to put that aside and make the most productive year we could. To be clear: I am leaving with plenty of frustrations, but I have also resolved plenty of frustrations by working through them with University staff and finding practical solutions to benefit students. I think we reached a level of partnership this year that hasn’t been seen in a while, if ever. There is still work to be done, but I hope we have laid the foundation for our successors to have an even more successful year.*
- *Second, we’re proud of the Student Experience Framework. We’re proud that we really sat down to think through what Student Experience is so early in our terms, and we’re proud that our thinking resonated with so many others, as well. I hope that even after we’re gone, people continue to interrogate what student experience actually is, and especially in a space like Court, ask how something is going to benefit student experience, not just if it will.*

Item 7: Data Driven Innovation (DDI)

- The DDI initiative is a 15-year, £661 million investment and innovation programme launched in August 2018. It secured a total of £270 million in capital funding from the UK and Scottish Governments, part of the £1.3 billion Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal. The DDI initiative continues to be one of the most significant innovation investments made by both governments in UK academic institutions;
- The DDI Programme has now completed its investment phase, including transforming the former Royal Infirmary into the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) and creating the Usher Building at the BioQuarter and which was formally opened on 26 June;
- *Performance Against KPIs in FY2023/24*  
The DDI Initiative has been successful in driving engagement and positive outcomes at scale across its educational, research, innovation and wider economic aims, often exceeding expectations. For example, University students completed 89% of the end-of-programme target;
- DDI-tagged research activities amounted to £158.1 million from 279 unique grants, bringing the total research expenditure since FY2017/18 to £556.8 million;
- The full DDI Annual Report for FY 2023/24 is accessible at <https://readymag.website/ddi/DDIAnnualReview/>

Item 11: Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC) Future Governance

Approved the proposal that KSC be stood down on 1 August 2025.

Item 13: Implementation of Ordinance No. 217

(General Council Membership & Registration)

Approved the implementation of Ordinance No. 217 from 1 October 2025.

Item 15: Education Act 1994 requirements in relation to the Students' Association

Noted the Certificate of Assurance and be assured of current compliance.

Item 17: Resolutions – Chairs

Very large number due to catch up. There will be very few next year because of restrictions on progression and promotion.

**Discussion**

2025/26 and 2026-27 budget and strategic cost saving proposals

- GC asked about the timeframe for communicating to staff the implications of the budget reductions and how savings will be achieved. JM commented on the offer made to UCU at the meeting on 12 June of no compulsory redundancies until the end of the current year, but this had been rejected;
- KM asked about the scale of redundancies the budget reductions would require and if this would mainly affect professional and support staff? JM replied that the number of redundancies was not known at this stage but it was likely to impact both professional and academic staff;
- BS asked whether strike action would affect the graduation ceremonies. JM said that the summer graduations are going ahead as planned but it is not clear whether any strike action would have an impact;

- RA raised the issue of separating the promotions process from immediate pay rises, emphasising the importance of continued career progression opportunities for staff even without pay increases. JM confirmed no distinction had been made between promotions and pay rises during Court discussions;
- WD sought clarification on the timeline for producing the £140m savings and whether this was expected to be achieved by the end of 2025/26 or in 2026/27 as indicated in the Principal's latest message to staff? LB referred to the FSSC meeting in March when it had been stated savings would need to be made in 2025/26. JM explained that the aim was to achieve the reductions over an 18-month period by end 2026 and to produce a small surplus by 2026/27;
- There was significant concern expressed over how financial austerity measures might impact the University's mission and overall strategy. AA commented on the potential risks to the University's reputation due to halted promotions and the threat of redundancies, although it was acknowledged that the current situation is a sector-wide issue and not limited to the University, and stressed the need for a balanced approach to maintain the University's standing as a leading institution;
- BN emphasised the need for clear communication around the University's future plans and direction to sustain staff morale, suggesting that more positive messaging might aid in maintaining a supportive atmosphere around financial restructuring.

Senior Lay Member of Court

- WD asked how the election for this key role of the would be handled, noting with concern the previously low participation rates in governance elections (often around 1%), suggesting a need for better strategies to enhance engagement to ensure a good outcome.

Supercomputer

- It was agreed to send a message to Sir Peter congratulating him for the remarkable achievement of the University securing funding of up to £750m for a supercomputer.

**ACTION: Secretary to write to Principal**

The Convener thanked JM for his report.

**3. Minutes of the Meeting of 1 May 2025**

- a. The minutes were approved.
- b. Any matters arising were covered under other agenda items.

**4. Draft Resolutions of the University Court**

The Academic Standing Committee (ASC), was content to recommend approval of the following Resolutions at its meeting on 5 June:

- Draft Resolutions No. 3-5/2025: Creation of Personal Chairs (various)
- Draft Resolution No. 6/2025: Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations
- Draft Resolution No. 7/2025: Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations
- Draft Resolutions No. 8-87/2025: Creation of Personal Chairs (various)

The above Resolutions were approved by correspondence with the Business Committee and a letter sent to Court Services to that effect on 6 June.

No new Resolutions had been received.

**5. Co-option of new members of the Business Committee to fill vacancies**

- The Secretary referred to Paper 3, previously circulated;
- A vacancy has arisen due to Tamara Raidt having made the difficult decision to resign because of competing work commitments;
- WD explained that when a vacancy occurs between elections, the Business Committee has the authority under the Constitutional Arrangements to co-opt a General Council member of its choosing to the Business Committee;
- The member co-opted will serve for the length of term remaining of the member whose departure from the Committee has created a vacancy, in this case 3 years;
- In deciding whom to co-opt on this occasion, it was noted that Tamara is a member of the Public Affairs Standing Committee, and suggested that it would be desirable to co-opt someone with the experience and skills relevant to that Committee, especially someone familiar with social media;
- KM suggested that someone of a different background could perhaps bring a fresh approach and that the calibre of a candidate may outweigh specific expertise;
- It was agreed that the member co-opted must be available and willing to participate in meetings, particularly those of the Standing Committee and this is important because there are only five members in each.

**Action: -**

- ***The committee was asked to inform the Secretary by Friday 4 July of any General Council members whom they would like to propose for co-option (without reference to the potential candidate in the first instance);***
- ***These will be considered by the Secretary, Convener, Deputy Convener, and Convener of PASC, and a recommendation circulated to the Business Committee for approval by correspondence so that whoever is chosen can be inducted into the Business Committee at the same time as the other new members.***

**6. Summer Half-Yearly Meeting feedback**

- The Convener invited comments from members who were able to attend in-person or online;
- It was noted that, despite bad weather, in-person attendance was sufficient to be quorate;
- The Edinburgh Climate Change Institute (ECCI) was a satisfactory venue;
- Issues with online streaming had impacted the viewing experience, indicating the need for better technical support at weekends. The Secretary is investigating the online transmission issues to try to prevent a recurrence at the February meeting;
- The reports from the Conveners of the Standing Committees were highlighted as positive contributions and were well received;
- There were concerns about maintaining attendance levels at purely governance-based business Half-Yearly Meetings and suggested it would be desirable for the business part to be followed by an event to attract increased attendance;
- JH said that she favoured some type of showcasing event like the recent successful Usher Institute event to follow the statutory meeting, as combining popular events with mandatory meetings could boost attendance and engagement;
- WD explained the Constitution mandates that Half-Yearly meetings must be held on a Saturday but this constrains the practicality of arranging showcasing events. An alternative would be to have an invited speaker on a topical issue at the June HYM;
- It was suggested that amendments should be made to the Constitution to be more flexible and the process for changing the Constitution was discussed;

- It was now too late to change the dates of the HYMs in 2026 but a motion could go to the June 2026 HYM which, if approved, would apply to future meetings;
- Members supported the proposal for a review of the Constitution by the Constitutional Standing Committee with an indication of the main issues to be explored brought to the October meeting of the Business Committee;
- WD cautioned against 'piecemeal' changes to the Constitution.

### 7. Minutes of Standing Committee meetings

Papers 4-8 contained reports from recent Standing Committee meetings, circulated in advance to the Business Committee, and the following points were noted:

#### Academic Standing Committee (ASC)

- Graeme Reid reported on the last meeting of ASC on 5 June (Paper 4) when a discussion with Colm Harmon, VP Students, focused on recent updates and changes in the curriculum transformation at the University.
- Significant developments are as follows:
- The centralised governance model that had been in place since the inception of the curriculum transformation project has been discontinued;
- Governance responsibilities have now been devolved to the school level, allowing for localised oversight and management of new programmes and courses. This shift aims to enhance the relevance and responsiveness of the curriculum to specific academic and student needs;
- Notable progress has been reported in the development of institution-wide Challenge courses across all colleges. These courses are designed to cater to large student numbers and tackle broad educational challenges;
- Although not at full capacity yet due to deliberate restrictions to ensure smooth implementation, there are expectations of significant student participation in these courses in the coming years;
- Concerns were raised regarding the potential increase in class sizes due to the new curriculum models. Colm Harmon provided reassurance that any increase would be minimal and manageable, ensuring that the quality of education and student interaction remains high;
- The feedback on student experience under the new curriculum structure has been generally positive. Students seem to be enjoying the changes, and the new student support model has been well received.

#### Finance and Services Standing Committee (FSSC)

- Almira Delibegovic-Broome reported on the meeting of FSSC on 6 May (Paper 5) when VP and Chief Information Officer, Gavin McLachlan, gave a presentation focusing primarily on cybersecurity concerns and which had drawn many questions from members of the committee indicating the high level of interest and concern due to the critical nature of this topic;
- A key issue highlighted during the meeting was the emerging risks concerning both digital and physical estates over the next five years;
- Special attention was drawn to the student record system, which will soon need to be replaced. This will be a major critical project due to the complexities involved in designing and implementing such systems;
- The overall theme of the meeting emphasised not only immediate cybersecurity challenges but also the foresight required in managing looming risks associated with technological and infrastructure upgrades;



- It was suggested that staying informed and understanding these issues is crucial, and it was recommended to invite Gavin again next year to provide updates on the progress;
- AD-B mentioned successful personal engagement at a meeting of the Consular Corp, where an international event related to AI showcased the university's capabilities;
- During this event, there was an interesting note on student recruitment dynamics, particularly regarding the situation in the U.S. where students who had previously declined offers from the University of Edinburgh were reconsidering and expressing a desire to enroll.

As this was Almira's final meeting, the Convener took the opportunity to thank her for her valuable contribution to the Business Committee and welcomed Manya Buchan as Almira's successor as Convener of FSSC.

### **International Standing Committee (ISC)**

- Ann Cormack reported on the ISC meeting on 12 May (Paper 6) when the committee had heard from Chris Cox (CC) VP Philanthropy, and Executive Director of Development and Alumni (D & A) and Christina Boswell (CB) VP Research and Innovation;
- CC provided a comprehensive update on key activities for D & A, which included engagement through events and delegation visits aimed at maintaining relationships with global alumni; support for student recruitment, leveraging alumni to identify potential students and foster their interest in the University; and the introduction of an alumni ambassadors programme to support prospective students through the admissions process;
- CC also touched on the importance of philanthropy and improving the overall student experience at the University;
- AC shared her positive personal experience with the Insights programme, which supports disadvantaged students in realising their leadership potential and preparing for their future careers;
- CB had discussed the alignment of the Research and Innovation strategy with the broader global strategy;
- Initiatives included strengthening bilateral and multilateral relationships; implementing an ethical framework considering geopolitical challenges; and supporting academic advancements in commercialisation and industry collaborations;
- Ongoing initiatives to strengthen the University's global presence and partnerships were reaffirmed;
- The meeting marked CB's final presentation to ISC as VP, as she demits in the autumn;
- ISC plans to continue exploring effective global engagement strategies and the positive impacts of alumni involvement on prospective and current students;
- A shift in the University's approach towards China was discussed, acknowledging the long-term academic potential despite different political attitudes to engagement with China;
- Concerns were raised about the possible less positive experiences of Chinese students at the University during the Covid-19 pandemic potentially impacting future recruitment and reputation in China.
- AC noted the intention to start future ISC meetings around the middle of the working day instead of 4.30pm to facilitate attendance by committee members based in markedly different time zones.

### **Public Affairs Standing Committee (PASC)**

- There were two recent meetings of PASC on 8 May and 26 May (Papers 7 and 8) and WD highlighted two key points:
- General Council videos: one video is now complete, the other will be available soon and both will be circulated to the Business Committee;
- Usher Institute event: results received from the questionnaire were very positive about the event, although many commented on the need for better signage to the venue. 61% of the respondents said it had been the first time they had attended a General Council event and they indicated a desire for more of this type of event. WD said he would like to hold further similar events with each of the Colleges and will follow up with the Heads of Colleges;
- AC mentioned the need for a more proactive role in ensuring that all graduates of the University know that they are General Council members as there seems to be a lack of understanding and awareness by many members.

#### **8. Report from the Secretary of the General Council**

- Paper 9, previously circulated, included the following diary dates for noting:
  - Business Committee meetings for 2025/6
  - ❖ Thursday 16 October 2025 – presentation by the EUSA sabbatical officers highlighting individual and joint priorities and objectives for the academic year 2025-26.
  - ❖ Thursday 4 December 2025
  - ❖ Thursday 5 March 2026
  - ❖ Thursday 30 April 2026
  - ❖ Thursday 25 June 2026

All meetings to be held at 5.15pm in the Raeburn Room unless otherwise advised

- Christmas Reception
- ❖ 9 December 2025 in the Informatics Building
- Half Yearly Meeting
- ❖ Saturday 14 February 2026 at 10.30 at the Edinburgh Futures Institute followed by lunch at the Playfair Library
- ❖ Saturday 13 June 2026 – Edinburgh Futures Institute

#### **Questions**

University's Race Review. LB asked for an update.

- WD replied that the Race Review report has been submitted to the University Executive and approved in mid-June, but its release date was still to be decided;
- This is both because there are funding implications linked to the recommendations and the report contains critical findings that could prompt significant discussions or actions within the University. The timing of the release and how this is handled are important to manage the impact effectively;
- Given the recent death of Sir Geoffrey Palmer (who had led the review), it would be better for it to be released sooner rather than later;

Community Plan. DW asked for an update on the launch

- WD replied this will take place on 8 October at Edinburgh Futures Institute, but no further details are available at present. DW hoped local alumni would be invited. WD said he would pass this on to those organising the launch.

### **Any other competent business**

The Convener conveyed grateful thanks to the departing members of the Business Committee, Arron Ashton, Tamara Raidt and Brian Smith for their valued participation during their terms of office.

### **8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Business Committee would take place at 5.15pm on Thursday, 16 October, 2025 in the Raeburn Room, Old College.



## THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

University Court  
Usher Institute, BioQuarter,  
5-7 Little France Road, Edinburgh EH16 4UX  
Monday, 23 June 2025

### AGENDA

[Version for General Council Business Committee, indicating  
open or closed status of papers]

#### OPENING ITEMS

- |          |   |           |
|----------|---|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Minutes [Open version of minutes to be published in due course]</b><br>To <u>approve</u> the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2025  | <b>A1</b> |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Matters Arising &amp; Review of Action Log [CLOSED]</b><br>To <u>raise</u> any matters arising and <u>review</u> the Action Log  | <b>A2</b> |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Principal's Report [OPEN]</b><br>To <u>note</u> a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal   | <b>B</b>  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Committee Business</b>   |           |
|          | • Exception Committee [CLOSED]  | <b>C1</b> |
|          | • Policy & Resources Committee [CLOSED]   | <b>C2</b> |
|          | • Governance & Nominations Committee [Court and committee<br>memberships will be published in due course]<br>To <u>approve</u> appointments to committee positions and other roles and to<br><u>approve</u> a package of reforms to Court and committee papers to be<br>implemented for the academic year 2025-26 | <b>C3</b> |
|          | • Audit & Risk Committee [CLOSED]   | <b>C4</b> |
|          | • Knowledge Strategy Committee [CLOSED]   | <b>C5</b> |
|          | • Senate [OPEN]   | <b>C6</b> |

#### KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

- |          |  |           |
|----------|--|-----------|
| <b>5</b> | <b>Finance and Planning</b>  |           |
|          | • <b>Finance Update Report [CLOSED]</b><br>To <u>consider</u> a paper presented by Nirmal Borkhataria,<br>Interim Director of Finance                            | <b>D1</b> |
|          | • <b>2025-26 and 2026-27 budget and strategic cost saving proposals</b><br><b>[CLOSED paper – but approval of the budget has been communicated<br/>to staff]</b> | <b>D2</b> |

To approve the group-level budget for 2025-26 and 2026-27.

Paper presented by Kim Graham, Provost, and Nirmal Borkhataria, Interim Director of Finance

- |               |   |              |
|---------------|---|--------------|
| <b>6</b>      | <b>Students' Association and Sports Union Reports [OPEN]</b><br>To <u>consider</u> reports presented by Ash Scholz, President of the Students' Association  |              |
|               | • <b>Students' Association Report</b>   | <b>E1</b>    |
|               | • <b>Sports Union Report</b>  | <b>E2</b>    |
| <br><b>7</b>  | <br><b>Data-Driven Innovation (DDI) Initiative Progress Report Q2 – 2024/25 [OPEN]</b><br>To <u>consider</u> a paper presented by Kim Graham, Provost   | <br><b>F</b> |
| <br><b>8</b>  | <br><b>Net Zero Infrastructure – Easter Bush Campus Utilities Networks Expansion [CLOSED]</b><br>To <u>approve</u> the University's contribution to funding   | <br><b>G</b> |
| <br><b>9</b>  | <br><b>Senior Lay Member: Recruitment and Election [OPEN]</b><br>To <u>approve</u> election and appointment regulations. Paper presented by Leigh Chalmers, Vice Principal & University Secretary   | <br><b>H</b> |
| <br><b>10</b> | <br><b>Amendments to Delegated Authority Schedule [OPEN]</b><br>To <u>approve</u> amendments to the Delegated Authority Schedule. Paper presented by Leigh Chalmers, Vice Principal & University Secretary  | <br><b>I</b> |
| <br><b>11</b> | <br><b>Knowledge Strategy Committee Future Governance [OPEN]</b><br>To <u>approve</u> the proposal that Knowledge Strategy Committee be stood down and <u>note</u> future process. Paper presented by Leigh Chalmers, Vice Principal & University Secretary | <br><b>J</b> |

#### ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

- |               |  |                  |
|---------------|--|------------------|
| <b>12</b>     | <b>Development Trust – Amendments to the Deed of Trust and Update on the Development Trust [OPEN]</b><br><br>To approve  | <br><br><b>K</b> |
| <br><b>13</b> | <br><b>Implementation of Ordinance No. 217 (General Council Membership and Registration) [OPEN]</b><br>To <u>approve</u> | <br><br><b>L</b> |
| <br><b>14</b> | <br><b>Donations &amp; Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity [CLOSED]</b><br><br>To note                                | <br><br><b>M</b> |
| <br><b>15</b> | <br><b>Education Act 1994 requirements in relation to the Students' Association [OPEN] To <u>note</u></b>                | <br><br><b>N</b> |

- |           |  |           |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| <b>16</b> | <b>Prevent Duty Annual Compliance [CLOSED]</b> | <b>O</b>  |
|           | <b>To note</b>                                 |           |
| <b>17</b> | <b>Resolutions – Chairs [OPEN]</b>             | <b>P1</b> |
|           | <b>Resolutions – Degree Regulations [OPEN]</b> | <b>P2</b> |
|           | <b>To <u>approve</u></b>                       |           |
| <b>18</b> | <b>Court Meeting Dates 2026/27</b>             | <b>Q</b>  |
|           | <b>To approve</b>                              |           |
| <b>19</b> | <b>Any Other Business</b>                      |           |
|           | <b>To <u>consider</u> any other matters</b>    |           |
| <b>20</b> | <b>Date of Next Meeting</b>                    |           |
|           | Monday 6 October 2025                          |           |



## University Court

6 October 2025

Pentland Suite, John McIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls

## Agenda

[Version for General Council Business Committee,  
indicating open or closed status of papers]

### OPENING ITEMS

- |          |  |           |
|----------|--|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Minutes [Open version of minutes to be published in due course]</b>   | <b>A1</b> |
|          | To <u>approve</u> the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2025  |           |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Matters Arising &amp; Review of Action Log [CLOSED]</b>   | <b>A2</b> |
|          | To <u>raise</u> any matters arising and <u>review</u> the Action Log   |           |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update on the Responsible Investment Advisory Group</li></ul>  |           |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Principal's Report [OPEN]</b>   | <b>B</b>  |
|          | To <u>note</u> a report from Peter Mathieson, Principal  |           |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Committee Business</b>  |           |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exception Committee [CLOSED]</li></ul>   | <b>C1</b> |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy &amp; Resources Committee [CLOSED]</li></ul>  | <b>C2</b> |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governance &amp; Nominations Committee [Court and committee memberships are published on the University website]</li></ul> | <b>C3</b> |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Audit &amp; Risk Committee [CLOSED]</li></ul>  | <b>C4</b> |
|          | To <u>approve</u> the Risk Appetite Statement  |           |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remuneration Committee [CLOSED]</li></ul>  | <b>C5</b> |
|          | To <u>approve</u> revisions to the Framework for Decision Making   |           |

### KEY ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

- |          |  |           |
|----------|--|-----------|
| <b>5</b> | <b>Finance and Planning Update Report [CLOSED]</b>   | <b>D</b>  |
|          | To <u>note</u> a paper presented by James Gray, Chief Financial Officer, and Kim Graham, Provost                                       |           |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Students' Association and Sports Union Reports [OPEN]</b>   |           |
|          | To <u>note</u> reports presented by Ash Scholz, President of the Students' Association, and Liv Stevens, President of the Sports Union |           |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students' Association Report</li></ul>   | <b>E1</b> |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sports Union Report</li></ul>  | <b>E2</b> |

- 7      Student Surveys 2025: Results and Responses [CLOSED paper. National Student Survey results are publicly available.]      F**

To note a paper presented by Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students, and Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students

- 8      Teviot Row House Compliance Works [CLOSED]      G**

To approve additional funding to complete the works. Paper presented by Damian Toner, Director of Estates

- 9      Microsoft Agreement [CLOSED]      H**

To approve the agreement and delegate authority to the Vice Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University to sign the contract  
Paper presented by Gavin McLachlan, Vice Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University

- 10      Consideration of the Investigation into Financial Oversight and Decision Making at the University of Dundee [CLOSED paper. The report of the investigation is available on the Scottish Funding Council website]      I**

To note a paper presented by Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary

- 11      Award of University Benefactor [CLOSED]      J**

To approve the award of University Benefactor status to two new recipients.  
Paper presented by Peter Mathieson, Principal

#### **ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

- 12      The University of Edinburgh Cross & Salmon Trust: Appointment of New Trustee and Re-appointment of Continuing Trustee [CLOSED]      K**

To approve the appointment of a new trustee and the re-appointment of a continuing trustee

- 13      John Rae Collection: Legacy Loans Recommendation [CLOSED]      L**

To approve

- 14      Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy & Procedure [The revised policy will be published on the University website]      M**

To approve

- 15      Anti-Fraud Policy 2025 [CLOSED]      N**

To approve

- 16      Donations & Legacies and Alumni Relations Activity [CLOSED]      O**

To note



**17 Any Other Business**

**18 Date of Next Meeting**

1 December 2025

**19 Remuneration Committee: Senior Leadership Team  
Remuneration Review – Proposed Approach [CLOSED]**

**P**

To approve (closed session for Court members)

**Business Committee Workplan for 2025-2026**

**Meeting Dates 2025-2026**

Business Committee Meetings begin at 5.15pm, preceded by coffee and tea from 5pm

All meetings will take place in the Raeburn Room, Old College

16 October 2025

A presentation from EUSA Sabbatical Officers.

4 December 2025

A report from the Conveners of the Standing Committees on the meetings held in Semester One.

5 March 2026

A presentation from James Gray, Chief Financial Officer (tbc)

30 April 2026

A report from the Conveners of the Standing Committees on the first meetings held in Semester 2.

25 June 2026

A report from the Conveners of the Standing Committees on the final meetings held in Semester 2.

**Standing Committee Membership and Work Plan 2025/26**

Meetings are online via Teams at 4.30pm (Except ISC)

**Academic Standing Committee (ASC)**

**Convener: Graeme Reid**

John Gillies

Judy Hardy

Dorothy Welch

Matthew Epton

**Dates of Meetings: 27 October** (Lucy Evans, Associate Principal and Deputy Secretary Students\*);  
**11 November** (Colm Harmon, VP Students); **31 March; 4 June**

**Finance & Services Standing Committee (FSSC)**

**Convener: Manya Buchan**

Lucy Blackburn

Alan Ross

Lorn Macneal

Jessica Williamson

**Dates of Meetings: 23 October** (Director of Estates); **19 February** (Director of IT); **5 May**

**International Standing Committee (ISC)**

**Convener: Ann Cormack**

Mary Gunn

Nikhil Agarwal

Richard Andrews

Max Browning

**Dates of Meetings: 4 November** (Chris Yeomans, Director, Global Engagement); **14 April;**  
**28 May**

**Public Affairs Standing Committee (PASC)**

**Convener: Alice Brown**

Devin Scobie

Candice Donnelly

Kate Richards

Thomas Wrench

**Dates of Meetings: 9 October** (Niall Bradley, Interim Director of CAM); **12 March; 14 May**

\*Shown in brackets where topic/speaker has been agreed. When a speaker has been decided for open meetings (except FSSC) an outlook invitation with a Teams link will be sent to all BC members. Meeting papers will be sent to members of each particular committee only.

## Report by Secretary

### A. Matters arising from Minute of Business Committee on 25 June 2025

#### 1. Co-option to Business Committee

Two vacancies arose since the elections held in February. Using the delegated powers given by the Constitutional Arrangements, the Business Committee agreed, unanimously by correspondence, to **co-opt Tom Wrench** to replace Tamara Raidt **and to co-opt Lorn Macneal** to replace Kirsty MacGregor. These co-options are for the remainder of the terms of those being replaced, being until July 2028 for Tom and July 2029 for Lorn.

#### 2. Race Review

This major two-part Review was released in late July and received widespread mixed media coverage and reaction. An Implementation Group has been established to advise on the many recommendations made in the Review Reports.

### B. Other matters – for information

#### 1. Meeting of the Secretaries, Clerks and Conveners of the General Councils of the 'Ancient' Universities in Scotland

This was held on 4 August and hosted by the University of Glasgow. It had been intended to hold it as an in-person meeting but due to adverse weather affecting travel to Glasgow, it had to be held online. Dr Bruce Nelson and Dr William Duncan attended. There was an extensive agenda of matters of shared interest. The minute of the meeting, being produced by Glasgow, will be circulated when available. The University of St Andrews will host the 2026 meeting.

#### 2. Summer Graduations

Many of these were disrupted by demonstrations by the graduands about the University's investment portfolio and the implied support this gave to Israel in the war in Gaza. These protests made it uncomfortable for Business Committee members to be on stage as part of the academic procession.

#### 3. Ordinance 217

The widening of General Council membership allowed by this Ordinance was implemented smoothly on 1 October 2025. This resulted in 25000 new members being added to the General Council Register, but the University only has email addresses for 60% of these, and so only they will receive General Council communications.

**4. Videos about General Council**

These are available to view on the General Council website and have been well received.

**5. ‘In conversation’ event on 7 October at St Cecilia’s Hall**

This conversation between Joanna Cherry and Lord Jim Wallace, chaired by Simon Fanshaw was very well received by the 100 members who attended the event, with very positive feedback. The Public Affairs Standing Committee will consider options for further ‘Town and Gown’ events.

**6. Community Plan**

This was launched on 8 October 2025 at EFI.

**7. February 2026 Half Yearly Meeting**

This will be held on 14 February at EFI and followed by lunch in the Playfair Library, when the guest speaker will be Professor Marion Thain, Director of EFI

Dr William Duncan

9 November 2025

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**DATES FOR DIARY**

<b>2025-2026</b>	
5.15pm, Thursday 16 October 2025	Business Committee Raeburn Room, Old College
5.15pm, Thursday 4 December 2025	Business Committee Raeburn Room, Old College
5.15, Tuesday 9 December 2025	General Council Business Committee Christmas Reception Informatics Building

## BC Meeting 16 October 2025 Paper 5

<p>Saturday</p> <p>14 February 2026</p> <p>10.30am</p>	<p><b>Half Yearly Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Edinburgh Futures Institute/Playfair Library</b></p>
<p>5.15pm, Thursday</p> <p>5 March 2026</p>	<p>Business Committee</p> <p>Raeburn Room, Old College</p>
<p>5.15pm, Thursday</p> <p>30 April 2026</p>	<p>Business Committee</p> <p>Raeburn Room, Old College</p>
<p>Saturday</p> <p>13 June 2026</p> <p>10.30am</p>	<p><b>Half Yearly Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Venue tbc</b></p>
<p>5.15pm, Thursday</p> <p>25 June 2026</p>	<p>Business Committee</p> <p>Raeburn Room, Old College</p>

## UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

## RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE

The Schedule below sets out the General Council's archive policies in terms of materials that are sent to the University Archives for long-term retention. Working files are kept in the University's "k" drive and in due course will be digitally archived as set out in the Schedule. The archive policy document will need to be approved by the Business Committee at its meeting on 16 October 2025.

<b>Function:</b>	General Council				
<b>Business areas:</b>	Administration of General Council business				
Reference	Description	Disposal	Timing	Trigger	Notes
	Academic Standing Committee, agendas and papers	Archives	5 years	After end of current year / current academic year	
	Alumni, correspondence re King's Birthday Honours List, etc	Destroy	5 years	After end of current year / current academic year	Honours Lists are now sent electronically and deleted immediately after use
	Ancient Universities (Correspondence with other three GCs and minutes of joint meetings)	Archive	5 years	After end of current academic year	
	Appointment of a new Principal	Archive	5 years	After end of	

## BC Meeting 16 October 2025 Paper 6

	(Convener of the General Council invited to comment by Court – record of correspondence)			current academic year	
	Billet: Publication of Agenda and Papers for Half-Yearly Meetings]	Archive	5 years	After end of academic year	
	Budget	Destroy	5 years	After end of current financial year	
	Business Committee (agenda, minutes and papers)	Archive	5 years	After end of current year / academic year	
	Business Committee Correspondence	Archive	5 years	After end of current year / academic year	
	Business Committee Events, organisation of functions	Destroy	5 years	After end of current year / academic year	Kept for GC reference only
	Chancellor(ship), correspondence	Archive	5 years	After end of current academic year	Sensitive
	Constitutional Standing Committee (agenda, minutes and papers)	Archive	5 years	After end of current year / academic year	
	Court Assessors	Archive	5 years	After end of current year / academic year	
	Correspondence General, responses to suggestions and complaints	Archive	5 years	After end of current year /	



## BC Meeting 16 October 2025 Paper 6

				academic year	
	Data Protection (Consideration of DP issues affecting GC registers)	Archive	5 years	After end of current academic year	
	Development & Alumni Services, Staff Meetings, alumni numbers, taxation matters	Destroy	2 years	After end of current year / academic year	The golden copy is held by Development and Alumni.
	Draft Resolutions (University Court)	Destroy	5 years	After end of current year / academic year	The golden copy is held in the University Court records and copies are also published in Billet.
	Effectiveness Review	Archive	5 years	After end of current academic year	
	Election of Business Committee – nomination forms	Archive	5 years	After termination of appointment	<b>Destroy after 10 years</b>
	Voting material for elections	Destroy	1 year	After end of election	Management and disposal of these records carried out by Civica Election Services
	EUSA (Correspondence/arrangements to meet with GC)	Destroy	2 years	After end of academic year	
	Finance and Statistics Standing Committee/Finance & Services (agenda, minutes and papers)	Archive	5 years	After end of current year /	

				academic year	
	General Council Meetings	Destroy	2 years	After end of current year / academic year	
	International Standing Committee (agenda, minutes and papers)	Archives	5 years	After end of current year / academic year	
	Membership, invitations to retired members of staff	Destroy	5 years	After end of current year / academic year	
	Officers and Standing Committee Conveners Meeting, notes of meetings	Archive	5 years	After end of current academic year	
	Public Affairs Standing Committee (agenda, minutes and papers)	Archive	5 years	After end of current year / academic year	
	Review Committee, remit to examine the role, constitution and status of the General Council	Archive	5 years	After end of current year / academic year	
	Search Committee (Established by Business Committee to find and appoint a Secretary)	Archive	5 years	After end of academic year	
	Website, correspondence and consultation re development	Archive	5 years	After end of current academic year	
	Working Groups	Archive	5 years	After end of current academic	

				year	
<b>Compiled by: Alison McNulty</b>					
					<b>Date: 24 June 2025</b>
<b>Approved by University Records Manager:</b>					
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>			<b>Date:</b>
<b>Approved by head(s) of unit(s):</b>					
<b>Name:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>			<b>Date:</b>
<b>Version no:</b>	1	<b>Details:</b>			

\* Irene Ferguson reports that the Library has copies of the Business Committee Minutes and Papers from 1988 to 1994.