

Appointments Committee

25/01 A hybrid meeting of the Committee was held on Thursday 30 January 2025 at 2.00 pm via Teams and in Committee Room 1, Whiteknights House.

Present: Lay Member of the Council, Kate Owen (Chair) via Teams
Lay Member of the Council, Sian Butler via Teams
Lay Member of the Council, Kevin Corrigan via Teams
The President of Council, Helen Gordon via Teams
Lay Member of the Council, Sue Maple via Teams
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
An elected member of the Council, John Jack

By invitation: University Secretary
Director of Human Resources
Head of Governance (*Secretary*)

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and referred to the very recent announcement that Dr Richard Messer had elected to retire at the end of November 2025. She expressed her thanks and appreciation for all he had done for the University and noted that there would be ample time to speak more on this later. She invited him to say more about his views on the role under Any Other Business.

25/02 Minutes of the last meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting, held on 15 October 2024, as a correct record.

25/03 Matters Arising

The Committee noted that the report submitted to Council on 20 November 2024 had been accepted, including all changes to membership.

The Committee noted the addition of Alex Slater, the Head of Directorate for Student Experience and Education, to those in attendance at Student Experience Committee.

All other matters arising were covered below.

25/04 Committees of Selection

The Committee received and noted a Committee of Selection Report for Sociology that had been submitted since the last meeting.

The Committee noted that the University received a strong field of applications for these academic appointments; the candidates appointed were highly qualified in their discipline.

25/05 Appointment of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience

The Committee noted that Professor Elizabeth McCrum had been appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience for a second and final term to 31 July 2031.

25/06 Membership of the Council in Class 2

At the outset of the discussion Helen Gordon and Kevin Corrigan declared an interest. Given that the discussion was around process the Chair agreed that they did not need to recuse themselves.

The Committee received and noted membership of the Council in Class 2. It was noted that a number of renewals would need to be made before 31 July 2025, including:

President

It was noted that Helen Gordon's current period of office as President would end on 31 July 2025, after which she would have served eight years on Council, as member and then President. The President could serve a maximum period on Council (as member as well as President) of twelve years.

The status of President was different from other members of Council. It was recommended accordingly that the Chair of Appointments Committee ask members of Council for their assessment of the President against key aspects of the role description and, on the back of that assessment, their view on whether she should be extended for a further period of four years; whether, instead, they had an alternative suggestion about the Presidency; and to provide feedback on the President's performance in particular against the job description.

Vice-Presidents

The Council had two Vice-Presidents. There was no stipulation about how many Vice-Presidents the Council could have. Vice-Presidents could serve twelve years on Council (as member as well as Vice-Presidents).

It was noted that Kate Owen reached the maximum term of her appointment on Council on 31 July 2027. Kevin Corrigan reached the end of his current term on 31 July 2025. He could be appointed for a further and final period of up to three years. It was recommended that the President and the Chair of the Appointments Committee assess

Kevin Corrigan's past and expected future contribution and make a recommendation about continuation to the Appointments Committee, including a set of objectives.

Should the Appointments Committee and the Council agree to the maximum extensions for Helen Gordon and Kevin Corrigan, the departure dates from Council of the President and Vice-Presidents would be:

Kate Owen	31 July 2027
Kevin Corrigan	31 July 2028
Helen Gordon	31 July 2029

The Committee noted an argument, for reasons of continuity and hand-over, of appointing a third Vice-President, concurrent with the existing two, starting on 1 August 2026. Appointments Committee was asked to discuss whether it was in favour of appointing a third member, from within the existing group of lay members, to the role of Vice-President. Whilst no decision was required now, it would be useful to provide Council with the Committee's thinking.

Other lay members

Seven other lay members reached the end of their current term on 31 July 2025.

- Sue Maple, Peter Milhofer and Chris Shaw would have completed their second term, and could be extended for a further and, unless appointed to a Vice-President role, final term of three years.
- Shamshad Ali, Steve Alexander, Angus McCallum and Janet Young would have completed their first term and could be extended for a second term for a further three years.

It was recommended that the President and Vice-Presidents, in their annual appraisal of lay members, check that they wish to continue; and, if so, consider the past and expected future contribution of each of these seven lay members and make recommendations to the Appointments Committee as to their continuation.

It was noted that, should all maximum extensions be approved, and should all lay members serve out their maximum term, that there was a clustering of departures (Corrigan, Maple, Milhofer and Shaw) in July 2028.

Appointment to the Senate

The Committee noted that following the departure of Penny Egan there was now a vacancy on the Senate for a lay member of the Council.

The following comments were made on the proposal:

- There needed to be rigour in the process for assessing performance of Lay Members
- It would be helpful to have a job description for the Vice-President role and Lay Members of Council role – that way it would be possible to review how individuals were fulfilling their roles and responsibilities

- It was agreed that the appraisal process should be sharpened. The President and Vice-Presidents would discuss this further outside of the meeting
Action: President and Vice-Presidents
- There was broad support for appointing a third Vice-President of Council. It was suggested that this could via an expressions of interest process – any other suggestions on process should be passed to the President
- In regard to the Senate it was noted that Sally Plank was working on a role description for the Lay Member of Council on the Senate. It was suggested that [Redacted, Section 40] be approached as a second member to replace Penny Egan

The Committee agreed that it was content with the approaches proposed.

25/07 Appointment of the Chief Financial Officer

The Committee noted that Andrew Grice was retiring from his role as Director of Finance in April 2025. At its last meeting (Minute 24/25), the Committee had discussed the nature of the replacement post and had agreed by circulation the need to appoint a Chief Financial Officer. The Committee approved the interview panel as follows:

President of Council (Chair)

Vice-President (Kevin Corrigan)

Vice-Chancellor

Pro-Vice-Chancellor Academic Planning and Resource (Professor Dominik Zaum)

Chief Strategy Officer & University Secretary

An external (a Chief Financial Officer or equivalent at a comparable University)

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Committee that he had held a Teams Live event with interested applicants (19 had attended). To date 22 applications had been received. The deadline for applications was 5 February 2025; the Director of HR would produce a long-list to focus discussion ahead of short-listing.

25/08 Advance HE report on the Diversity of Governors in HE

The Committee received and noted the Advance HE Report on the Diversity of Governors in HE. It was noted in terms of Council data in 2024 the figures were: women – 44.4%, Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic – 14.8%, declared disability – 7.4%.

The Committee noted that whilst the University's statistics were broadly in line with the Advance HE Report it was important to keep a continual eye on the processes around recruitment of Lay Members and the composition of the Council. In considering what good looked like it was suggested that consideration should be given to the % of the UK population in regard to protected characteristics such as BAME. The Committee discussed whether other protected characteristics should be considered.

It was agreed that the Committee should continue to be attentive to the composition of the Council and that its composition should broadly be reflective of the UK population.

25/09 Any other business – retirement of the Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary

As noted, Dr Richard Messer would retire with effect from 30 November 2025. The Committee asked for his thoughts on the role. In particular it was noted that:

- There were two external reports that were useful: from the CUC (role of University Secretary) and AHUA (role of COO/Registrar)
- Across the sector the role was quite diffuse but the most common models were COO & Registrar/COO & University Secretary, who looked after both operations and governance
- It was hard to look after Council if the individual did not have a broader role managing a range of services
- Any University Secretary needed to be privy to activity in the business and needed to have the authority to challenge UEB
- Across the sector the COO role looked after a range of professional services, but Finance remained separate
- The role should report jointly to the Vice-Chancellor and President of the Council
- Technical skills were secondary; what was more important was knowledge and soft skills. A company secretarial qualification was unimportant

Members of the Committee were asked to forward any comments on the role to the Vice-Chancellor and the President. The Vice-Chancellor noted that it was important to consider recruitment to this role alongside the CFO recruitment. The Vice-Chancellor would take some time to think further on the role.

25/10 Date of next meeting

Meetings of the Appointments Committee in 2024-25 have been scheduled for:

Tuesday 3 June 2025 9.00 – 9.30 am