

Role of members of Council

Council members need to be satisfied that processes and procedures are in place which are sufficient and effective in running the business of the University. They do this by asking questions and ensuring responses are sound and consistent, rather than by doing direct checking themselves. It follows that Council members “should question intelligently, debate constructively, challenge rigorously and decide dispassionately, and they should listen sensitively to the views of others, inside and outside meetings” of Council (CUC Guide for Members of HE Governing Bodies in the UK, 2004). They are expected to make their knowledge and expertise available to Council as opportunity arises.

Members are required to accept collective responsibility for the decisions reached by Council. Members elected, nominated or appointed by particular constituencies may not act as if delegated by the group they represent, and may not be bound in any way by mandates given to them by others. They must also declare any conflicts of interest.

Members have a responsibility for ensuring that Council conducts itself in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life, embracing selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership (“The Nolan Principles”).

Members must make a full and timely disclosure to the Chief Administrative Officer and Secretary of any personal interests which may lead to conflicts of interest, and enter these in the Register of Interests. They must, as soon as practicable, disclose any interest which they have in any matter under discussion and accept the ruling of the Chair in relation to the management of that situation, in order that the integrity of the business of the Council and its committees may be and may be seen to be maintained.

Members will be expected to serve on at least one committee of Council and are expected to play a full part in the business of all committees to which they are appointed.

Members of Council have an ambassadorial and networking role on behalf of the University. They may be asked to represent Council and the University externally, and may be asked to use personal influence and networking skills on behalf of the University. They will be fully briefed by the University to enable them to carry out these roles effectively.

Members of Council will have a strong personal commitment to Higher Education and to the values, aims and objectives of Lancaster University. They should possess expertise in areas of relevance to the University’s activities, and will enrich the development of the university by contributing to Council their skills and life experiences.

Members are expected to attend all meetings of Council and of the committees of which they are a member, or give timely apologies if their absence is unavoidable.

The University will prepare members of Council for that role, and will arrange induction activities which new members will be expected to attend. Further, optional, training and development opportunities will also be provided. Members must participate in the regular review of the effectiveness of Council and of the performance of individual members.

The likely overall time commitment required of members amounts to approximately 10 days per annum (although time commitment will be greater for members who chair committees), spread over a greater number of days, taking preparation time into account. This is structured around the regular cycle of Council meetings (six per annum) and associated committees. Members are encouraged to attend events at the University according to their personal interests.

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