

REVIEW OF COURT EFFECTIVENESS

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Summary and Judgement

This Report is the outcome of an externally facilitated Effectiveness Review conducted by a University Court appointed Review Working Group.

The review was conducted over the period February to October 2015 by a team of 5 Court appointed reviewers (listed in paragraph 4 below). The methodology and approach adopted by the Review Working Group was facilitated by an external adviser and supported by the University Secretary and former Governance Adviser.

Having reviewed all the evidence available to it, the overarching judgement of the Review Working Group is that the University Court has **Effective** arrangements in place to ensure that it meets its key obligations as set out in the University Court Statement of Primary Responsibilities. Examples of best practice in governance are in place, and a small number of areas for potential development and enhancement has been identified and form the basis of recommendations set out in Section 5 of this report.

2 Format of Report and Recommendations

This report consists of two parts. The first part is an overview of the overarching conclusions and recommendations of the Review Working Group. These conclusions and recommendations draw heavily on the second part of the report, which is the independent assessment and report produced for the Working Group by the External Adviser, John Lauwerys. That report is appended to this document. Given the unanimity with which the Review Working Group accepted almost all the conclusions and recommendations set out in that report, the Lauwerys report has been reproduced in full as part of the review outcome.

3 Background and Review Approach

As part of a process of enhancing the effectiveness of its governance, and in fulfilment of the requirements

*and that of its committees, and ensure that a parallel review is undertaken of the senate/academic board and its committees. Effectiveness shall be assessed both against the Statement of Primary Responsibilities and compliance with this Code. The governing body shall, where necessary, revise its structure or processes, and shall require the senate/academic board of its Institution to revise its structure and processes, accordingly.'*¹

The University Court had already commissioned the University's Internal Auditors, KPMG, to undertake an audit of its compliance with the Scottish Code shortly after the Code came into effect and Universities were required to implement its main principles on a 'comply or explain' basis. The KPMG audit report, published in December 2014, confirmed the University Court's compliance with the Scottish Code, and made only minor recommendations concerning some areas of best practice implementation of the Code. A copy of that report can be found at:

[http://www.qmu.ac.uk/court/docs/QMU%20HE%20Governance%20FINAL%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.qmu.ac.uk/court/docs/QMU%20HE%20Governance%20FINAL%20(2).pdf)

In February 2015, the University Court set aside a half-day session during its annual Away Days in order to determine how it might move assessment of its governance arrangements away from a narrow focus on compliance and towards benchmarking effectiveness

4 Review Outcome and Recommendations

Having reviewed all the evidence available to it, the overarching judgement of the Review Working Group is that the University Court has **Effective**

5.3 *The number of Key Performance Indicators presented on a quarterly basis to Court should be reduced to ten or a dozen high level KPIs. The performance targets should be agreed by Court annually and not amended during the following year. [Paragraph 3.3]*

The University Court has discussed proposals to reduce the number of KPIs presented to it on a number of occasions, with members expressing varying views on the matter. It is suggested the University Court accepts the principle cept

5.8 *The Court should amend the terms of office for Court members and its Officers when the Governing Instrument is next amended to reflect the greater flexibility of the Scottish Code. [Paragraph 4.4]*

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