

## GENERIC ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR UNIVERSITY SENATE MEMBERS

Following a detailed review in 2021/22 of its effectiveness, the overarching purpose of the University Senate has been refreshed and clarified as the body which holds ultimate oversight of University academic policy and regulatory matters. Through this key role it provides assurance to the University Council (the University's governing body) that academic governance is robust and effective for teaching and learning, the student experience, student life, research and knowledge exchange. Senate members bring to its deliberations and decisions a wide range of academic knowledge and expertise.

Spanning the diversity of members across the different [membership](#) categories, Senate members' main responsibilities are:

- to consider issues based on first-hand knowledge and experience of academic practice, balanced with exercising their responsibilities to deliberate and take decisions in the interests of the University as a whole rather than as representatives of any specific group;
- to advise the Vice-Chancellor and University Council on the academic implications of teaching, learning and students, research, knowledge exchange and partnership activities;
- to advise the Vice-Chancellor on academic aspects of the University Vision and Strategy;
- to provide assurance to the University Council and other stakeholders that agreed academic standards are being achieved, maintained and enhanced and that the interests of all students are being protected;
- to view issues and assess risks from all sides in a balanced manner in order to achieve an objective appraisal of a problem and propose a rational solution to it;
- to prepare for meetings by review of circulated agenda papers followed by attendance at meetings to consider issues based on first-hand knowledge and experience of academic practice.

In broad terms, the personal qualities and behaviours required of Senate members are:

- a commitment to the University and specifically to maintaining high academic quality and standards;
- a commitment to developing a clear understanding of Senate's remit and of the scope of its powers and authority;
- good understanding of the University's academic strategic direction and internal processes/practices for teaching and/or research, and championing of it;
- the capacity to debate academic issues with objectivity, openness, transparency and mutual respect (and confidentiality when required);
- adherence to the Seven Principles of Public Life (the 'Nolan principles'): Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership;
- willingness to accept consensus decisions made in the broader interest of the University;
- respect for the difference between governance and management, and the spirit of empowering Senate sub-committees and those who sit on them;
- improving the commitment and enthusiasm of other Senate members by encouraging them to contribute their ideas and participate in debate;

- engaging in debate and opposing different perspectives of Senate members and those attending meetings in a respectful manner.

### **Time Commitment and Initial and Ongoing Development**

Senate meets on a formal basis four times each academic year for approximately three hours per meeting. In addition to this, Senate members are expected to prepare for meetings by reading the circulated agenda papers.

Senate members are offered an induction slot each year with the Vice-Chancellor and President and University Secretary. Should they be unable to attend, we are happy to offer alternative sessions. A short induction pack for Senate members is also under development, to aid members in locating Senate's role in its wider context, and mentorship opportunities will be offered for those Senate members who would benefit from it.

*[Approved by Senate, 18 October 2022]*

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