UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR A LAY MEMBER OF COUNCIL

Term of office: Three years. Appointments may be renewed for further terms of three years, but the maximum length of service is nine consecutive years.

Time commitment: Estimated to total the equivalent of 5-10 full days per year, spread over a greater number of separate visits to the University, including involvement on Council committees. The role will mostly involve daytime commitments, although there may be occasional evening engagements.

Remuneration: Appointments to Council are in the nature of public service appointments and no remuneration is made.

Method of appointment: On the recommendation of the Nominations Committee.

Main duties

Members of Council are expected, in a non-executive capacity, to:

a. ensure that Council exercises control over the strategic direction of the University, and that the performance of the University against its strategic objectives is properly assessed on a regular basis
b. ensure that the University maintains its long-term financial viability, safeguards its assets and operates proper mechanisms to ensure effective internal control, risk management and value for money
c. contribute to debate, and make their knowledge and expertise available to Council as needs and opportunities arise
d. act fairly and impartially at all times, in the interests of the University as a whole, using independent judgement and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate
e. observe the seven “Nolan Principles” of behaviour in public life, embracing selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
f. accept collective responsibility for the decisions reached by Council.

Key responsibilities

Members of Council are expected to:

a. attend meetings of Council and participate in discussions, acting as a “critical friend”, contributing to the development, implementation and monitoring of University strategy
b. question intelligently, debate constructively, challenge rigorously and decide dispassionately, listening respectfully to the views of others, inside and outside meetings of the Council
c. serve as a member of at least one Council or Senate Committee
d. attend some of the formal or informal events of the University, including degree ceremonies, as may be organised from time to time
e. act as an ambassador for the University, promoting its activities in the wider community including, for example, assisting with philanthropic activity and fund raising projects
f. attend any induction and training as may be required by the University to carry out effectively the role of a member of Council

g. contribute to regular reviews of the effectiveness of Council, both collectively and individually

h. submit an annual *Registration of Personal and Pecuniary Interests* return, and to ensure that the University is notified promptly of any material changes to these details as may arise during the year.

**Governance and Management**

It is reasonable and appropriate for lay members of Council to endeavour to establish constructive and supportive working relationships with University staff and students with whom they come into contact. These relationships must at all times remain both independent and challenging, and must always observe the proper separation between governance and management. In particular, lay members of Council must not seek, or allow themselves to develop, an involvement in the day-to-day executive management of the University. Notwithstanding this clear separation lay members of Council are still eligible to chair, or to serve as a member of, a committee of Council.

**The practicalities of Council membership**

Five ordinary meetings of the Council (normally starting at 4.00pm on dates in September, November, March, May and July), together with an annual away-day, are usually held in each academic year. Attendance is monitored by the Nominations Committee and members are expected to attend a minimum of three Ordinary meetings per year. Membership of other University committees is a matter for discussion between individuals and the Nominations Committee, but members of Council are usually expected to serve on at least one such committee. Most committees meet once or twice per term.

The University year runs from August to July and dates of meetings are determined and notified to Council during the preceding session, to give as much notice as possible. The University recognises that members will have other personal or professional commitments which may mean that, occasionally, they will have to tender their apologies for absence from meetings. The University reviews attendance on a regular basis and any problems identified will be a matter for discussion between the Chair of Council and the individual member concerned. If problems of attendance cannot be resolved it may be necessary for the member to stand down from Council.

**Payment of expenses**

Lay members of Council are eligible to claim reimbursement of travelling expenses for attendance at meetings of Council and any University committee or other body to which they have been appointed, with the exception of Court.

In addition to the above, travelling expenses will also be reimbursed in respect of any necessary duties arising from membership of Council or other University bodies. This would include, for example, fact-finding visits to another institution, conference attendance, and participation in induction and development events.

All claims will be dealt with on the same terms and conditions as apply to University staff.

*Please note that this role description is intended to provide an indicative description of the duties involved in membership of Council. It is not designed to be a full description of the responsibilities of Council or of individual members of Council.*

Governance Office
University of Leicester
April 2017