

Member of Court

Role description

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Table of Contents

[Member of Court 2](#_Toc160703197)

[Role Description 2](#_Toc160703198)

[Additional Information 4](#_Toc160703199)

[Our Governance 4](#_Toc160703200)

[Our charitable objects 4](#_Toc160703201)

[Our mission 4](#_Toc160703202)

[Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion 4](#_Toc160703203)

[Ways to get involved 5](#_Toc160703204)

[Who are our members? 5](#_Toc160703205)

[Codes of practice 5](#_Toc160703206)

### Member of Court

#### Role Description

Court members are valued members of the University community, who contribute to the advancement of the University’s mission and charitable objectives in advancing knowledge and understanding in society, through value-added engagement with the University’s activities, staff and students.

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| Term of Office | Persons appointed by the Council shall hold office for such periods as may be determined by the Council, *normally three years*.  Former members may be reappointed. |
| Time commitment | A minimum of three interactions a year, equivalent to two days |
| Remuneration | The role is unremunerated and is a voluntary role |
| Appointment | Council on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee. |

* 1. **Nature and scope of the role**
  2. We are keen that members share an interest in the University’s work and life and take an active and enthusiastic interest in this.
  3. The majority of the Court’s appointed members are drawn from outside the University. The external members contribute a wide range of experience from the public and private sectors. Internal members help relate the University’s mission of excellence in education and excellence in research, and the delivery of other contemporary strategic priorities, commitment and the experience of working in the University.
  4. We ask members to promote the University within their locality and through their networks, and comment on its affairs. Representing the University externally as an ambassador and friend, drawing on their personal influence and networking skills on behalf of the University, and where appropriate playing a role in liaising between key stakeholders and the University.

1. **Personal Qualities sought in potential members of Court**
   1. A commitment to attend meetings of Court, where possible, and engage in opportunities identified through our stakeholder engagement plan.
   2. Members should be willing to use their skills and expertise to support the work of the University, in whatever way is suitable, depending on the opportunity.
   3. We are also keen that members are happy to support the University’s commitment to sustaining an inclusive and diverse community that is open to all who have the potential to benefit from membership of it, which ensures equality of opportunity for all its members, and that treats all its members with equal respect and dignity at all times.
   4. We ask Court members, as University ambassadors, to behave appropriately in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life.
2. **Practical aspects of the role**
   1. We ask Court members to participate in at least three events per academic year. This could be an invited lecture, supporting students, or attendance at one of our open days or a cultural event. All members will be invited to the annual meeting and there will be opportunities to attend [University activities and events](https://www.essex.ac.uk/events) on at least two further occasions. Where possible, attendance in person is preferred at the annual meeting, and dependant on location, may be by means of video or teleconference.
   2. University office holders aim to develop good relationships with appointed members of Court in relation to areas where members have particular expertise, and a willingness to support the office holder in this way, and so contribute to University life, is valued.
   3. The likely time commitment needed is a minimum of three interactions a year, equivalent to two days.
   4. Members are asked to be contactable by email, which is our preferred method of correspondence. Court members’ personal data will be held in accordance with our Privacy Notice.
   5. Members are asked to complete an equality and diversity form and a skills and expertise questionnaire, and to review this periodically and at each period of appointment.
   6. Any member of the Court may resign by writing to the Registrar and Secretary.
   7. This role description will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains appropriate for the contemporary and medium-term operating environment.

## Additional Information

### Our Governance

Whether external or internal, all members of Court have equal standing and are drawn widely from the community, having regard to provisions of the membership of Court in the University's Charter and Ordinances, and the need for continuity, balance and a range of appropriate experience, skills and interests.

The University Charter states in 2(a) that *“‘Court’ means a meeting of persons who have been appointed by the Council and have an interest in, or relationship to, the University.”* This is embodied in paragraph 10 *“There shall be a Court of the University comprising persons who have been appointed by the Council and which shall have the composition and functions prescribed in the Ordinances.”*

#### Our charitable objects

The University of Essex is an exempt charity subject to the provisions of the Charities Act 2006. It was established by Royal Charter. Our Royal Charter states that “the objects of the University shall be to advance education, scholarship, knowledge and understanding”.

#### Our mission

The University’s mission, as outlined in our Strategy is excellence in education and research, for the benefit of individuals and communities.

#### Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

Our community is diverse in many ways. We have students from over 140 countries, and we see ourselves as being “the world in one place”. More than 1,000 of our staff and students identify as LGBTQ+; more than 1,300 have declared a disability; and many members of our community follow a religion or belief.

We recognise the value that diversity brings and so we want to recruit, develop, retain and motivate an increasingly diverse Court membership. We also want to attract people who will be good citizens, who will contribute to the life of the University and whose behaviour will have a positive impact on those around them. Our [Strategy](https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance-and-strategy/university-strategy/people) sets out how we will do this through the delivery of a fair and supportive working environment for all. The University supports all Members of Court who may wish to take a period of leave for family or caring responsibilities.

### Ways to get involved

Court members will have opportunities to attend [University activities and events](https://www.essex.ac.uk/events) throughout the academic year. We encourage our Court members to become involved with activities such as student mentoring, offering our students work placements, and responding to requests such as our annual call for nominations for awards of Honorary Degrees at our Graduation Ceremonies.

### Who are our members?

Ordinance 20 sets out the membership of Court. Court is made up of Ex Officio members, who are both internal and external to the University and Appointed members, who are usually external members of the University community, appointed by the Council on the recommendation of Nominations Committee.

#### Codes of practice

We are a university that values academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law. We see these as vital components of being an inclusive community. Academic Freedom is an essential part of academic and University life and flourishes where there is tolerance of a wide range of views and beliefs which are lawfully expressed.

Promoting the lawful expression of diverse views on our campuses and through events that we hold, including the lawful expression of views that some may find objectionable or offensive is an important part of our responsibility to be inclusive, and a duty we hold under the law. It enables all members of the University to feel able to express their views and beliefs within the law and encouraged to be active members of our University community.

The University is also committed to tackling any and all forms of discrimination within its community, and to treating individuals fairly, with dignity and respect. It expects all members of Court to act with integrity, honesty and fairness and to be respectful of each other's views, listening, assessing and evaluating them without prejudice.

Concerns or complaints made against a member of Court would be managed in accordance with the University’s Complaints Procedure(s).