

# External Members (2 vacancies)

UNIVERSITY COURT AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Closing date: 26 August 2022  
Interview date: 28/29 September 2022  
Reference number: GOV001A



## INTRODUCTION

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We are seeking two new external members for our Audit & Risk Management Committee, a major standing committee of our governing body, the University Court.

The committee is responsible for:

- Assessing and advising University Court on the effectiveness of the institution's risk management, control and governance arrangements, and the internal controls and procedures to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- Oversight of external and internal audit arrangements, including advising University Court on the appointment of the audit providers, and oversight of the nature and scope of external and internal audits and the effectiveness of the audit processes;
- Oversight of audit aspects of the University's Annual Report and Accounts, advising University Court on whether, taken as a whole, it is fair, balanced and understandable and provides the information necessary for stakeholders to assess the university's performance, strategy and sustainability;
- Advising University Court on the adequacy of the approach to risk management (including academic risk) and maintaining oversight of the strategic risks facing the University;
- Ensuring compliance with the mandatory requirements of the Scottish Funding Council's Memorandum.

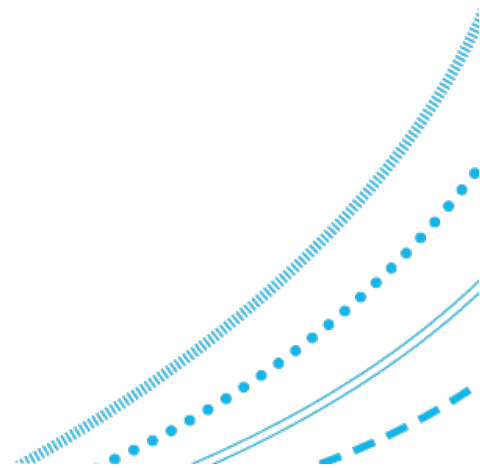
## JOB DESCRIPTION

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We are seeking individuals with the passion to support us in this work, including monitoring the University's risk management framework, providing oversight of our risk management activity, monitoring financial reporting processes and compliance processes, and the performance of auditors (external and internal), as well as overseeing the audit programme.

You will be committed to working constructively, in a non-Executive capacity, with the University's Chair of Audit & Risk Committee, the University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer, and the Chief Financial Officer in reviewing the effectiveness of the financial and other internal control systems of the University.

The University of Aberdeen is committed to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive culture. The University wishes to encourage applications from candidates with a high level of personal skills and competence to help provide assurance that we are meeting our potential and managing our exposure to risk in a way that delivers economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The role offers new challenges, continued professional development and the opportunity to make a difference.





## PERSON SPECIFICATION

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### ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

- Experience of acting as a Non-Executive or Trustee, in a private, public or voluntary sector Board.
- An ability to provide critical scrutiny of strategy, financial and other plans, risk, assurance and performance oversight by:
  - a. using professional knowledge and experience;
  - b. analysing complex data and information;
  - c. reaching informed judgement;
  - d. using effective communication and interpersonal skills.

### DESIRABLE REQUIREMENTS

- A track record of significant personal achievements and experience in large and complex organisations.
- An understanding of the context for UK/Scottish higher education and research, as well as the wider European and international context for world leading universities.

## TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

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As a member of our Audit & Risk Committee you will be expected to attend five meetings of the Committee per year, with associated preparation time for the reading of committee documentation.

Meetings are normally held during standard working hours, virtually, but with at least one face to face meeting or hybrid meeting each year.

The term of office is for a period of three years from 1 November 2022. The post is non-remunerated.



## UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

*open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others*

The University of Aberdeen is a broad based, research intensive University, and we put students at the centre of everything we do. Outstanding in a wide range of discipline areas, Aberdeen is credited for its international reach and commercialisation of research ideas into spin out companies. The University has over 16,000 matriculated students and 3,600 staff representing 130 nationalities. We encourage bold thinking, creativity and innovation, and we nurture ambition with many opportunities for professional and personal development in an inclusive learning environment which challenges and inspires.



## CURRENT CONTEXT

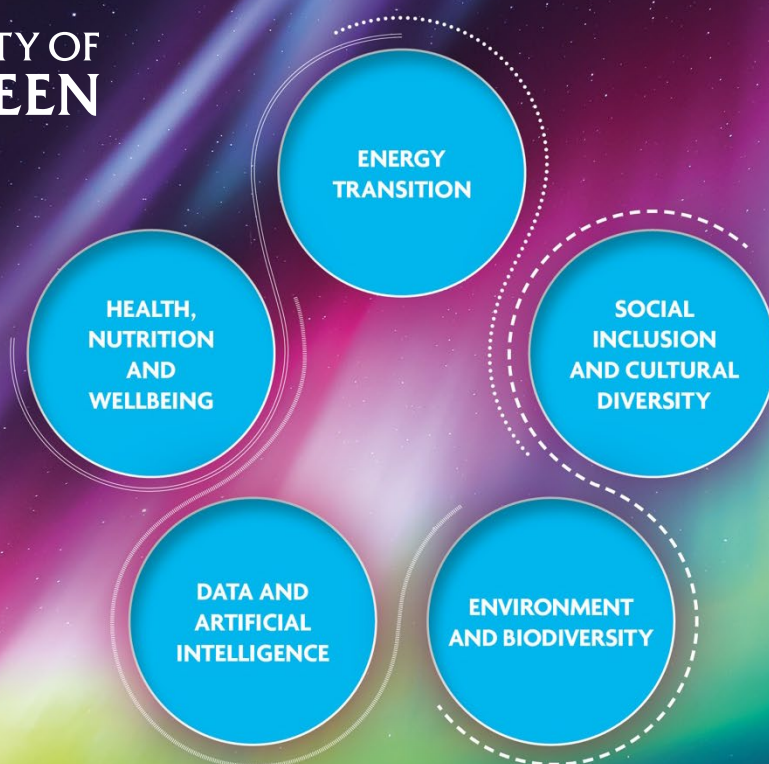
The University continues to build on its achievements. Underpinning our high performance and significant growth is a £100m investment in Aberdeen's estate which will include the completion of a new Science Teaching Hub, the regeneration of the historic King's Quarter and a new Business School building. The University has also invested in 50 new academic posts and in 2020 launched five interdisciplinary, cross-institution Research Centres that will catalyse world-leading research in our areas of strength. Our five Interdisciplinary Challenges are: Energy Transition; Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity; Environment and Biodiversity; Data and Artificial Intelligence; and Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing.

## ABERDEEN 2040

On our 525th anniversary as a University we launched [Aberdeen 2040](#), our strategic vision for the next 20 years. Four strategic themes will shape our learning and discovery, underlined by 20 commitments we have made against each theme:

- Inclusive**  
 We welcome students, staff and partners from all backgrounds, organisations and communities. We value diversity.
- Interdisciplinary**  
 We innovate in education and research by generating, sharing and applying new kinds of knowledge. We learn together.
- International**  
 We connect with others and extend our networks and partnerships around the world. We think across borders.
- Sustainable**  
 We understand and nurture our environment, and take care of our resources, including our people and finances. We work responsibly.





## OUR EDUCATION

Recognised as the Scottish University of the Year in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019, we remain true to our roots as an ancient Scottish university, combining breadth and depth in our degree programmes and drawing strength from the quality of our research. Our flexible curriculum encourages students to grow as independent learners and therefore to thrive as graduates in the diverse workplaces of the future. Our education is open to all and we are setting ambitious targets to further widen access.

## OUR RESEARCH

Researchers at the University of Aberdeen have been at the forefront of innovation and excellence throughout the centuries, generating insights in medicine, science, engineering, law, social sciences, arts and humanities. This research has contributed to five Nobel prizes as well as other awards such as the Queen's Anniversary prize. Our research is intellectually rigorous working within our established areas of excellence as well as new methods of enquiry. We will continue to generate new knowledge addressing economic and societal issues with ambition and imagination, ensuring that it is globally excellent and locally relevant.

## INTERNATIONAL

Aberdeen is increasing its international presence, positioning the University as a global organisation and building on established global partnerships in e.g. Qatar, China, North America, Europe. We feature in the top 50 institutions worldwide for international students<sup>1</sup> and have been named 31<sup>st</sup> in the world for International Outlook<sup>2</sup>. The University of Aberdeen is proud to be the first UK University to deliver programmes on a dedicated campus in Qatar in partnership with AFG College. Phase 1 has successfully recruited over 600 students and Phase 2 will see the creation of a substantially larger campus, with capacity for at least 5,000 students and research activity. For further information on our Qatar campus visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/qatar](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/qatar).

## IMPACT

Our dedication to building a sustainable future is reflected in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2021 where we were ranked in the top 60 Universities worldwide for positive impact on society.

In 2020 the University signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals accord, solidifying our commitment to developing the world in a sustainable way. In 2021 we were listed in the global Top 50 for 6 of these goals and in the UK Top 20 for all 17<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> QS World University Rankings 2022

<sup>2</sup> Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2022

<sup>3</sup> Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2021



## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

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The University of Aberdeen is a registered charity and a legally independent and autonomous institution. The governance framework of the University flows from various Acts of Parliament, statutes, ordinances and resolutions from which the University derives the power and authority to carry out its activities.

### COURT AND SENATE

The University Court is the University's governing body and has ultimate responsibility for the affairs of the University. It sets the mission, strategic direction and values of the University and monitors and challenges the execution of the strategy by the Principal and Senior Management Team.

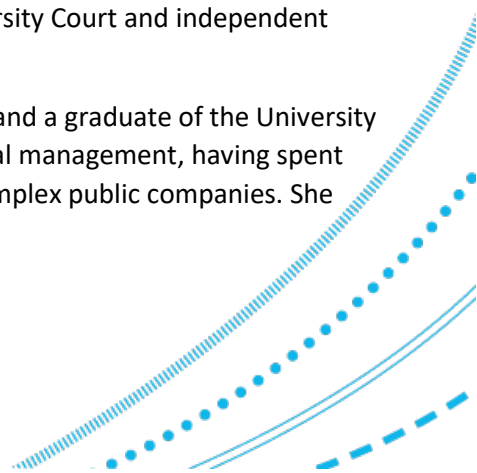
The Senate has governance responsibility for all academic matters, subject to the powers of University Court, who must secure appropriate assurance on academic governance and quality from Senate.

The work of University Court and Senate is supported through various key committees, which focus on particular areas of University activity. University Court has established a number of standing committees, which include Audit & Risk Committee, Finance & Resources Committee, Commercialisation Committee, Governance & Nominations Committee and Remuneration Committee.

### AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

The Audit & Risk Committee's role is to advise and assist Council in respect of the University's assurance and control environment. Audit & Risk Committee includes both independent members of University Court and independent external members who are not members of University Court.

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee is Eleanor Bentley, a Chartered Accountant and a graduate of the University of Aberdeen. She has extensive experience of corporate governance, risk and financial management, having spent the majority of her executive career in senior finance roles with international and complex public companies. She was appointed as Chair of the Committee in 2021.



## SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Court delegates responsibility for delivering the University's Strategic Plan, as well as the overall management of operations, to the Principal and Senior Management Team (SMT), via its governance and committee framework. The University's Senior Management Team is led by the Principal & Vice Chancellor – Professor George Boyne – who is the chief academic and executive officer of the University. The Principal is supported directly by the Senior Vice Principal and the University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer.

## ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

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The University's academic structure comprises 12 Schools, each of which is overseen by the Senior Vice-Principal and operates within a framework of devolved budgetary and planning responsibility:

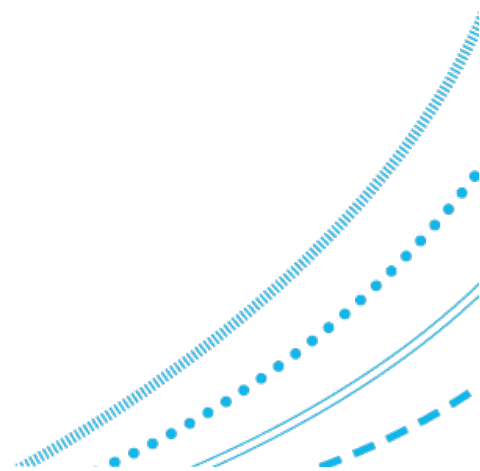
- Biological Sciences
- Business School
- Divinity, History, Philosophy and Art History
- Education
- Engineering
- Geosciences
- Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture
- Law
- Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition
- Natural and Computing Sciences
- Psychology
- Social Science

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STRUCTURE

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Professional Services activities are delivered through 9 Directorates. Each Directorate reports to the University Secretary & Chief Operating Officer:

- Academic Services and Online Education
- Development Trust
- Digital and Information Services
- Estates and Facilities
- External Relations
- Finance
- People
- Planning
- Research and Innovation





## ABERDEEN AND ABERDEENSHIRE

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Scotland's third largest city, Aberdeen sits on the coast between the mountains of Aberdeenshire and the stunning North Sea coastline. The Aberdeen City region is a can-do place that is actively investing, at scale, in its future.

Renowned as a Global Energy Hub, Aberdeen is a vibrant, entrepreneurial region, home to a unique mix of business opportunities and specialist skills across various sectors including energy, technology, life sciences and food & drink. More than 20% of Scotland's top businesses are located in this region which is taking great strides to ensure that it continues to compete on a world stage. Investments of more than £10 billion of public and private infrastructure is due to be delivered before 2030, marking an exciting time to be part of a genuine world-class location.

Built from sparkling local granite Aberdeen has earned the name of the Silver City. As the energy capital of Europe, Aberdeen nevertheless retains its old-fashioned charm and character making it an attractive place in which to live, work and study. Due to its global business and international energy industry credentials, Aberdeen is well served by local and national transport infrastructure with excellent rail networks that run both North and South of Scotland and the rest of the UK. It also acts as an international travel hub. Flying time to London is just over one hour with regular daily flights and serves international travel to European centres such as Amsterdam (Schiphol) and Paris (Charles de-Gaulle) as well as flights to other European destinations.

The City and the surrounding countryside provide a variety of urban, seaside and country attractions. Aberdeen has first class amenities including [His Majesty's Theatre](#), [Music Hall](#), [Art Gallery](#), [the P&J Arena](#), [Museums](#), and [Beach Leisure Centre](#). The City is framed by its accessible beach front which is within a short walk of the city centre and there are an array of activities available across the region such as hill walking; mountaineering; sailing; surfing; salmon, trout and sea fishing; golf; sailing; surfing and windsurfing. The surrounding countryside, known as Aberdeenshire, is also one of Scotland's most appealing regions. Royal Deeside and the Cairngorms National Park are within easy access of the city, and there are a variety of towns and villages scattered along the coastline.

Aberdeen has ranked consistently highly in nationally recognised quality of life surveys, and was recently named the happiest city in the UK to live and work in<sup>4</sup>.

To find out more visit [www.visitabdn.com](http://www.visitabdn.com)

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<sup>4</sup> Shawbrook Bank Happiest Cities Index 2021





## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

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The University values a diverse working environment and recognises the benefits this can bring. The University is keen to receive applications from individuals from across all of the equality protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).

The University supports opportunities for flexible working for a range of reasons and has policies in place to facilitate this. The policies can be found at <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/flexible-working--5607.php>.

The University's commitment to gender equality has been recognised through the achievement of an Athena SWAN Bronze award at an institutional level and across all its subject areas. The University is also a Stonewall Diversity Champion to further LGBT+ equality.

The University is signed up to Advance HE's Race Equality Charter, affirming the University's commitment to the charter's aim of improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education.

Candidates who are British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us directly by using [contact SCOTLAND-BSL](#).

The University is delighted to be accredited as a [Disability Confident](#) employer and strives to ensure that disabled staff and students have the opportunity to work and study in an inclusive, accessible and supportive environment.

[www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/equality-and-diversity-277](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/equality-and-diversity-277)

## HOW TO APPLY

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Candidates should apply with a CV and covering letter outlining their suitability for the role. All applications should be submitted via email to the University's recruitment team at: [hrrecruitment@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:hrrecruitment@abdn.ac.uk)

The closing date for receipt of applications is **26 August 2022**

Should you wish to make an informal enquiry please contact:

Jan Whitfield, Governance Officer and Clerk to the Audit & Risk Committee

01224 272140

[janine.whitfield@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:janine.whitfield@abdn.ac.uk)

Please do **not** send CVs and covering letters to Mrs Whitfield.

Please quote reference number **GOV001A** on all correspondence

