

COUNCIL

Statement of the Council's Primary Responsibilities

This Statement is based on the Model Statement contained in the Committee of University Chairs Higher Education Code of Governance, adapted to reflect the powers and responsibilities that the University of Durham's Council derives from the University Statutes.

The Council is the governing and executive body of the University. Subject to the powers of the Senate as indicated in the University Statutes, it has ultimate responsibility for all the affairs of the University. It is responsible for reviewing the work of the University and taking such steps as it thinks proper for the purpose of advancing the interests of the University, maintaining its efficiency, and encouraging the prosecution of learning and research in the University.

Consistent with the University's constitution, Council's primary responsibilities are as follows:

1. To set and agree the mission, strategic vision and values of the University.
2. To agree long term academic and business plans and key performance indicators and ensure that these meet the interests of stakeholders, especially staff, students and alumni.
3. Subject to the powers of the Senate, to be responsible for the organisation of teaching and research, including the organisation of Faculties, Boards of Studies and other groupings, the appointments of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Heads of Departments (Chairs of Boards of Studies), and the prescription of the dates when the Michaelmas, Epiphany and Easter Terms begin and end.
4. To appoint the Vice-Chancellor as Chief Executive of the University and Accountable Officer, and to put in place suitable arrangements for monitoring his/her performance. The Council is responsible for the removal of the Vice-Chancellor for good cause.
5. To delegate authority to the Vice-Chancellor, as Chief Executive, for the effective academic, corporate, financial, estate and human resource management of the University.
6. To establish and keep under regular review the policies, procedures and limits within such management functions as shall be undertaken by and under the authority of the Vice-Chancellor.
7. To ensure the establishment and monitoring of systems of control and accountability, including financial and operational controls, risk assessment, value for money arrangements and procedures for handling internal grievances and for managing conflicts of interest. Council is responsible for the appointment of the University's external auditors.
8. To ensure that processes are in place to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the University against the strategy, plans and approved key performance indicators, which should be, where possible and appropriate, benchmarked against other comparable institutions.
9. To establish processes to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the governing body itself and the University's system of governance.
10. To conduct its business in accordance with best practice in higher education corporate governance and with the principles of public life drawn up by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (see **Attachment**).

11. To safeguard the good name and values of the University and to be responsible for the ethical governance of the University.
12. To appoint the University Secretary as Secretary to Council.
13. To be the employing authority for all staff in the University and in the maintained Colleges and Societies and to be responsible for establishing a human resources strategy and, subject to the powers of the Senate, for the maintenance of discipline.
14. To be the principal financial and business authority of the University, including:
 - a) ensuring that proper books of account are kept; approving the annual budget financial statements and financial forecasts; establishing budget centres within the University for the efficient management of resources and appointing Budget Officers for each budget centre; the approval of fees;
 - b) having overall responsibility for the University's assets, property and estate.
15. To ensure that there are adequate and effective arrangements in place to ensure public funds are managed appropriately, in line with the conditions of grant and the principles of regularity, propriety and value for money, and to protect the interests of taxpayers and other stakeholders, including providing transparency about value for money for students and for taxpayers.
16. To be the University's legal authority and, as such, to ensure that systems are in place for meeting all the University's legal obligations, including those arising from contracts and other legal commitments made in the University's name. This includes accountability for health, safety and security and for equality, diversity and inclusion. Council is responsible for making regulations for the custody and use of the common seal of the University and for representing the University in all negotiations for obtaining grants from public bodies in aid of the work of the University.
17. To act as trustee for any property, legacy, endowment, bequest or gift in support of the work and welfare of the University.
18. To promote a culture which supports inclusivity and diversity across the institution.
19. To maintain and protect the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech legislation.
20. To receive and test assurance that academic governance overseen by Senate is adequate and effective.
21. To ensure that all students have opportunities to engage with the governance of the University and that this allows for a range of perspectives to have influence.
22. To receive assurance that adequate provision has been made for the general welfare of students. Subject to the powers of the Senate, to be responsible for the regulation of the relations between the Council and the students, and for the maintenance of student discipline.
23. Subject to the provisions of the Statutes, to be responsible for the recognition of the recognised Colleges of the University. In particular, University Council shall approve the appointment of the Heads of the Recognised Colleges.
24. To approve changes to Statutes and to ensure that the University's constitution is followed at all times and that appropriate advice is available to enable this to happen.

Approved by Council 11 May 2021

Principles of Public Life

Members are expected to operate in accord with the following “Nolan” Principles of Public Life:

In 1995, the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles, which should underpin the actions of all who serve the public in any way. These are:

Selflessness Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or other friends.

Integrity Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.