University of Sheffield | University Secretary's Office

Induction and development of members of Council

Introduction

In order to develop an understanding of the complex environment in which the University operates, all members should participate as appropriate in training and development events provided by the University or other bodies. New members of Council are expected to participate in the induction arrangements made by the University.

This document describes the induction materials, meetings and events available to all new members of Council, as well as mandatory training for staff that lay members of Council should also complete, but is also relevant to existing members. To minimise the risk of information overload, we have structured the document in terms of a timeline, and also indicated which items are strongly recommended and which are suggested. We recognise that the needs of individual members will differ, and we are happy to work with members to provide an induction programme tailored to their requirements. An initial meeting with the Secretary to Council and Deputy Secretary & Head of Governance is recommended, in order to discuss an appropriate programme and the support to be provided. The Governance Team in the University Secretary's Office will then facilitate meetings and visits on behalf of members.

Staff and Student Members of Council

The expectations on members of Council set out in the Roles and Responsibilities and Code of Conduct, and the expectation and encouragement to participate in a comprehensive and meaningful induction, apply to all members of Council. It is recognised, however, that the particular knowledge and understanding that staff and student members bring to Council debate (for example in terms of direct experience of institutional life and enabling links to be made with the academic governance of the University), while valuable, can give rise to perceived conflicts of interest, and the fact that they are internal stakeholders of the University as well as governing body members can sometimes lead to uncertainty as to their role on Council. This duality should not, however, be allowed to confuse the key principle that all Council members are charitable trustees and have a corporate responsibility that overrides any other role they may be perceived to have. These points and any additional questions that staff and student members may have about their role, will be covered in initial induction activities, particularly discussions with the University Secretary and Head of Governance. The Students' Union Officer who attends Council sessions with the SU President is encouraged to undertake a significant proportion of the members' induction activities in order to contribute effectively in Council meetings.

1.	**Upon appointment**			
1.1	**Letter of appointment**			
	New members receive a letter of appointment notifying the period of appointment, dates of Council meetings and short biographical details about other members. The letter also provides the following documents/urls:			
	▪ Role and responsibilities of members of Council, including the Members Code of Conduct (document)			
	▪ Induction and development of members of Council (document)			
	▪ Committee of University Chairs' Higher Education Code of Governance (document)			
	▪ Details of AdvanceHE's Governor Development Programme (document)			
	▪ Register of Interests (including 'fit and proper person declaration' for the Office for Students (OfS)) (form to complete)			
	▪ Skills Matrix (form to complete)			
	▪ Council Bio/Who's Who (form to complete) ▪ Mandatory Training, (Cyber Security, Data Protection and Information Management			
1.2	**Strongly recommended**			
	(a)	Meeting with the Chair of Council		
	(b)	Meeting with the other Pro-Chancellors and Treasurer		
	(c)	Meeting with President & Vice-Chancellor (to include discussion of institutional strategy and objectives, risks and opportunities)		
	(d)	Meeting with the Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor		
	(e)	Meeting with the University Secretary and/or Deputy Secretary & Head of Governance (to include discussion of Council and Committee's responsibilities and the role, duties and responsibilities of all Council Members and academic governance and assurance)		
	(f)	Campus tour with the Director of Estates & Facilities Management		
	(g)	Further reading (all available via the University's Governance web pages http://www.shef.ac.uk/govern/council/induct):		
		(i)	Governance of the University	
			▪ Council Regulation setting out the powers and functions of Council; Council Scheme of Delegation	
			▪ Council membership and Council Who's Who	
			▪ University Strategic Plan	
			▪ Annual Report and Financial Statements	

			▪ The most recent Annual Academic Assurance Report (and a recording of the most recent Council briefing on academic assurance) (available via the Council members' Google Drive/the Governance team)
			▪ Latest version of the Corporate Risk Register and accompanying reports to Council (available via the Council members' Google Drive/the Governance team)
		(ii)	External publications
			▪ Office for Students Regulatory Framework ▪ Office for Students terms and conditions of funding for higher education institutions ▪ Advance HE Getting to Grips Series: Trustee Responsibilities in Higher Education: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/getting-grips-trustee-responsibilities-higher-education
		(iii)	Supplementary Training ▪ Introduction to Implicit Bias (Staff login required)
1.3	**Suggested**		
	(a)	Further reading (available via the University's Governance web pages http://www.shef.ac.uk/govern/council/induct):	
		(i)	Governance of the University
			▪ University Charter, Statutes and Regulations of Council, particularly Regulations II: The Council and III: Scheme of Delegation
			▪ University committee structure
			▪ Committee memberships and terms of reference
			▪ Minutes of recent meetings of Council
			▪ Council Effectiveness Reviews Reports and Action Plans
		(ii)	About the University
			▪ University facts and figures
			▪ Undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses
2.	**3-6 months following initial appointment**		
2.1	**Strongly recommended**		
	(a)	Meetings with Chief Financial Officer, to include financial governance and decision making, and Chief Operating Officer.	
	(b)	Meetings with the Vice-Presidents for Education and Research & Innovation.	
	(c)	Attendance at AdvanceHE's Governor Induction/Development Programme events. Note that AdvanceHE runs additional events specifically designed for	

		student and staff governors, as well as lay members.	
2.2	**Suggested**		
	(a)	Meetings with one or two Vice-Presidents & Heads of Faculty (combined if wished with a visit to the Faculty/meeting of a Faculty Executive Board)	
	(b)	Observing a meeting of a Council committee and/or the Senate	
	(c)	Further reading (all available via the University's Governance web pages http://www.shef.ac.uk/govern/council/induct):	
		(i)	Governance of the University
			▪ University Strategy Delivery Plans (Education, Research, Innovation & One University) ▪ Other major strategy documents, e.g. Finance, Estates, People, IT
			▪ Information on financial control and governance
			▪ Information on risk management ▪ The opportunity to discuss Council meeting agendas and papers with the University Secretary/Head of Governance
		(ii)	External publications (all available via the University's Governance web pages http://www.shef.ac.uk/govern/council/induct):
			▪ AdvanceHE governance web pages (a website designed specifically for governors of HEIs, with links to a range of resources, including the Getting to Grips series of guides covering: Audit; Finance; Human Resources; Estates & Infrastructure; Risk; Academic Standards; Quality & the Student Experience, Research & Knowledge Transfer; Internationalisation).
			▪ Governing bodies, equality and diversity: a handbook for governors of HEIs
3.	**Ongoing**		
3.1	**Regular updates**		
	(a)	All members of Council will routinely receive:	
		▪ President & Vice-Chancellor's key messages to staff and blog (by email)	
		▪ Staff news and update emails (if desired)	
		▪ Periodic Council updates on matters of importance/interest (by email)	
		▪ Council members' contact details (updated annually)	
	(b)	Members of Council may also wish to join the University's daily media monitoring bulletin and weekly Policy Briefing mailing lists and receive media and policy updates (by email). Please contact governance-admin@sheffield.ac.uk.	

3.2	**Visits and Tours**
	Where possible, we aim to use a variety of venues for Council's business meetings and other sessions, to give members the opportunity to visit different parts of the University and meet relevant members of staff. Where appropriate, tours of buildings or facilities will be offered around Council meetings or other sessions, with at least two tours or visits provisionally scheduled each year.
	We are happy to arrange for individual members of Council to visit departments and/or meet with directors of professional services or heads of academic schools, research centres etc. Please contact governance-admin@sheffield.ac.uk.
3.3	**Pre-Council Lunch and Information Sessions**
	Council's business meetings are preceded or followed by informal topic-based discussion over lunch, often including other members of University staff and, on occasions, an external speaker.
3.4	**Council Dinners**
	Council dinners are held on the evening before two or three Council meetings and the evening before the Away Day. Members of the University Executive Board will be invited to at least one dinner each year. Dinners may be structured around a particular topic of interest, often involving additional members or University staff or external speakers.
3.5	**Council away day**
	A Council away day takes place annually in June. This event provides an opportunity for extended update and debate on key strategic issues and is usually attended by members of UEB as well as Council.
3.6	**Virtual Briefings/Strategic Sessions**
	Two-hour virtual sessions are scheduled between Council meetings to provide an opportunity for Council to receive updates and information on key topics of interest or relevance and/or to consider specific issues in greater detail prior to formal discussion in business meetings. A flexible approach to these sessions is adopted in order to maximise their value to members. Additional, shorter sessions are sometimes arranged to address particular issues which arises during the year. Where possible, these sessions are recorded to be made available for future reference.
3.7	**Pairing Schemes**
	Members of Council are routinely paired with members of UEB and/or with members of Council in other membership categories, i.e. lay members will be paired with a member appointed from the Senate or professional services. This scheme provides an opportunity to learn more about different areas of the University and to build mutually beneficial relationships. The pairings are reviewed an updated annually.
3.8	**Chair of Council / Senior Independent Director Catch Ups**

	Members of Council are offered the opportunity to meet with the Chair an/or the Senior Independent Director in small groups of up to five members on one or two occasions throughout the academic year, providing an opportunity to raise issues and concerns, ask questions, and make suggestions about the operation of Council or its business.
3.9	**Annual evaluation (Effectiveness Questionnaire) and Appraisal**
	A questionnaire circulated annually in July (other than in years when a formal, independent Effectiveness Review takes place) seeks members' comments on the operation of Council during the previous academic year, and also asks members to provide an assessment of their role as a governor and the extent to which their skills and experience are being appropriately used. Members are also invited to specify any further induction or developments needs they may have and offered the opportunity to meet with the Chair of Council, President & Vice-Chancellor or University Secretary. Council receives a report on the findings of the questionnaire and considers any actions proposed to address issues raised and to further enhance Council's effectiveness. Members will also have a scheduled annual appraisal meeting with the Chair of Council to discuss individual and collective Council performance over the previous year, drawing on responses to the effectiveness questionnaire and anything else they may wish to raise directly in those meetings.
3.10	**Other University committees**
	Members are encouraged to serve as representatives of Council on other University committees, such as those covering Audit & Risk Assurance, Finance, and Equality & Diversity. Some staff and student members will have additional opportunities to serve on University committees by virtue of their substantive role, but further opportunities may exist to sit on additional Council committees. The Council Nominations Committee meets annually to consider appointments and members are welcome to express interest in a particular area at any time, including through the annual evaluation exercise (see above). We are happy to arrange for individual members of Council to attend, as observers and with the agreement of the Chair, a meeting of a committee of Senate or Council. Please contact governance-admin@sheffield.ac.uk.
3.11	**AdvanceHE's Governor Development Programme**
	Members of Council are recommended to attend relevant events provided by AdvanceHE, particularly its Governor Development Programme. Details of these events are also shared with Council periodically. Fees and expenses will be met by the University and members wishing to attend are asked to contact governance-admin@sheffield.ac.uk who will make the necessary booking.
4.	**Other relevant information**
4.1	**Useful bookmarks**
	(a) University home page: http://www.shef.ac.uk/

		Council web pages: http://www.shef.ac.uk/govern/council
		UEB web pages: http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ueb/
	(b)	External
		Office for Students (OfS): https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/
		Department for Education (DfE): https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education
		AdvanceHE: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/
		Times Higher Education: http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/

4.2	**Contacts**	
	Day-to-day support for Council is provided by the University Secretary's Office. General enquiries may be addressed to: governance-admin@sheffield.ac.uk Individual contact details are as follows:	
	Riley Power University Secretary (E) university.secretary@sheffield.ac.uk (T) 0114 222 1211	David Swinn Deputy Secretary & Head of Governance (E): d.swinn@sheffield.ac.uk (T): 0114 222 123
	Emily Allan Senior Governance Officer (E) e.allan@sheffield.ac.uk (T) 0114 222 1201	Edward Smith Senior Governance Officer (E) e.p.m.smith@sheffield.ac.uk (T) 0114 222 1206
	Kate Sullivan Senior Governance Officer (E) kate.sullivan@sheffield.ac.uk (T) 0114 222 1202	Kathryn Clements Senior Governance Coordinator (E) kathryn.clements@sheffield.ac.uk (T) 0114 222 1716
	Stacey Callan Governance Coordinator & Administrative Assistant (E) s.l.callan@sheffield.ac.uk (T) 0114 222 1741	Angela Priestley Personal Assistant to the University Secretary & Office Manager (E) angela.priestley@sheffield.ac.uk (T) 0114 222 1215
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