

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY COURT**

**STAFF OBSERVERS AT UNIVERSITY COURT MEETINGS:
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Policy

1. To help improve understanding of the governing body and as a development opportunity for the staff of the University, the Chairman of Court has agreed to make places available at the regular business meetings of the Court, when appropriate, for members of staff to observe the proceedings.
2. A maximum of two places may be available at each meeting, as appropriate, to ensure that the observers can be accommodated without disrupting the normal business of the Court. Staff can register with the Clerk to Court their interest in attending and the Principal will have the final decision on which staff will be invited to attend appropriate meetings.
3. Before each meeting of Court, when the agenda is being prepared, it will be decided whether it is appropriate to invite observers to attend. When observers are in attendance, they will be able to observe the normal business sessions of the Court apart from sessions dealing with confidential business. Staff will be provided with a copy of the agenda at the meeting.
4. The Chairman of Court will be entitled at his discretion to decide at any time during a meeting that confidential discussions are required and, in these circumstances, to ask the observers to withdraw from the meeting.

Code of conduct

5. Staff must note that they are being invited solely to observe proceedings and not to take part in discussions in any way. It is the responsibility of observers as well as of members of Court at all times to respect the authority of the Chairman of Court and to demonstrate the highest standards of conduct.
6. Staff should be aware that the Chairman may ask the observers to withdraw from the meeting if he decides at any point that confidential discussions are required. Please note that laptops, phones and other mobile communications devices including recording equipment are not permitted in Court meetings.
7. Observers are required to demonstrate confidentiality, tact and discretion following their attendance at Court. They should not communicate any decisions of Court, nor attribute comments or views expressed at Court to individual members unless this is recorded clearly in the official minute.

Procedure

8. The opportunity to observe Court meetings is publicised to staff through the staff intranet and staff may put their names forward at any time of year. In applying to observe, staff will be expected to confirm in their email that they have identified this as a useful professional development opportunity through the Professional Development Review process, in conjunction with their line manager.
9. When the Chairman decides that observers will be invited to the next meeting of Court, staff will normally have the opportunity to attend on a first come, first served basis. If there are more expressions of interest than places available, the Clerk to Court will if necessary prepare recommendations for the Principal about which people from the list of interested staff members should be given the opportunity to observe the meeting.
10. The Principal will make the final decision on who should be invited to attend based on how long an individual has been on the list, the usefulness of the development opportunity to the staff member, the relevance to the University given their work responsibilities, and whether they have previously had the opportunity to observe a meeting.
11. A staff member will not normally be invited to observe more than one meeting in each academic year, in order to give the maximum number of staff the opportunity to attend. If a member of staff is invited but unable to attend the next meeting of Court their name will go back into the list of staff to be considered at the next appropriate meeting.
12. Staff members will be expected to have a follow up discussion with their line manager about the usefulness of the opportunity to observe the Court meeting.
13. The Chairman and Principal welcome any feedback, via the Clerk to Court, which will be anonymised if possible.

Governance Services
December 2012