

Minutes (Open) Approved University Court - 26 November 2025**Members**

David Brew (Chair)

Professor Liz Bacon

Liz Blackburn*

Dr Scott Cameron

Col. Eur Ing Iain Davidson VR**

Carla De Brito

Fiona Drysdale KC (from item 25.1)

Professor Ruth Falconer

Kerith George-Briant

Colin Graham

Lynne Hamilton

Pam Herries

Fraser Keir

Veronica Lynch

Jim Macgregor

Thomas Sloan

Steven Traynor

Luke Webster

Apologies

Andrew Bailey

Dia Banerji

Antony Marks

Dr Hadi Mehrpouya

In Attendance

Eilidh Fraser

Julie Greenhill

James Nicholson (items 36.1 and 36.2)

Professor Luke Millard (item 39.5)

Dr Dianne Peden (Clerk to Court)

Claire MacEachen (item 39.4)

Andrew Menzies

Caroline Summers (Secretary to Court)

Aparna Tatavarty (item 38/observer)

Boab Thomson (observer)

Professor Nia White (item 39.6)*

* attended online; ** attended online until item 39

Open Business**Preliminary Matters**

21. Welcome and Apologies**Oral Report**

- (i). The Chair welcomed Court to its second meeting of the academic year. Court was advised that Financial Accountant, A. Tatavarty, and Communications and Public Affairs Manager, B. Thomson, were observing. Court was reminded that as observers they would not contribute to the discussions, would be asked to leave the meeting for any agenda items

which were deemed to be commercially sensitive and/or confidential and would not be present for Reserved Business.

- (ii). The Chair highlighted that Equality Impact Assessments for relevant items were available via Admincontrol along with Other Matters for Information (as noted at the end of the agenda) a mechanism for providing Court with information which was relevant and informative but for which no action was required. Court was advised that these enclosures therefore did appear in the meeting book, however they did contain a Cover paper to aid Court with their review and an associated enclosure reference.
- (iii). Apologies were received as noted above.

22. Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest

Oral Report

- (i). None were declared.

23. Minutes of Court 17 September 2025

CT/1125/013

Outcome: Court received and considered the minutes and approved them as an accurate record of its meeting held on 17 September 2025.

24. Action List and Matters Arising

CT/1125/014

- (i). Court was advised the action list had been updated on 12 November 2025, with five ongoing actions, none of which were due at this meeting, and two actions marked as Complete since the previous meeting.
- (ii). L. Hamilton sought assurance in relation to Court Action 0925/11, the review of the Chair's Committee Terms of Reference, in particular asking if the review to be undertaken by the Governance and Nominations Committee would take account of lessons learned from the matters considered by the Committee in 2024-25. Vice-Principal, C. Summers, confirmed that it would. She also confirmed, in response to a further query, that there was no conflict arising from the Chair of Court also chairing both the Chair's Committee and the Governance and Nominations Committee and that if any conflict arose it would be managed in line with normal practice. The University's legal advisors had confirmed they were content with the proposed approach. Court noted that the review would also consider arrangements at other Scottish universities to handle urgent business outwith regular Court meetings.

Court Matters

25. Court Matters**CT/1125/015**

- (i). Court was advised that the paper provided an update on governance, policy development, and sector-wide issues in addition to various appointment recommended by the Governance and Nominations Committee for consideration by Court.

Outcome: Court approved the appointment of Fraser Keir as Court Intermediary from 1 January 2026 for an initial term of 2 years.

Outcome: Court approved the appointment of Colin Graham as the Chair of the People, Health and Equality Committee with immediate effect.

Outcome: Court approved the appointment of Mairi Julier, as an external member of the Audit and Risk Committee, from 1 January 2026 for a second and final term of 2 years.

Outcome: Court approved the appointment of Chris Wilson, as an external member of the Audit and Risk Committee, from 1 January 2026 for a second and final term of 2 years.

- (ii). Court was advised that a new Intellectual Property Policy was required by 1 January 2026 to ensure Research Excellence Framework (REF) Open Access compliance. Court was advised that the policy would be considered by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee on 3 December 2025 and by the Finance and Corporate Performance Committee (FCPC) on 9 December 2025. Court agreed to consider the policy for approval by correspondence following review by FCPC.

Outcome: Court agreed to consider the approval of the Intellectual Property Policy, on recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Performance Committee, by correspondence prior to the winter break.

25.1. Appointment of the Vice-Chair of Court**CT/1125/016**

- (i). C. Summers highlighted the ongoing vacancy for the Vice-Chair of Court following the previous incumbent's resignation in September 2025. Court was advised of the risks associated if this position remained vacant for a prolonged period of time. Potential options were highlighted including the appointment of an interim vice-chair from current lay members of Court, seeking a new lay member who could take on the role in the new year, as well as encouraging members to reflect and express interest before the next Governance and Nominations Committee on 4 December 2025.
- (ii). Court discussed the potential time commitment and responsibilities of the Vice-Chair role, with the C. Summers indicating flexibility in the interim based on the appointee's availability and encouraged members to contact her after the meeting to discuss options.
- (iii). C. Summers highlighted that Court may wish to defer a decision at this point until it had considered the extension of the Chair's appointment under agenda item 29.

Outcome: Court agreed to revisit the appointment of the Vice-Chair of Court following the discussions in reserved business with regards to the extension of the Chair of Court's appointment.

26. Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Court

CT/1125/017

- (i). Court was advised that this annual review assesses the effectiveness of the University Court for the academic year 2024–25, in line with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance (2023) and it reflects internal evaluation activities, compliance with governance standards, strategic oversight, stakeholder engagement, and committee performance. Court noted that the review was recommended to Court for approval by the Governance and Nominations Committee.
- (ii). Court proposed the addition of a reference to the upcoming Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Bill and related governance changes, and it was agreed to strengthen the report to reflect ongoing monitoring of legislative developments.

Action: Head of Governance and Deputy Secretary to address Court's request to strengthen the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Court to reflect ongoing monitoring of legislative developments prior to its publication.

Outcome: Court agreed that reference to confidential discussions would be redacted, due to commercial sensitivity, from the published version

Outcome: Court approved the report prior to its publication on the University's website, subject to the amendment and redactions as noted above.

Committee Matters

27. Audit and Risk Committee

27.1. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2025

CT/1125/018

Outcome: Court noted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 14 October 2025.

27.2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2025

CT/1125/019

- (i). Court noted that the Committee had approved its Annual Report (CT/1125/034) and had reviewed the Cyber Resilience Annual Report (CT/1125/052).
- (ii). Court was advised that the Committee had recommended three items to Court for approval; the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024-25 (CT/1125/032); the Statement of Assurance Over the Letter of Representation (CT/1125/033) and the Fraud Prevention Policy (CT/1125/040)

Outcome: Court noted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 4 November 2025.

28. Finance and Corporate Performance Committee

28.1. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2025 **CT/1125/020**

- (i). Court noted that the Committee had reviewed the Insurance Annual Report (CT/1125/052); the Information Governance Annual Report (CT/1125/054) and the International and Partnerships Strategy Report 2025 Update (CT/1125/047).
- (ii). Court was advised that the Committee had recommended four items to Court for approval: the Information Security Policy (CT/1125/041); the Data Protection Policy (CT/1125/042); the Individual Rights Policy (CT/1125/043) and the Privacy by Design by Default Policy (CT/1125/044).

Outcome: Court noted the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Corporate Performance Committee held on 23 September 2025.

28.2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2025 **CT/1125/021**

- (i). Court noted that the Committee had reviewed Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024-25 (CT/1125/032), prior to their consideration by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC).
- (ii). Court was advised that the Committee had recommended two items to Court for approval: the Financial Strategy (CT/1125/035) and the International and Partnership Strategy (CT/1125/037).

Outcome: Court noted the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Corporate Performance Committee held on 4 November 2025.

29. Governance and Nominations Committee

29.1. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2025 **CT/1125/022**

- (i). Court noted that the Committee had recommended appointments to the role of Court Intermediary, the Chair of the People, Health and Equality Committee and renewal of external members of ARC as documented in Court Matters (CT/1125/015).
- (ii). Court was advised that the Committee had recommended three items to Court for approval: the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Court (CT/1125/017); the Scheme of Delegation and Decision-Making Powers (CT/1125/031) and the Conflict of Interest Policy and Practice (CT/1125/045).

Outcome: Court noted the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Nominations Committee held on 2 October 2025.

30. People, Health and Equality Committee

30.1. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2025 **CT/1125/023**

- (i). Court noted that the Committee had reviewed the Complaints Annual Report (CT/1125/028), the Health and Safety Annual Report (CT/1125/030) and the Occupational Health Annual Report (CT/1125/055).
- (ii). Court was advised that the Committee had recommended two items to Court for approval: the People Strategy (CT/1125/036) and the Visiting and Emeritus Title Policy (CT/1125/046).
- (iii). Court was advised that the Committee had approved revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Health and Safety Sub-Committee.

Outcome: Court noted the minutes of the meeting of the People, Health and Equality Committee held on 30 September 2025.

31. Remuneration Committee

31.1. Report from the meeting held on 31 October 2025 **CT/1125/024**

- (i). Court was advised that the Committee had reviewed the Pay Policy; received Annual Reports on Salaries in the discretionary range and on severance arrangements and had reviewed salaries of members of the Executive Group including the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, in addition to the Chair of Court's remuneration. Court was advised that further details would be provided under agenda item 28 in the reserved section of the meeting.

Outcome: Court noted the report from the meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 31 October 2025.

32. Senate

32.1. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2025 **CT/1125/025**

- (i). Court noted that Senate had reviewed the National Student Survey Report (CT/1125/029); the People Strategy (CT/1125/036) and the Scottish Funding Council Return: Research Assurance and Accountability Return (CT/1125/048).
- (ii). Court was advised that Senate had recommended four items to Court for approval; the Academic section of the Scheme of Delegation and Decision-Making Powers (CT/1125/031); the International and Partnership Strategy (CT/1125/037); the Student Success Strategy (CT/1125/038); Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Strategy (CT/1125/039).
- (iii). Court was advised that Senate had approved "in principle" revisions to the Academic Governance Framework (dependent upon approval of the Academic section of the

Scheme of Delegation and Decision-Making Powers (CT/1125/031) and had approved an update to Academic Regulation 13 for Undergraduate Programmes.

Outcome: Court noted the minutes of the meeting of Senate Committee held on 29 October 2025.

Regular Reports

33. Report from the Chair of Court

Oral Report

- (i). The Chair provided an update on his recent activities including attendance at meetings of the Committee of Scottish Chairs (attended both by the Scottish Funding Council and Universities Scotland) and the Autumn Plenary of the UK Committee of University Chairs, which included a discussion of the risks of HE Reform across the UK.
- (ii). Court was advised that the PricewaterhouseCoopers-led review of the CUC Governance Code was ongoing, with Scottish and UK-wide consultations and the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance serving as a reference for improvements.
- (iii). Court noted that the Scottish Government was considering amendments to the Tertiary Education and Training Bill, which could impact university governance, Principal salaries, and potentially lead to the reclassification of universities as public sector bodies. Court discussed the potential implications of this. Court emphasised the importance of ARC being fully briefed on the associated risks and highlighted that it would be worthwhile considering adding this to the institutional risk register.

Action: Director of Finance, Infrastructure and Corporate Services to brief the Audit and Risk Committee on the risks associated with any reclassification of universities to the public sector and to reflect on the addition of an associated risk to the institutional risk register.

34. Executive Group Report

CT/1125/026

- (i). Court was advised that the report provided Court with an update on key institutional matters not covered elsewhere on the agenda, including student recruitment, financial performance, external engagement, academic developments, and strategic initiatives. Court noted that it also contained two appendices; Key External Engagements by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor and an abridged version of the Academic Matters report that Court had previously received for information.
- (ii). Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor L. Bacon, highlighted a significant increase in international student recruitment, its positive impact on the university's financial position, and the arrangements for additional staffing and support, noting the importance of regulatory compliance.

- (iii). Court members asked about the impact on academic and professional services workloads, and it was confirmed that additional staff had been recruited where needed, with income from increased international student recruitment reinvested as appropriate to ensure an excellent applicant and student experience. This was being kept under review and members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) were encouraged to request further resources as required. Court noted its appreciation of the growth in numbers and the work to support this and confirmed it was content with the responses which had been provided.
- (iv). Court was advised that the University was preparing for tightening UKVI regulations in future by diversifying recruitment to lower-risk countries, and monitoring compliance, with ongoing analysis of student performance by country and agent.

35. Students' Association Report

CT/1125/027

- (i). Students' Association President, C. De Brito, and Students' Association Vice-President, L. Webster, presented the report, outlining recent activities, manifesto priorities, and engagement initiatives.
- (ii). Court noted that Freshers events saw high attendance, with 1,415 students participating, and a notable increase in student engagement and representation, particularly among international students. Court praised a new initiative to provide a winter meal and social space on Christmas Day for students unable to return home, reflecting the Association's commitment to student welfare. Court welcomed the increased student engagement and was advised that over 600 students engage with societies and that events on average attracted around 50 students.
- (iii). Court was advised that the Students' Association collaborated with the University to provide targeted support for international students, including an International Students Day, cultural fairs, and plans to produce a guide to help new arrivals navigate university life.
- (iv). Court noted ongoing campaigns included housing, election engagement, and lobbying for improved funding for Scottish education, with efforts to involve both home and international students.
- (v). Court welcomed the report and thanked the Association for its hard work.

Main Business

36. Annual Reports

36.1. Complaints Annual Report (incl. Protected Characteristics Report)

CT/1125/028

- (i). Court thanked the Director of Student and Academic Services, J. Nicholson, for joining the meeting to address any questions from Court with regards to both the Complaints Annual Report and the National Student Survey Report. Court was advised that the Complaints Annual Report would be published on the University's website, which is a requirement of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Court noted that the Protected Characteristics Report was not published.
- (ii). Court discussed the report, noting that the majority of complaints related to service delivery rather than financial compensation. Court also discussed the current ongoing case which had attracted a high volume of complaints and how this would be treated in the next Annual Report.

Outcome: Court approved the Complaints Annual Report, prior to its publication on the University's website.

36.2. National Student Survey Report

CT/1125/029

- (i). Court welcomed the overall positive results, in particular highlighting the strong performance in "Assessment and Feedback". Court raised concerns around the persistent low scores in accounting and business. Court was assured that these were being addressed in various ways including curriculum changes. Court was advised of the recent creation of the Abertay Accounting Society for students and noted that it had had good engagement from employers. It was acknowledged that there would be a lag in the survey results reflecting the impact of such changes.
- (ii). Court discussed the lower scores for mental health awareness and was assured that services were promoted although uptake of available support was low.
- (iii). Court expressed its gratitude to J. Nicholson for his analysis of the survey results and to the staff for their hard work to ensure a positive student experience.

36.3. Health and Safety Annual Report

CT/1125/030

- (i). Court welcomed the report, and no specific issues were raised.

37. Scheme of Delegation and Decision-Making Powers

CT/1125/031

- (i). Court was advised that the scheme had been recommended for approval by the Governance and Nominations Committee, with Senate having recommended the

amendments to the Academic section. Court noted that the updated scheme had also been reviewed by the University's legal advisors, Thorntons LLP. The format of the document had been revised to improve clarity.

- (ii). Court was advised that the scheme reflected the current role of the Chair's Committee and acknowledged that any required changes from the review as noted above would be submitted to Court for approval. In addition, Court noted that a schedule confirming signing authorities would be submitted to Court in February 2026.

Outcome: Court approved the Scheme of Delegation and Decision-Making Powers.

38. Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024-25

CT/1125/032

- (i). Director of Finance, Infrastructure and Corporate Services, A. Menzies, presented the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2024-25, highlighting improved financial performance, changes due to Scottish Funding Council recovery and audit findings. Court was advised that report was split into six main sections:

- 1. Introduction** from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor outlining a year of significant achievement and transformation for Abertay University.
- 2. Strategic Report** which includes the strategic plan 2025-2030, the operating review, which includes mandated elements relating to areas as such as equality, diversity, and inclusion and environmental sustainability, key performance indicators (KPIs), which present metrics bridging the previous strategic plan and the new strategy; principal risks and uncertainties, highlighting principal institutional risks as required by the SFC.
- 3. Financial review** which covers prior-year adjustments, updated SFC recovery estimates, and included income/expenditure trends with enhanced analysis following FCPC requests.
- 4. Corporate Governance Statement** which includes a statement from Court confirming that it is satisfied that the University remains a Going Concern and a statement of compliance with the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.
- 5. Independent Auditor's Report** which provided their opinion having audited the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2025 in which they concluded that the University Court's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements was appropriate; and
- 6. Financial Statements** including the statement of comprehensive income and expenditure, statement of changes in reserves; statement of financial position; cash flow and the University's accounting policies.

- (ii). Court noted that the document has been updated following consideration by FCPC and by ARC at their respective meetings on 4 November 2025 to incorporate, within

Environmental Sustainability reporting, the most recent carbon emission data for 2024-25; to provide, within the Financial Review, an analysis of the significant movements in Creditors due in less than one year; and to include, within the Corporate Governance Statement, more overt reference to the University's consideration of the Gillies Report. Additionally, since in the period since the Committee's review, SFC had intimated the actual recovery that they will make in regard to the shortfall against funded student numbers in 2023-24. Court was advised that the recovery was £300k higher than the £1m estimate that had previously been reflected as an accrual in the draft 2024-25 accounts. Court was advised that this had required a very late adjustment to the accounts. Court was advised that income had increased from £39.7m to £41.3m with expenditure rising to £42.9m (from £41.7m). The resultant deficit of £466k was much better than the budgeted £3.6m deficit, with improved cash flow and reserves. Court was advised that the University's analysis of the SFC's calculation for recovery should make future estimates of SFC's recovery more reliable and had been reflected the impact on both the current year's forecast of outturn and in the Financial Plan for years beyond 2025-26.

- (iii). Court acknowledged the benefit of the Financial Reporting session led by A. Menzies prior to the September meeting of Court in understanding the Financial Statement but noted that additional training with regards to pensions would be beneficial. A. Menzies agreed to reflect on what information could be shared to assist with Court's understanding of pensions.

Action: Director of Finance, Infrastructure and Corporate Services to reflect on what information could be shared to assist with Court's understanding of pensions.

38.1. Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report

CT/1125/034

- (i). Court noted that the report provided a summary of the Committee's activities and assurances for the financial year 2024-25 and had been drafted following receipt and consideration of reports from the internal and external auditors (Annex A and B respectively). Court was advised that the Committee had approved the report on 4 November 2025, and it would be submitted to the SFC as part of the University's submission of its Financial Statement.
- (ii). The Committee Chair, L. Hamilton, noted thanks on behalf of the committee to A. Menzies and A. Tatavarty and team for their professionalism in drafting the Annual Report and Financial Statements and in addressing queries from the committee.
- (iii). Court discussed the format of the report and agreed it would be beneficial for future reports to include commentary on the impact and contribution of the Committee's activities in a qualitative way. The Chair highlighted that FCPC had had similar discussions regarding the Corporate Governance Statement.

Action: Head of Governance and Deputy Secretary to ensure that future Corporate Governance Statements include commentary on the impact and contribution of Committee and Court activities respectively, in a qualitative way.

38.2. Statement of Assurance Over the Letter of Representation **CT/1125/033**

- (i). Court was advised that as part of the annual external audit of the University's financial statements, Court was required to provide a formal Letter of Representation to the auditors, which serves as a written confirmation that Court acknowledged its responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with applicable accounting standards and regulatory requirements; affirmed that the University had maintained appropriate internal controls and governance arrangements throughout the reporting period; and that all material information had been disclosed to the auditors. On the recommendation of ARC, Court was invited to approve that the Principal and Vice-Chancellor sign the letter of representation on its behalf in respect of the audit of the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2025.

Outcome: Court noted the Audit and Risk Committee's Annual Report, approved by the Audit and Risk Committee, which would be submitted with the University's Financial Statements to the Scottish Funding Council.

Outcome: On the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, Court approved that the Principal and Vice-Chancellor sign the letter of representation on its behalf in respect of the audit of the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2025.

Outcome: Court approved the revised Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024-25, prior to their submission to the Scottish Funding Council and publication on the University's website.

39. Supporting Strategies

39.1. Overview of Strategy Implementation **Oral Report**

- (i). Professor L. Bacon outlined the process for updating the supporting strategies to align with the previously approved University Strategy for 2025-2030, including staff consultation (except for the Financial Strategy), consideration by SMT, and consideration by the relevant committees of Court and, where appropriate, Senate. Court was advised that the remaining four supporting strategies: Civic Engagement, Digital, Estates, and Sustainable Development would be considered by Court in February.
- (ii). Court noted that the draft supporting strategies had been marked as Confidential as some contained internal KPIs and other information for internal use only which would not appear in the published versions. Court was reminded that a framework incorporating the University-level KPIs, the supporting strategies KPIs, and other internal indicators was

under development. In addition, as the supporting strategies had been developed in parallel, it was highlighted that a final review would take place when all nine supporting strategies had been approved to ensure consistency of terminology and appropriate cross-referencing. It was expected that any changes would be minor and editorial in nature.

39.2. Financial Strategy

CT/1125/035

- (i). Court was advised that the revised strategy supports delivery of the University strategy by ensuring long-term financial sustainability and effective integration of infrastructure strategies with the financial strategy and had been recommended to Court for approval by FCPC on 4 November 2025. Court was advised that the draft had been updated following feedback from FCPC with revisions to Section B to increase the granularity of the 'financial sustainability' objective, by splitting that into the component parts of generating surpluses, maintaining liquidity, managing reserves, as well as maintaining the original draft's objective to integrate financial and capital planning. In addition, Section H had been refined to more conspicuously link to the descriptions of risk, as set out in the Institutional Risk Register. Court was advised that, notwithstanding those changes, the Strategy's key priorities remained income diversification and growth, cost control, and strategic investment in digital and physical infrastructure to enable institutional resilience, growth, and innovation.
- (ii). Court discussed the appropriateness of using 'contribution' versus 'income' as an indicator, agreeing that contribution may better reflect financial performance, and discussed the rationale for setting certain targets below baseline due to the challenging external environment. Court also discussed staff costs being higher than sector averages, noting factors such as institutional scale, income diversity, and outsourcing practices, and acknowledged the challenge of containing staff costs within the set KPI.

Outcome: Court approved the Financial Strategy.

39.3. People Strategy

CT/1125/036

- (i). Director of People and Culture, E. Fraser, highlighted that, as the original strategy had been approved by Court on 23 November 2022, the proposed revisions were relatively minor. The review had involved discussion with a range of stakeholders including SMT, the Trade Unions, and the staff Lead Voices for equality, diversity and inclusion. In addition, the revised draft had been published for open consultation with staff. Court was advised that the strategy had been recommended to Court for approval by the People, Health and Equality Committee (PHEC) by correspondence, although the Committee had considered an earlier draft on 30 September 2025. Work-life balance and well-being were

highlighted as key objectives, with leadership and management practices aimed at supporting staff engagement and appropriate workload management.

- (ii). Court discussed the KPIs and it was emphasised that it included high-level KPIs, with plans for a detailed implementation plan featuring SMART actions and routine monitoring which is regularly reviewed by PHEC.
- (iii). Court agreed to consider amending the strategy to reference the armed forces employer recognition scheme, ensuring relevant policies were linked and visible.

Secretary's Note: It was agreed to add the following wording to section B - (g) Support members of the armed forces community in Abertay through continued commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and participation in the Employer Recognition Scheme.

Outcome: Court approved the People Strategy, subject to the minor amendment as noted above.

39.4. International and Partnership Strategy

CT/1125/037

- (i). Dean of International and Partnerships, C. MacEachen, advised Court that the revised strategy had been developed with input from key stakeholders across the university and had been recommended to Court for approval by both Senate on 29 October and by FCPC on 4 November 2025.
- (ii). Court was advised that the KPIs had been carefully considered and Court recognised that some targets were dependent on external factors such as UKVI and government decisions, with compliance rates being set externally. Court discussed the internal targets, and it was recognised that these were ambitious but realistic based on current and future activity in this area.
- (iii). Court discussed the implications of international student number targets, the need for a balanced approach, and the impact of physical and staffing resources on achievable growth, with ongoing scenario modelling to inform planning.
- (iv). Court emphasised the importance of articulating risks by region and cohort, aligning KPIs with risk flags for escalation, and ensuring annual reporting and implementation plans are in place for effective monitoring. Court asked that the strategy be reviewed to emphasise certain elements, including risk articulation and alignment of KPIs with risk flags for escalation and communicate any updates to the February meeting.

Action: Dean of International and Partnerships to update the International and Partnerships Strategy to emphasise certain elements, including risk articulation and alignment of KPIs with risk flags for escalation.

- (v). Court recognised the need to align the institutional risk register with strategy implementation, and it was confirmed that that work would be part of the review as noted under 39.1 once all nine supporting strategies had been approved. Court was assured that

this would be considered as appropriate by ARC as part of its regular work with regards to oversight of the institutional risk register.

- (vi). Court was reminded that an annual report on the implementation and impact of the strategy was submitted to FCPC and Court following approval of the original strategy and Court would receive its annual report relating to this revised strategy in December 2026.

Outcome: Court approved the International and Partnership Strategy, subject to the amendments as noted above.

39.5. Student Success Strategy

CT/1125/038

- (i). Dean of Learning and Teaching, Professor L. Millard, highlighted that the strategy, which would replace the current Learning Enhancement Strategy, combined learning, teaching, and student experience under the banner of student success. Emphasising curriculum design and transitions, it aimed to better align with sector language and best practice. Court was advised that the strategy aimed to support student transitions into, through, and out of the university, with initiatives to normalise support services, facilitate preparedness, and address retention and well-being. Court noted that the strategy had been developed with key stakeholders across faculties, professional services and the Students' Association and had been recommended to Court for approval by Senate on 29 October 2025.
- (ii). Court was advised that the KPIs were still to be finalised, with SMT requesting additional definitions, and that an implementation plan would be developed to ensure alignment with other strategies.
- (iii). Court discussed how the University was exploring block learning, particularly at postgraduate level, with plans for staff consultation and consideration of operational impacts such as timetabling and resource use.
- (iv). Court discussed the integration of mental health support within the strategy, monitoring of service capacity, and the impact of external funding changes, with plans to review resource adequacy.

Outcome: Court approved the Student Success Strategy, subject to the development of KPIs.

39.6. Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Strategy

CT/1125/039

- (i). Dean of Research and the Graduate School, Professor N. White, highlighted that the revised strategy was an evolution of previous research and knowledge exchange strategies. Court was advised that the strategy now explicitly included innovation, reflecting government priorities, and it aimed to broaden metrics beyond spin-outs to include economic and regional impact, with ongoing debate about appropriate measures.

Court noted that the strategy had been developed through the Research Executive, the Professoriate, SMT, as well as open consultation with staff and had been recommended to Court for approval by Senate on 29 October 2025.

Outcome: Court approved the Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Strategy.

40. Policy Documents

40.1. Fraud Prevention Policy **CT/1125/040**

- (i). Court flagged the need to ensure that both the Code of Student Discipline: Academic Misconduct policy and the Code of Student Discipline: Non-Academic Misconduct policy were referenced as appropriate, since the existing reference to the Discipline Procedure only applies to staff.

Outcome: Court approved the Fraud Prevention Policy, subject to amendment as noted above.

40.2. Information Security Policy **CT/1125/041**

- (i). Court reflected on whether the policy was robust enough in the context of AI-enabled data leakage, specifically regarding the use of unapproved AI tools. Court was advised that an AI Governance Framework was under development.

Outcome: Court approved the Information Security Policy.

40.3. Data Protection Policy **CT/1125/042**

Outcome: Court approved the Data Protection Policy.

40.4. Individual Rights Policy **CT/1125/043**

Outcome: Court approved the Individual Rights Policy.

40.5. Privacy by Design by Default Policy **CT/1125/044**

Outcome: Court approved the Privacy by Design by Default Policy.

40.6. Conflict of Interest Policy and Practice **CT/1125/045**

Outcome: Court approved the Conflict of Interest Policy and Practice.

Outcome: Court agreed that any revisions to Sections 6 and 7 of the policy, outwith the normal review period, be delegated to the Senior Management Team for approval as these relate to the operational aspects of its implementation.

40.7. Visiting and Emeritus Title Policy

CT/1125/046

Outcome: Court approved the Visiting and Emeritus Title Policy.

Matters for Information

41. International and Partnerships Strategy Report 2024-25 (Update) CT/1125/047

Outcome: Court noted the International and Partnerships Strategy Report 2024-25 (Update).

42. Scottish Funding Council Return: Research Assurance and Accountability Return

CT/1125/048

Outcome: Court noted the Scottish Funding Council Return: Research Assurance and Accountability Return.

Concluding Matters

43. Any Other Competent Business

Oral Report

- (i). Court requested assurance regarding the management of reputational risks associated with the media coverage of a recent external speaker event. Court was advised that an investigation was ongoing, and further actions would be determined upon its conclusion.

44. Reflections on Court Meeting and Future Business

Oral Report

- (i). Court reflected on the volume and structure of meeting materials and discussed possible improvements while balancing detail with meeting efficiency for future sessions. Court highlighted the extensive length of the meeting book (over 700 pages), expressing that while the detail was valuable, it had been challenging to review in depth, and suggested prioritising content for more efficient preparation. It was noted that this volume of papers and length of meeting was exceptional and was as a result of the need to consider the supporting strategies. Court discussed options for handling committee meeting minutes, including circulating them in advance for approval by correspondence.
- (i). Court was advised that its next meeting would take place on Tuesday 17 February prior to the full day Court Conference on 18 February 2026. Court was advised that the programme was under development and further details would be circulated in due course.

Date of Next Meeting: 17 February 2026

Chair: David Brew