

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR THE CLERK TO COUNCIL

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Council is the governing body of the University of Bristol and exercises general control over the University and its affairs. All members of Council are trustees of the University, and Council's decisions affect all aspects of the University's life and work.
- 1.2 The Clerk to Council is responsible for supporting Council, ensuring the effective coordination of its business and providing members of Council with advice and guidance about its responsibilities and on how these responsibilities should be discharged.
- 1.3 The University Secretary will usually act as Clerk to Council, as envisaged by the University's Statutes and Ordinances¹. The University Secretary may delegate the role of Clerk to Council (or any particular element of it) to a member of his or her staff (preferably a person with a legal background).
- 1.4 Although the Clerk to Council may combine the function of Clerk with another function within the University, he or she must exercise care in separating the two functions. Irrespective of any other positions held the Clerk to Council is, in relation to his or role of Clerk and to Council business, responsible to Council and reports directly to the Chair of Council.

2. Duties of the Clerk to Council

The Clerk will ensure that the business of Council is coordinated and operates effectively. In doing so, the principal duties of the Clerk to Council include:

- ensure that Council conducts its business and responsibilities according to University policy and procedure (including that set by Council) and as provided by the University's Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations
- advise members of Council in the discharge of their duties as members of Council, providing or obtaining training and support as appropriate and ensuring that all new members of Council receive a full induction upon joining Council
- support the Chair of Council including in particular supporting the Chair in the conduct of regular reviews of the effectiveness of Council
- ensure that new or revised responsibilities for the Council (e.g. arising from new legislation, best practice or the recommendations of any effectiveness review) are drawn to Council's attention
- alert Council if he/she believes that any proposed action would exceed Council's powers or would be contrary to the proper discharge of Council's responsibilities
- obtain legal, or other specialist, advice for Council as appropriate
- maintain the register of Council members' interests and of any other persons from whom the Council requires a statement of interests
- arrange for the re-imbusement to Council members of the reasonable expenses they incur in carrying out Council business

¹ Specific references as follows:

- Under Statute 8, the Treasurer may resign by providing notice to Council via the University Secretary
- Under Statute 15, members of Council may resign by providing notice to Council via the University Secretary
- Under Ordinance 3, Council members should submit written questions to the Vice-Chancellor via the University Secretary
- Under Ordinance 3, Council members should submit items for discussion at Council meetings to the University Secretary
- Under Ordinance 3, conflicts of interest should be notified to the University Secretary
- Under Ordinance 5, staff members of Council submit nominations to the University Secretary

- ensure that all documentation provided to members of the Council is concise, appropriate and accurate, and facilitates effective decision-making.