

University of Bristol

Council's Statement of Primary Responsibilities

This Statement is based on the Model Statement contained in the Governance Code of Practice published by the Committee of University Chairs, adapted to reflect the powers and responsibilities that the Council of the University of Bristol derives from the University Charter and Statutes.

Under the Charter, Council is the governing body of the University. Members of Council are charity trustees and accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the University by ensuring that it is solvent, well-run and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it was established.

Within the framework laid down by the Charter and Statutes, the primary responsibilities of Council are as follows.

1. To contribute to the development and review and approve the mission and strategic vision of the institution, its business plans and key performance indicators, and to ensure that these meet the interests of stakeholders.
2. To appoint the Vice-Chancellor as Chief Academic and Administrative Officer of the University and the HEFCE Accountable Officer and to put in place suitable arrangements for monitoring his/her performance.
3. To delegate authority to the Vice-Chancellor, for the academic, corporate, financial, estate and human resources management of the institution. And 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 head of the institution.
4. To ensure the establishment and monitoring of systems of control and accountability, including financial and operational controls and risk assessment, and procedures for handling internal grievances and for managing conflicts of interest.
5. To ensure that processes are in place to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the institution against the plans and approved key performance indicators, which should be – where possible and appropriate – benchmarked against other comparable institutions.
6. To establish processes to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the governing body itself.
7. 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 (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership)
8. To safeguard the good name and values of the institution.

9. To appoint a secretary to the governing body and to ensure that, if the person appointed has managerial responsibilities in the institution, there is an appropriate separation in the lines of accountability.
10. To be the employing authority for all staff in the institution and to be responsible for establishing and reviewing a human resources strategy.
11. To make such provision as it thinks fit for the general welfare of students, in consultation with the University Senate and/or the Students' Union Sabbatical Officers.
12. To be the principal financial and business authority of the institution, to ensure that proper books of account are kept, to approve the annual budget and financial statements, and to have overall responsibility for the institution's assets, property and estate.
13. To be the institution's legal authority and, as such, to ensure that systems are in place for meeting all the institution's legal obligations, including those arising from contracts and other legal commitments made in the institution's name. Council shall have the sole custody and use of the University seal, arms and mace.
14. To accept ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of employees, students and other individuals while they are on the institution's premises and in other places where they may be affected by its operations, and to ensure that the institution has a written statement of policy on health and safety, and arrangements for the implementation of that policy.
15. To make, amend, add to or repeal Statutes, subject to the approval of the Privy Council, and to make Ordinances for the regulation of all matters not required by the Charter to be dealt with by Statute.
16. To report to each annual meeting of Court any changes to the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances.
17. To act as trustee for any property, legacy, endowment, bequest or gift in support of the work and welfare of the institution.
18. To ensure that the institution's constitution is followed at all times and that appropriate advice is available to enable this to happen.