



For the attention of

Lord Smith of Kelvin Kt
Chair, Steering Group
Scottish Code of Good HE Governance

10 June 2013

Dear Lord Smith

DRAFT SCOTTISH CODE OF GOOD HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE: FINAL CONSULTATION

Heriot-Watt University is pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the final phase of consultation towards finalisation of the Draft Scottish Code of Higher Education Governance.

The Draft Code was discussed recently by our Court which views the Code as a very positive development in terms of providing a framework for effective and consistent governance across all Scottish Higher Education Institutions.

In this last phase of consultation, we note that the Steering Group has specifically requested new evidence which might have been overlooked in drafting the Code.

Our Court members are of the general view that the importance of inclusion of the student body within the membership of a higher education governing body has been somewhat overlooked. While there are several passing references in the Code to student members on governing bodies, members were surprised and disappointed (most especially our student Court members) not to see some explicit guidance in the Code which set out student membership as a criterion of effective higher education governance (relating to both corporate and academic governance, i.e. including both Court and Senate memberships).

Determining the appropriate level of student membership will be dependent, of course, on the overall size of a governing body membership. At Heriot-Watt University, where our Court membership stands at 25, two student representatives are included: the President and the Vice-President of the Student Union, as elected by the University's student body. We would not consider having less than two members in the student category on our Court at its current size.

At Heriot-Watt, besides including student members on our Court and our Senate, they sit on a number of key policy, strategy and decision-making committees and boards where they add considerable value to the work and decision-making of the University. It is because of the relationships built up around the work of all of these formal bodies, that the University and its Student Union have established such a strong and effective partnership. This has greatly assisted Heriot-Watt in recent years to deliver against one of its key aims to deliver a high quality student experience.

If it were possible, we would like to see something more in the Code which reflects the important contribution to higher education governance provided by student governing body members.

Yours sincerely

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