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PAGE 3: Respondent information

Q1: Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?	Organisation
Q2: Please enter your full name or the organisation's name	The University of Strathclyde
Q3: Contact details	
Address line 1	[REDACTED]
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Email address	[REDACTED]
Q4: The Committee of Scottish Chairs would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference. NOTE - If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, anonymous publishing refers only to your name, not your organisation's name. If this option is selected, your organisation name will still be published.	Publish response only (anonymous)

PAGE 4: Review questions

Q5: How well has the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance served its purpose?

When the Scottish Code was introduced in 2013, Scottish universities were already required to demonstrate compliance with the pre-existing CUC Code of Governance and the relevant sections of the UK Corporate Governance Code, as a condition of grant. As such, universities were already in a demonstrably strong position in terms of the quality and effectiveness of their governance arrangements. Nonetheless, at the University of Strathclyde, the introduction of the Scottish Code has supported an enhanced focus within the institution on reviewing and implementing best practice.

Q6: What effects has the Code had on the governance of Scottish higher education? Please provide specific examples of any improvements it has brought, or ways in which it has failed to serve its purpose.

The University of Strathclyde is committed to the continual improvement of its governance arrangements in order to ensure that it remains effective, inclusive, transparent and accountable. The codification of the key principles of good governance has supported further enhancement of this approach across the sector, whilst recognising the autonomy and diversity that is key to the global success of Scotland's higher education institutions.

For specific evidence of the sector-wide impact of the Scottish Code, the Committee of Scottish Chairs' 'One Year into Implementation' report, published in 2014, documented the significant progress made in a relatively short space of time and provided clear and evidenced examples of enhanced governance practices put in place by all Scottish universities in response to the Code. The Report specifically highlighted the publication of a role description and skills register for members of the governing body at the University of Strathclyde as a case study of the Code being applied in practice.

Other steps taken at Strathclyde, in response to the Code, to benchmark and ensure completeness in our system of governance include:

- Ensuring that the advertisement of Court vacancies include reference to the desire for a diverse membership and are published widely in professional media with the purpose of encouraging more female and minority applicants (Main Principles 1 & 11);
- Reviewing and updating the Court's Statement of Primary Responsibilities to ensure that the appointment of the Principal and Vice-Chancellor and the subsequent performance monitoring process includes a requirement to consult with all members of Court (Main Principle 5);
- Publication of Court's Register of Interests, which was previously available on request (Main Principle 6);
- Comprehensive review and regular monitoring of the Court's Schedule of Delegated Authority, including the authority delegated to the Principal (Main Principle 8);
- Composition of the University's Court Membership Group (equivalent to a Nominations Committee) revised to include an appointed staff member of Court – a student member was included prior to the introduction of the Code (Main Principle 11);
- Agendas, minutes and non-reserved papers published on the University website (Main Principle 14);
- Keeping effectiveness under review annually through a regular survey of all Court members and one-to-one meetings between the Convener and individual members, with outcomes reported to Court. Also, the appointment of the Vice-Convener of Court as the 'independent intermediary' to allow members to raise any issues about the conduct of Court or the Convener (Main Principle 16);
- The intention to undertake an externally-facilitated Review of Effectiveness in 2017/18, to coincide with the anticipated appointment of a new Convener of Court (Main Principle 11);
- Performance against institutional-level Key Performance Indicators published within the University's Annual Reports (Main Principle 18).

Q7: What if any) changes to the Code would help to improve the governance of Scottish higher education? Please provide evidence of how any suggested changes would improve governance.

Any changes should avoid adding to the current regulatory burden of universities and the widely accepted 'comply or explain' approach should be maintained to reflect the diversity of the sector. In order to support a process of continual review and enhancement of governance practices, the Code itself could be shortened to include only the Main Principles, with these being reviewed on the current three-year cycle. Providing the Supporting Guidelines (and other relevant guidance) in a separate document or online would enable these to be updated more regularly, including with case studies or examples of good practice (such was the original purpose stated within the 2013 Code).

Q8: Should the Code be changed to reflect the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2016, or any other legislative or regulatory changes made since 2013? If so, what changes would you like to see?

Any revisions to the Code should not go beyond the provisions of the Act, in recognition of the need to minimise regulatory burdens and of the significant governance changes that Scottish universities will be required to implement over the next few years to ensure compliance with the Act. Other than making reference to the Act's existence, it is not clear that its provisions require to be reflected in any detail within the Code. It is of course important to ensure that there is no conflict between the provisions of the Act and the requirements of the Code.

Q9: Does anything need to change in the current Code to improve its clarity or presentation, even if not changing the substance?

Restricting the Code itself to a core set of Main Principles (as suggested above) would bring focus and significantly improve clarity and presentation.

Q10: Is there any good practice in higher education or other sectors, and from Scotland or elsewhere, which you would particularly highlight?

The Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Universities is one example of a statement of high-level governance principles that is both succinct and effective. This is available at the following URL: https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/efficiency-and-governance/legislation-and-governance/University-Governance#.V_d3Q_TbCjw

Q11: Please provide any other relevant comments you may have.

N/A
