

Open consultation: review of the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance

Comments from the General Council of the University of Edinburgh

Publish response only with name of the organisation

We subscribe fully to the core values espoused by the Code such as accountability, transparency sustainability, effectiveness and equality and diversity. We believe that due to the increased focus on ensuring good governance, which includes the development of the current Code, there have been a number of constructive changes to the organisation and working practices of our governing body and its sub-committees. Although there must continue to be regular reviews of its effectiveness we believe that presently it works well and meets or exceeds normal accepted standards of good governance.

The recent legislation from the Scottish Government, the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, is a significant change in context since the original Code was developed. It has always been said in our previous submissions that the contents of the Code should very much focus on good principles and sound values with as little detail as practicable. It should not be prescriptive but allow individual institutions to develop their own solutions to meet their own particular requirements. This is particularly necessary now that there is a greater degree of prescription around higher education governance in the recent legislation and given the wide range in size and nature of the higher education institutions in Scotland. Each governing body must produce clear documentation of its structures and working arrangements which must address the requirements of the Code and the 2016 Bill as well as meeting all necessary legal and regulatory standards.

We very much hope that a revised Code will be significantly more concise and simplified.