



**Information for prospective Staff Members of Senate,
the University's Governing Body**

FOREWORD

Thank you for the interest you have shown in membership of Senate, the University's Governing Body.

As Chair of Senate, I am particularly proud that Northern Ireland is home to one of the leading universities in the UK and Ireland, with a distinguished heritage and history. This status puts an onus on the University to be a leader within the higher education sector – not just in research and education but also in its management and governance.

Senate, as the Governing Body of "The Queen's University of Belfast" carries overall responsibility for the mission, strategic vision, performance and governance of the University.

Queen's University Belfast is a registered charity and, as such, members of the governing body are also charity trustees. Senate consists of 26 members, six of whom are elected by the staff across three separate constituencies, as set out below:

- (i) Academic Council - two members, elected by Regulations approved by Academic Council.
- (ii) Academic Staff - two members, elected by the academic staff of the University.
- (iii) Professional Services Staff - two members, elected by the professional services staff of the University.

Under the Statutes of the University, Senate is now seeking to elect the Academic Staff and the Professional Services Staff representatives, and nominations are now invited from eligible members.

Those elected will hold office for up to four years, with effect from 1 August 2026, and may be eligible for re-election for one further period of up to four years.

If you feel that you have the required commitment and time, we look forward to hearing from you.

Dr Len O'Hagan
Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Senate



Contents Page

	Page Nos
Foreword	2
The University – Background Information	4
The University's Vision	4
A Tradition of Excellence – A World-class Future	4
The Powers of Senate	5
Charitable Status	5
Membership of Senate	5
Chair of Senate	5
Composition of Senate	5
Secretary to Senate	5
The University Senate – Responsibilities	6
Senate Member Responsibilities	6
Senate Involvement and Time Commitment	6
Attendance at Senate Meetings	6
Core Committees	6
Other Engagements	6
Circulation of Papers	6
Induction, Training and Development	6
Principles of Public Life/Code of Conduct	6
Collective Responsibility - Corporate Decision-Making	6
Conflicts of Interest	7
Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Guidance	7
Review of Senate Effectiveness	7
Remuneration	7
Further Information	7

The University – Background Information

1. The University's Vision

Our vision is to be a global research-intensive university, generating internationally leading research coupled with outstanding teaching and learning, focused on the needs of our society, locally and globally.

2. A Tradition of Excellence - A World-class Future

The University was founded in 1845 as part of the federal Queen's University of Ireland with Colleges in Belfast, Galway and Cork, and was awarded independent degree awarding powers in 1908 when it became a university in its own right. It is one of the oldest universities in the UK: only nine can claim longer lineage. It has a rich and distinguished heritage and holds a special place in the history of education, research and innovation.

Today, Queen's is one of the top 200 universities worldwide, (QS and Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2026). As a member of the Russell Group of 24 UK research-intensive universities, Queen's combines excellence in research and education with a student-centred ethos.

We are ranked the Number 1 university in the UK (StudentCrowd University Awards 2025) and we have 21 subjects in the top 200 in the world (QS World University Rankings 2025). Four of those subjects are in the World Top 100 (QS World Rankings by subject 2025): Pharmacy and Pharmacology, Nursing, Performing Arts; and Social Policy and Administration. In the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU, 2024), we have 15 subjects in the top 200 in the world.

The University is ranked 13th in the UK for Research Intensity (Complete University Guide 2026). In REF 2021, 99% of Queen's research environment was assessed as 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent' in REF. Our researchers are at the forefront of discovery and innovation, with ambitious projects to address global problems and make a difference to society worldwide.

Queen's is also ranked 2nd in the UK for entrepreneurial impact (i2i University Spinout Ranking 2024) and has been awarded 7 Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Further and Higher Education - a prestigious award of the highest national honour available to universities and FE colleges across the UK, approved directly by The King and Parliament.

Queen's is a globally connected and networked University with strategic partnerships across the world, helping us to expand our impact on wider society locally, nationally and globally. Amongst our dynamic partnerships are academic links with leading institutions in America, China, India, the Middle East and Asia.

Ranked 5th in the world for international outlook, Queen's is a diverse institution with over 4,300 staff and 24,000 students, including 4,000 international students, from over 90 countries, helping to create a thriving multicultural community and vibrant campus. They are joining a university that is committed to attracting, retaining and developing the best global talent within an environment that enables them to realise their full potential.

An innovative, welcoming and inclusive place to work and study, Queen's is a leader in gender equality and diversity, proud to be the first university in Ireland, and only the second in the UK to earn an Athena Swan Gold Award for our commitment to gender equality.

The unique and positive impact of Queen's locally and globally is well recognised and evidenced through our key achievements. It is because of these successes we are able to plan even more ambition for the future.

3. The Powers of Senate

Senate is the Governing Body of the University, deriving its powers from the University Charter, Statutes and supporting Regulations - these are available on request via senate@qub.ac.uk.

4. Charitable Status

The University successfully registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 3 July 2015. As a result, all members of Senate members are trustees of the charity "The Queen's University of Belfast". As charity trustees, they are collectively responsible for all the activities of the charity and must observe the requirements of the Charities Act, trustee and other relevant legislation, and have a shared duty of care for the charity.

5. Membership of Senate

5.1 Chair of Senate

Senate is chaired by Dr Len O'Hagan - one of the University's Pro-Chancellors. The Chair is responsible for the leadership and effective operation of the Governing Body.

5.2 Composition of Senate

The Governing Body has twenty-six members, as set out below:

(i) Ex-Officio Members

- Pro-Chancellors (3)
- President and Vice-Chancellor
- Honorary Treasurer
- Senior Independent Governor
- President, Students' Union

(ii) Academic Council (2 members)

(iii) Academic Staff (2 members)

(iv) Professional Services Staff (2 members)

(v) Students' Union Council (2 members)

(vi) Convocation (1 member)

(vii) Co-opted Lay Members (10 members)

The majority of Senate members serve for four years and are eligible to be considered for one further period of four years. For information on each member, please refer to [Senate Profiles](#).

5.3 Secretary to Senate

Under the Statutes of the University, the Vice-President (Governance and External Affairs) and Registrar is Secretary to Senate - any queries relating to the constitution and governance of the University are handled directly through The Chancellery via senate@qub.ac.uk.

The University Senate - Responsibilities

6. Senate Member Responsibilities

The key responsibilities of Senate are detailed in its Statement of Primary Responsibilities - this is attached in Appendix A.

7. Senate Involvement and Time Commitment

7.1 Attendance at Senate Meetings

Senate meets a minimum of four times each year, for approximately three hours on each occasion. Meetings are normally held on Tuesday mornings and dates are notified in advance. In addition, a Senate Day is held annually. To contribute and add value to the work of Senate, regular attendance is essential.

7.2 Core Committees

Members are also expected to contribute to the University's core Committees, through involvement in the People and Culture Committee and Special Committees as required.

7.3 Other Engagements

Throughout the year, members are given the opportunity to attend/participate in all aspects of university life - this will include celebratory and ceremonial occasions, such as graduation ceremonies.

7.4 Circulation of Papers

The agenda and supporting papers for each meeting are circulated one week in advance - this allows members time to familiarise themselves with the matters under consideration and to fully contribute to discussion/debate. All papers are available via the Diligent platform and access and relevant training will be provided on appointment.

7.5 Induction, Training and Development

All new members of Senate are required to participate in a Senate Induction and the ongoing programme of Senate briefings and site visits. The University operates in a highly complex environment, and it is important that Senate members have a full understanding of the key priorities and challenges facing the sector and the institution itself.

8. Principles of Public Life - The Senate Charter and Code of Conduct

Members of Senate must, both individually and collectively, observe the seven principles of public life drawn up by the Nolan Committee - selflessness; integrity; accountability; objectivity; openness; honesty; and leadership. Members must also comply fully with the Senate Charter and Code of Conduct, attached in Appendix B.

9. Collective Responsibility - Corporate Decision-Making

Senate reaches its decisions generally by consensus or, on occasions, by a majority vote of those present at quorate meetings. Members are openly encouraged to express their views at meetings but must accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by Senate.

This collective responsibility holds whether or not a member of Senate is present when a decision is taken and regardless of whether or not they originally supported a specific recommendation. Further information on this responsibility is available within the Senate Charter and Code of Conduct.

10. Conflicts of Interest

No member of Senate, nor any organisation with whom that member, or a member of their family, has a connection, should obtain any advantage, pecuniary or otherwise, through their association with the University and, in particular, their membership of its Governing Body.

On appointment, all members will be asked to complete and, subsequently, maintain their entry in the University's Register of Interests - accessible to staff via Queen's Online. Members will be expected to declare any interest which may interfere with, or which may be perceived to interfere with, a member's objectivity and independent judgement.

Members will also be expected to disclose any such interest arising during the consideration of Senate / Committee business and to leave the meeting for the duration of all related discussion / debate.

11. Committee of University Chairs (CUC) The Higher Education Code of Governance 2020

Senate has adopted the CUC Code and members must comply fully with this Code in discharging their responsibilities. Further information on the Code is available [here](#). A review of this Code is currently underway by the CUC.

12. Review of Senate Effectiveness

In line with the CUC Code, Senate will keep its effectiveness under regular review. Effectiveness is measured against the Statement of Primary Responsibilities, the CUC Code and other emerging best practice, within and without the sector, on corporate governance.

All Senate members are also required to meet regularly with the Chair of Senate, on a one-to-one basis, at least every two years. The purpose of these meetings is to enable the Chair and members to reflect on their contribution to the work of Senate and ways in which this could be enhanced / supported going forward.

13. Remuneration

The position of Senate member does not attract remuneration, but expenses properly incurred, in respect of any activities carried out on behalf of the University, will be reimbursed.

Further Information

Further information is available from The Chancellery or by email at senate@qub.ac.uk

Statement of Primary Responsibilities

1. To approve the mission and strategic vision of the institution, long-term academic and business plans and key performance indicators, and to ensure that these meet the interests of stakeholders.
2. To ensure compliance with the University's Charter, Statutes, Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and other rules, as well as UK and EU legal requirements, where applicable.
3. To delegate authority to the President and Vice-Chancellor, as chief executive, for the academic, corporate, financial, estate and personnel management of the institution. Also, 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 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.
8. To safeguard the good name and values of the institution.
9. To appoint the President and Vice-Chancellor as chief executive, and to put in place suitable arrangements for monitoring their performance.
10. 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 line of accountability.
11. To be the employing authority for all staff in the institution and to be responsible for establishing a human resources strategy.
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 University'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.
14. To act as trustee for any property, legacy, endowment, request or gift in support of the work and welfare of the institution.
15. To ensure that arrangements are in place for the proper management of health and safety in respect of students, staff and anyone else affected by the University's operations.
16. To ensure, through the appointment of lay persons (in accordance with the Statutes), that there is a balance of skills and experience, amongst the members of the Governing Body, which is sufficient to enable it to meet its primary responsibilities.

Senate Charter and Code of Conduct

The Charter and Code of Conduct affirms the standards of conduct, responsibilities, and expectations of all members of Senate and the core Committees of Queen's University Belfast and to those who attend Senate meetings. It exists to ensure that members and the Co-Optees discharge their duties with integrity, objectivity, impartiality, and in the best interests of the University, its students, staff, alumni, and wider society. It reflects the University's values, its Charter, Statutes and Regulations, and the Seven Principles of Public Life.

1. The Role of a member of Senate

- 1.1 The Charter states that there shall be a Senate which shall be the governing body of the University, responsible for the strategic oversight of the University and, subject to the powers of the Academic Council, shall have overall control over the conduct of the affairs of the University and shall have all such other powers and duties as may be conferred upon it by the Statutes.
- 1.2 The role of a member of Senate shall be as prescribed in the Charter, Statutes and Regulations of the University.
- 1.3 Members of Senate are also Trustees of the charity 'The Queen's University of Belfast'.
- 1.4 Members of Senate shall not use their position for personal, political, or financial gain.
- 1.5 In fulfilling their role, members of Senate shall:
 - a) Contribute to the effective governance and strategic direction of the University to ensure its long-term sustainability.
 - b) Exercise independent judgement, openness and collective responsibility in decision-making.
 - c) Provide support, challenge, and guidance to the President and Vice-Chancellor and the University Management Board.
 - d) Promote and safeguard the reputation and good standing of the University.
 - e) Follow specific responsibilities derived from its partnerships with sponsoring bodies and from its charitable status.

2. Appointment of members of Senate

- 2.1 Members of Senate shall be appointed or elected in accordance with the provisions of the University Charter, Statutes and Regulations.

3. Resignation and Removal of a member of Senate

- 3.1 A member of Senate may resign from office in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, Statutes and Regulations.
- 3.2 A member of Senate may be removed from office as prescribed in the Statutes.

4. Commitments and Expectations

A member of Senate shall, at all times:

- a) Comply with the Charter, Statutes and Regulations of the University, together with all applicable University policies and procedures and the Senate Charter and Code of Conduct.
- b) Act in accordance with the University's values of **Integrity, Connected, Ambition, Respect, and Excellence**.
- c) Uphold the **Seven Principles of Public Life**: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership.
- d) Treat all members of the University community and visitors equally and respectfully, regardless of gender, religion, community background, nationality, political opinion, race/ethnic origin, disability, marital status, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, or age.
- e) Behave responsibly, ensuring that their actions do not adversely affect the good name, standing, or reputation of the University.
- f) Respect the rights of all members of the University to lawful freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and academic freedom.
- g) Prepare appropriately for and attend meetings of Senate and its core Committees, taking personal responsibility to maintain strict confidentiality of the information received.
- h) Be aware of the extent of their powers and not attempt to exceed them. As non-executives, members should not stray into areas which are rightfully reserved to the President and Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Leadership Team.

5. Duties and Responsibilities

Members of Senate shall:

- a) Represent the interests of students, staff, and alumni with integrity and impartiality.
- b) Accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by Senate.
- c) Contribute to the University's leadership and advocacy locally, nationally, and globally.
- d) Promote equality, peace, and social justice, consistent with the University's Social Charter.
- e) Support the advancement of the University's mission through oversight of education, research, financial sustainability, and community impact.
- f) Act in good faith at all times in their dealings with and on behalf of Senate, respecting their fiduciary duty to the University.
- g) Refrain from reporting comments or expressions of opinion, given within the confines of a meeting, outside a meeting.
- h) Refrain from making statements on behalf of Senate without first having obtained the consent of the Chair, Pro-Chancellor or President and Vice-Chancellor.

6. Conflicts of Interest and Commitment

- 6.1 Members of Senate shall not hold any conflict of commitment, financial or otherwise, that interferes with the discharge of their duties and all pecuniary, business or other personal interests must be declared, along with those of associated individuals.
- 6.2 Members of Senate shall declare any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest in accordance with the relevant University policies and procedures.
- 6.3 Members of Senate shall not receive gifts, hospitality or benefits of any kind from a third party which might be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity. They shall report any offer of such to the Registrar, in accordance with the Policy on the Acceptance of Gifts, Gratuities and Hospitality.

All members of Senate and core Committee Co-Optees are requested to sign the Senate Charter and Code of Conduct to confirm their commitment to it on appointment.

I have read and agree to abide by the Senate Charter and Code of Conduct, as set out above:

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

September 2025