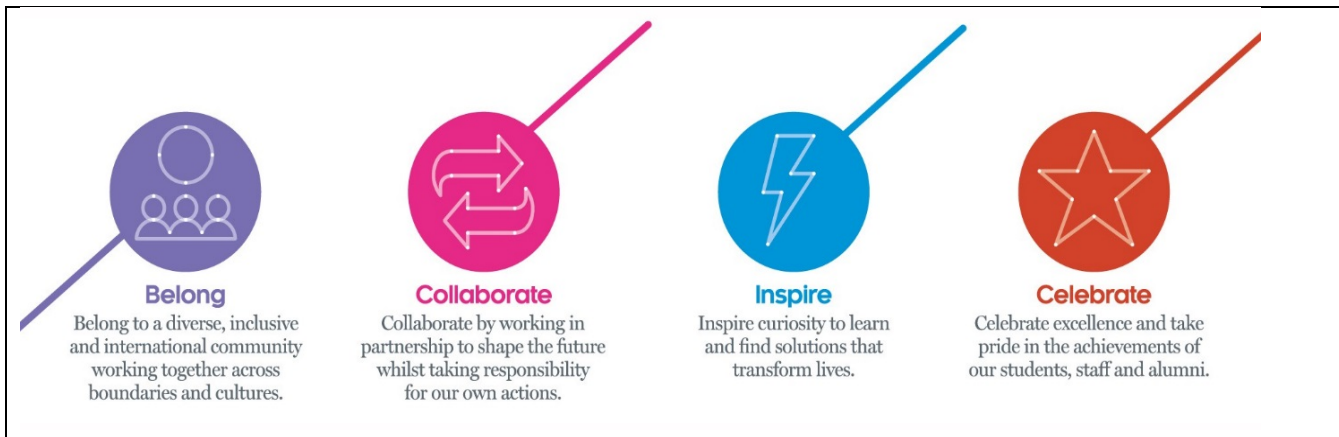


Role and Responsibilities of Senators 2025

Background

The University seeks to be a **Values-Led** organisation. Senators should **uphold** the Values to:



The role of Senate as detailed in the [Charter](#) and as delegated by [the Court](#) is to be responsible for:

“the academic work and standards of the University, Programmes of Study, teaching and research, and the regulation and superintendence of the education and discipline of the Students. The Senate shall take such measures and act in such manner as shall appear to it best calculated to promote the interests of the University and/or any member of the Heriot-Watt Group as places of education, learning and teaching, research, knowledge exchange and scholarship.”

Membership of [the Senate](#) is a privilege bestowed on only a small proportion of the University community at any given time. The role therefore requires commitment and engagement.

This paper seeks to articulate a shared understanding of how colleagues undertaking the role can be informed by the University Values whilst they contribute to the work of the Senate, and helping to deliver [Strategy 2025](#). This is articulated as being a “**Senator 2025**”.

The following principles and behaviours are agreed by the Senate as a whole in order to help Senators to operate, taking account also of the University’s [Constitutional Framework](#) (i.e. the Charter, Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations, Policies, Procedures, and Standing Orders).

The benefits of a fully functioning Senate, informed by the Values, will be to help ensure the delivery of Strategy 2025 in a collegiate, informed and respectful manner.

Principles of Membership of the Senate

1. Active participation by all Senators is paramount to the success of the Senate.
 - a. The Senate is a collegial and respectful space for the academic governance of the global University.
 - b. Senators have a duty to participate in discussions and all Senators have an equal say on the matters before the Senate, regardless of role,¹ seniority, or location, and can speak without fear of censure for expressing views in the common academic interest.²
2. Senators are regarded as members of the Senate as individuals with diverse academic experience.
 - a. Senators are appointed or elected in an individual capacity, and are expected to take a University-wide perspective on issues before them.
 - b. Individual Senators are not delegates of the areas from which they are drawn, and nor is their role that of advancing the interests of those areas.
 - c. Notwithstanding this, and having regard to the Senate's role in underpinning collegiality, Senators are expected informally to take soundings from colleagues on non-reserved matters of particular interest prior to meetings of the Senate and report back to colleagues subsequently.³

¹ With the exception of the Principal, who has some specified rights and responsibilities as Chair of the Senate

² If uncertain on any points, Senators are encouraged to raise specific issues with the Chair, or the Secretary, during or outwith Senate meetings

³ Such seeking of views can only be on an informal basis, and Senators cannot be expected to in any way ‘represent’ groups of Staff or Students. Nor can Senators be ‘mandated’ on any particular matter by those who elect them.

Operational Responsibilities of members of the Senate

In the conduct of their duties, all Senators (elected and *ex officio*, Staff and Student) have a responsibility to:

1. uphold and follow the Values of the University as well as the nine principles of public life in Scotland: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership, public service, and respect;
2. help ensure the delivery of the University's academic Vision and Mission, and Strategic Goals;
3. put into effect the principles of institutional citizenship that were agreed by the Senate in May 2017;
4. encourage colleagues to stand for election to the Senate – bearing in mind the benefits to be gained from Senate being composed of members drawn from a wide diversity of backgrounds and experiences;
5. help ensure the delivery of the responsibilities of the Senate (including through participation in the Senate committee structure, which includes appropriate School committees), and to take collective and individual ownership for the issues under the Senate's remit and for the discussion and resolution of these issues;
6. be prepared by reading the papers prior to meetings, whilst respecting confidentiality and handling sensitive matters with discretion;
7. engage in free, frank, candid and respectful discussion on matters brought before Senate, contributing to the broad spectrum of thoughts and opinions that are necessary for proper consideration of academic business – recognising that respectful disagreement is an important and valid part of arriving at an outcome;
8. take into account the unique needs and priorities of HWU's global composition, including to ensure the inclusion of colleagues participating in meetings remotely;
9. participate in all meetings of Senate unless absence is due to illness, urgent personal reasons or academic commitments, and whilst in meetings to remain 'engaged' with the subject matter, only using technology to enable their participation in the meeting;
10. if allocated actions, to ensure that these are followed up and reported on in the anticipated timescale;
11. be committed to communicating the work of Senate to the wider University Community, bearing in mind that the only official report of the meeting is the Minutes of the meeting, and that some matters must remain confidential;
12. participate actively in the wider University community (including to attend other formal and informal meetings/events in the University relevant to the business of Senate) and show a willingness to be appointed as members of Senate committees,⁴ sub-committees, or working groups.

'Job Specification' of a Senator

Term of Office

Ex Officio Member: For the duration of their office by virtue of which they are a member of Senate

Elected Staff Member: A term is three years, and a member may serve two consecutive terms (after which they must wait for three years before being eligible to stand again for election)⁵

Student Member: One year (up to a maximum of two years)⁴

Time Commitment:

A broad estimation is approximately one full-time-equivalent day every two months. However, service on Committees and other bodies, by virtue of membership of Senate, entails additional time commitment.

Method of Appointment

Ex Officio member: normal procedures for recruitment / appointment to the position

Elected Staff Member Election from among the eligible Staff in the respective School

Student Member: Appointment in accordance with the Statute⁴

Document prepared by Patrick Corbett, Senator and Ann Marie Dalton-Pillay, Secretary of the University
Approved and Adopted by the Senate on 11 September 2019

⁴ Senators have the opportunity to further specialise in areas within the remit of Senate, such as Research and Innovation, Learning and Teaching or Quality and Standards, by serving on these Committees. Senators also have the opportunity to stand for election by Senate to serve as a member of Court.

⁵ As specified in the revised Statute 5 of the University.