

Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 (GPRB Act) Report for the period May 2023 to August 2023

Percentage of Women on the Court (Governing Board)

The below data is at 1 August 2023. The majority of our Court and Court Committee members begin their terms of office on 1 August in the relevant year.

2023/24	Total Members	% female		Lay		Staff/Student	
		Lay	Non-Lay	M	F	M	F
Court	25	21%	18%	11	3	9	2

Number of Vacancies / Numbers of Applications from Women / Women Appointed

In May 2023, we advertised **one** vacancy within the Court. Of the seven applications received where the applicant's gender could be identified, three (42%) were from women. Of the four candidates invited to interview, two (50%) each were men and women. One male was appointed to the Court and one female candidate, identified as a strong future candidate for Court membership, was recommended for appointment to a Court Committee position.

We also advertised **one** vacancy within another Court Committee. Three applications were received, all from candidates identifying as men, and all three candidates were interviewed for the role. One male candidate was then appointed to the position.

In Spring 2023, our Alumni Association (the Watt Club) advertised **one** vacancy within the Alumni member category on the Court. Of the 21 applications received where the applicant's gender could be identified, two (9%) were from women. Of the two invited to interview, both were men. One male was appointed.

Information about the current composition of the Court can be found here:

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/about/profile/governance/court.htm>

Whether the GRPB Act was used to meet the Gender Representation objective

Section 1 of the GRPB Act sets a "gender representation objective" that a Board has 50% of non-executive members who are women. The Court of Heriot-Watt has a total of 25 members of whom 14 are lay (or non-executive) members. As at 1 August 2023, 20% were female.

Section 5 requires the University to take each steps as it considers appropriate to encourage applications by women. Whenever publishing vacancies for lay members of Court or of Court Committees, the University specifically encourages applications from women and from those with other protected characteristics that are under-represented.

Section 6 requires the University to take such other steps as they consider appropriate with a view to achieving the gender representation objective. The initial target was to meet the objective by 31 December 2022, but the University continues to monitor its gender diversity and to aim for a better gender balance on the Court.

All Court members involved in Court recruitment took part in a workshop on Mitigating Bias in March 2022. The recruitment processes for Court Committee vacancies have been assessed against an Advance HE EDI Toolkit and advertising materials were adapted to try and appeal to a wider range of candidates.

We also made changes to how we operate, making sure we are reducing barriers to more diverse groups considering taking part on our governance opportunities such as:

- Removing requirement to travel from role descriptor;
- Adjusting timing of meetings to make them more accessible to members from Dubai / Malaysia;
- Making majority of meetings online so members outside Scotland only need to travel once or twice a year;
- Collecting EDI monitoring information and benchmarking against staff / student data;
- Fulfilling EDI requirements as outlined in the Scottish Code of Good Governance;
- Adopting Internal Audit recommendations relevant to Court and Court Committee EDI, including the development of online training in Leading EDI; and
- Continually considering diversity against legislative requirements in our everyday activities.