

Role of Council

Council is the Senior Governing Body of the University of Sussex

Council's role is to act in the best interests of the University as a whole, ensuring it strategically delivers its mission to high standards with the necessary financial stability and long-term sustainability. It does this by:

- Discharging its responsibilities in relation to all relevant legislation, including the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA), and other statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Determining the University's mission, strategic direction, strategic objectives, and values. It seeks and receives assurance that the strategic plan is in line with the above and will meet the prevailing legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Ensuring an effective framework is in place for risk management, control, and governance.
- Meeting the requirements deriving from the Charter and Statutes.
- Monitoring the Institution's and its own effectiveness¹.

Powers and accountability of Council

Council is collectively responsible and accountable for all institutional activity² and conduct. Council delegates its powers and responsibilities to individuals and bodies within the institution to ensure the effective operation of the University and delivery of its charitable objectives.

In addition to all legal responsibilities, Council is accountable to the Office for Students and Charity Commission and has responsibilities under HERA, Trustees Act 2000, Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011. It is required to:

- Maximise value for money and ensure that University funds are properly safeguarded;
- Operate within the limits of delegated authorities agreed with the Regulator and those set out in the University's Charter, Statutes and Regulations (i.e. not in an operational management capacity);
- Act in an open and responsible way in all its dealings with students, staff and the public;
- Bear responsibility for compliance and promotion of equality, diversity, and disability legislation, and ensure that the University complies with its statutory and contractual responsibilities.

Council cannot delegate the following powers: appointment of the Vice-Chancellor; the variation, amendment or revocation of the Charter or Statutes; the approval of the University's annual audited accounts; and appointment of the Auditors of the University.³

Individual Council members

All members of the governing body (including students and staff members) share the same legal responsibilities and obligations as other members.⁴ Each member has personal liability for decisions made by Council. Members should not act individually or in informal groupings to take decisions on Council business outside of Council meetings. Members are required to respect confidentiality in line with Data Protection Act 2018 and university policies.

All decisions taken by Council are done so collectively, with all members acting in the capacity of a single body.

Members should always act ethically in line with the principles of public life (the Nolan principles), the institution's own ethical framework, and in the interests of the institution, its students and staff and other stakeholders.⁵

¹ Organisation of the University, | [THE COURT \(sussex.ac.uk\)](https://www.sussex.ac.uk)

² HE CUC Code 2020

³ Statute V.3

⁴ Higher Education Code of Governance (CUC, September 2020)

⁵ Higher Education Code of Governance (CUC, September 2020)