

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
ROLE AND FUNCTION OF COURT

INTRODUCTION

The University came into separate existence on 1 August 1963, as a result of the passing of the Universities of Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne Act. The constitutional framework within which the University operates is based upon its [Statutes](#) which were revised most recently in 2023.

The three main statutory bodies are the Council, the Senate, and the Court. Council is the University's governing body, Senate its supreme academic authority and Court is primarily an advisory body. The structure of governance of the University follows the usual pattern for English universities established before 1992. The relevant extract from the Statutes is set out below.

STATUTES

16. (1) There shall be a court of the University consisting of:

such principal officers of the University as the council may from time to time determine;

one sabbatical officer of the Students' Union elected annually by the Students' Union;

seven members of University staff appointed by the academic board;

together with such other co-opted members, not being fewer than thirty nor more than forty, as the court shall from time to time determine. None of the co-opted members shall be salaried staff or students of the University.

The appointed and co-opted members shall hold office for three years and shall be eligible for re-appointment for further periods provided that the total consecutive period of service does not exceed nine years unless, in exceptional circumstances, the chancellor, the pro-chancellor or vice-chancellor determines otherwise.

See also statute 57 – Procedure.

(2) In the absence of the chancellor, the pro-chancellor shall preside at all meetings of the court. In the absence of the chancellor and the pro-chancellor, the vice-chair of council shall preside.

Powers of the Court

17. (1) The court shall advise upon and further the work of the University. The powers of the court shall be as follows:
- (a) to discuss any matters relevant to the interests and well-being of the University and to send views to the council;
 - (b) to make regulations for the custody and use of the common seal of the University;
 - (c) to make statutes subject to the provisions of statute 58;
 - (d) to appoint half the lay membership of the council nominations committee for the purpose of appointing the lay members of the council.
- (2) The court and the senate sitting in joint session shall nominate the chancellor for appointment by the convocation.
- (3) The court shall normally meet twice during each academic year and shall receive reports from the vice-chancellor.

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF COURT

The prime purpose of Court is to provide a channel of communication between the University and the community in Newcastle, the North East of England, and beyond, informing different constituencies of the work of the University, and the University of the needs of these constituencies which are relevant to its activities.

Its statutory role is to advise upon and further the work of the University. Its responsibilities include the discussion of any matters relevant to the interests and well-being of the University, the approval of changes to the statutes for submission to the Privy Council, making regulations for the custody and use of the common seal of the University and the appointment of half of the lay membership of Council's Nominations Committee.

Court receives reports from the Vice-Chancellor and generally receives at each meeting a presentation on an aspect of the University's core business which provides a useful forum for discussion. Court may make recommendations to Senate and Council on any matters affecting the University or direct its concerns on issues to national organisations, the government etc.

Court normally meets twice a year.

The maximum membership of Court is 62 and it currently comprises 13 principal officers of the University, up to 7 members of University staff, 1 student member and between 30 and 40 lay co-opted members.

COURT STEERING COMMITTEE

Court has established a steering committee to advise the Chancellor on issues affecting the University where Court might usefully be consulted, and on the conduct of business at meetings of Court. The steering committee comprises three lay members of Court appointed by Court one of whom acts as Chair. The Chair of Council, the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar also attend meetings of Court Steering Committee.

Court Steering Committee keeps under review the membership of Court and makes recommendations to Court, through the Chancellor, in respect of the appointment of lay members of Court. It also acts as Court's membership on the Nominations Committee.

HONORARY UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS

Each year the University wishes to acknowledge the special contribution made by individuals to the work of the University. Court is responsible for the award of Fellowships. Court Steering Committee recommends to Court the names of persons to be awarded Honorary University Fellowships in accordance with the agreed principles for these awards.