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Duties and Responsibilities of Council members

Council has approved the following statement of duties and responsibilities of members of the Council -

The University was created by Royal Charter which provides that the Council shall be the University's supreme governing body.

The full details of the Council's powers and constitution are set out in the Charter and Statutes of the University. Council is the supreme governing body of the University. It is the employing body and is responsible for its overall organisational structure and for its finances, property, investments and business. The Senate is responsible to the Council for regulating and directing the academic work of the University in teaching and research, including the awarding of degrees.

The University is an educational charitable and chartered corporation, exempt under the terms of the Charities Act 1993. The members of the Council as individuals are the managing trustees of that charity, although they are not in strict legal sense trustees.

As managing trustees members of Council have a duty to ensure that the University restricts itself to whatever may be reasonably necessary to carry out its duties of teaching, examining and research. Members of Council as individuals are personally responsible for any breach of trust, which includes wilfully exceeding their powers or spending University funds on something outside the University's charitable objects. The Audit Committee of Council will, of course, act vigorously to ensure that the University's spending of funds will be in strict compliance with these charitable objects. It is perhaps worth noting that the University's objects are limited and do not include general benevolent purposes with a strong individual appeal (such as, for example, the relief of famine in Africa).

Members of Council as ‘trustees’ must at all times act in the best interests of the University and within the scope of their powers. Provided that they do so, as individuals, members will be indemnified by the University against the results of their actions or decisions. Members of Council will not be held personally liable for debt in the unlikely event of the University's becoming financially insolvent.

This is a general note which you may find helpful but for more detailed information on any particular aspect of the work either of the Council or the University you should refer to the Registrar and Secretary of the University. One document which may be of particular interest to Council members is the 'Manual of Financial Rules and Procedures' which can be sent to members of Council on request to the Registrar and Secretary, or can be accessed via the University website. Council members may also use the website to obtain information on administrative policies and procedures, or by contacting the Registrar and Secretary

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