



Election to Council

Academic Members of Senate – Guidance

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Table of Contents

Election to Council	3
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Guidance for Academic Members of Senate	3
What is Council?	3
Who sits on Council?	3
What does a member of Council do?	4
How do I know if I'm eligible to stand for election?	4
What do I need to do?	4
Submission: what, where and when?	5
Electoral Timetable	6
Further information	6

Election to Council

Guidance for Academic Members of Senate

We're seeking non-professorial academic members of Senate to stand for election to Council. From January 2026, we will have one vacancy on Council which must be filled by a non-professorial member of Senate at the time of election to Council.

Council is responsible for setting the University's overall strategic direction, providing oversight of delivery against the objectives set out in the University's Strategic Plan and ensuring the University meets its statutory and other obligations.

The Council is entrusted with the proper conduct of University business in line with its [Statement of Primary Responsibilities](#) and the requirements of the [Charter and Statutes](#).

What is Council?

Council is the University's governing body. Council is responsible for setting the University's overall strategic direction and providing oversight of delivery against the objectives set out in the University's Strategic Plan and the fulfilment of the University's statutory and other obligations. The Council is entrusted with the proper conduct of University business in line with its [Statement of Primary Responsibilities](#) (.pdf) and the requirements of the [Charter and Statutes](#) (.pdf). Council normally meets at least four times a year (plus at least one away day) and holds an additional joint meeting with the Senate each July.

Who sits on Council?

Council is made up of [internal and external members](#) (.pdf) who serve as governors and trustees of the University. Each member is committed to the work and impact of the University.

The majority of Council members are external, selected for their knowledge, skills and experience in areas such as, but not limited to, higher education (teaching, research, policy), audit, finance and accounting, human resources, the law, IT and information security, and estates management. Some of the internal members of Council are appointed as a consequence of the institutional role that they perform, e.g., the Vice-Chancellor and President of the Students' Union, while others are elected.

Council members must always act in the best interests of the University and take collective responsibility for decisions taken. Council members are not representatives of, or delegates for, the constituencies from which they are drawn.

What does a member of Council do?

Like Senate members, members of Council consider items of business at, and sometimes between, the four in-person meetings that take place throughout the academic year. Council members also benefit from undertaking appropriate training and development opportunities, and through attendance at away days, of which there is at least one each year.

Senate members of Council will automatically be appointed to the Senate Agenda Group (SAG). SAG normally meets four times a year and identifies matters of academic policy and strategy that may be of interest and/or pertinent to the work of Senate. SAG's suggestions are then shared with the Vice-Chancellor, in his capacity as the Chair of Senate.

There are also opportunities for internal members of Council to express an interest in being appointed to some of the committees of Council, such as Nominations Committee, Policy and Resources Committee, and the People Supporting Strategy Committee.

How do I know if I'm eligible to stand for election?

To be eligible to stand for election, you must:

- be a non-professorial academic member of Senate
- have a contract of employment that commenced at least 20 working days prior to 3 November 2025, the call for nominations, and which runs to at least 31 July 2026

You must also be able to demonstrate that you:

- are free from any conflicts of interests that might preclude you from serving as a governor and trustee of the University
- meet the Office for Students' test of being a 'fit and proper' person
- have a strong understanding of the role of Council and the responsibilities of Council members

What do I need to do?

Download, complete and return the following.

1. **Nomination form:** This will need to be signed by two academic staff members of Senate, one of whom will need to be from a different Department or School from yourself.
2. **Nominee declaration form:** This will need to be signed by you, as the electoral candidate. Please read and sign the declaration to confirm that you:

- are eligible to stand as a candidate
 - are able to demonstrate that: you are free from any conflicts of interest that might preclude you from performing the role of governor and trustee of the University; and you are a 'fit and proper person' in accordance with the requirements of the Office for Students
 - agree to complete all of the [How We Work at Essex](#) essential training modules and additional modules for University Committee members within four weeks of being appointed or prior to attending your first Council meeting or event, whichever occurs first; and
 - agree that, on appointment, you would accept the [Governor Code of Conduct](#)
3. **Nominee Personal Statement:** As part of the election, we invite all candidates to submit a short personal statement of no more than 350 words. This will be included on the ballot paper to help the electorate learn more about you and your motivations for being elected to Council.
 4. **Fit and Proper Persons Test.** This online test needs to be completed by all candidates to ensure they understand the role of a Council member and meet the regulatory requirement of being a 'Fit and Proper' person. You have one hour to complete the test.
 5. **Register of Interests Declaration and Fit and Proper Persons Declaration.** This helps to demonstrate that you satisfy the conditions described above.
 6. **Equality and Diversity Form.** The University of Essex celebrates diversity, challenges inequality and is committed to sustaining an inclusive and diverse community, and which ensures equality of opportunity for all its members. As part of our commitment, we're working hard to diversify the membership of our committees. To help us determine how much progress we're making, we ask all electoral candidates and appointed committee members to complete this form. The information that you provide in this form will be kept separate from the other information that you provide; it will not be aligned to your name. The anonymised, aggregated data will be used to for reporting purposes to Nominations Committee, a sub-committee of Council. All hard or electronic copies will be shredded or deleted once the anonymised entry is recorded.

Submission: what, where and when?

The completed forms must be submitted electronically to the Governance Office, via [Box](#) by **midday on Friday 14 November 2025**. Please also email elections@essex.ac.uk to confirm that your nomination has been submitted. All nominations will be acknowledged.

If more than one nomination is received an election will be held.

Electoral Timetable

Call for Nominations	12pm on Monday, 3 November 2025
Deadline for Nominations	12pm on Friday, 14 November 2025
Deadline for Completion of Fit and Proper Persons' Test	12pm on Friday, 14 November 2025
Election	Should it be necessary to hold an election, this will take place in early December 2025

Further information

You can find out more information about the [Council](#), the [role description](#) (.pdf), [Council's primary responsibilities](#) (.pdf), and the [Standing Orders for Council](#) (.pdf), on our Council webpages.

You can also see who the current [members of Council](#) (.pdf) are, read previous [Council agenda and minutes](#); find out the [meeting dates of Council and Council committees](#); explore the [University Committee structure](#) (.pdf) and the [Committee](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/about/governance/council-members.pdf) <https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/about/governance/council-members.pdf> of Council (.pdf) on the Governance webpages.

Informal enquiries can be addressed to the Governance Office, via email elections@essex.ac.uk.