



Election to Council Guidance

Academic Staff Members of Senate

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Publication date:	October 2026
Version:	1.0

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Election to Council

Guidance for Academic Staff members of Senate

We are seeking Academic Staff members of Senate to stand for election to Council. From 1 January 2027, there will be two vacancies on Council. The Ordinances state that the four academic staff members of Senate on Council must include:

- At least two Heads of Department at the time of election
- At least one member of the Senate who is not a Professor at the time of election

The current composition of Academic Staff members of Senate continuing in post on Council are:

- One Head of Department who is not a Professor
- One Professor who is not a Head of Department

The normal term of office for Academic Staff members elected to the Council by the Senate is three years.

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, Statutes and Ordinances](#).

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 as set out in [Ordinance 12, Statement of Primary Responsibilities](#) and the requirements of the [Charter, Statutes and Ordinances](#). Council normally meets in-person at least four times a year, with at least one additional away day, and also holds a joint meeting with Senate each July. Additional Special Meetings are also sometimes convened.

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 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 their capacity as the Chair of Senate.

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

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

To be eligible to stand for election, you must:

- be an Academic Staff member of Senate for the period in question (from 1 January 2027)
- have a contract of employment that commenced on or before 25 September 2026 (which is at least 20 working days prior to the call for nominations on 23 October 2026)
- have a contract of employment which extends to at least 31 July 2028

In addition, in line with our commitments to good governance through the Higher Education Code of Governance and under our obligations to the Office for Students, you must:

- be free from any conflicts of interest that might preclude you from serving as a governor and trustee of the University and meet the Office for Students' test of being a fit and proper person
- if you have not already done so, agree to complete all of the [How We Work at Essex](#) essential training modules and additional training modules for University Committee members, within four weeks of being appointed or prior to attending your first Council meeting or event, whichever occurs first
- agree that you will, on appointment, accept the [Code of Conduct for Governors](#) (.pdf)

What do I need to do?

Download, complete and submit 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 to you.
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 will accept the [Code of Conduct for Governors](#) (.pdf)
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.** These help 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 to the Governance Office, using this secure [Box submission link](#) by **12pm (midday) on Friday 6 November 2026**. Please also email elections@essex.ac.uk to confirm that your nomination has been submitted. All nominations will be acknowledged.

If more than two eligible nominations are received an election will be held.

Electoral timetable

Call for Nominations	12pm (midday) on Friday 23 October 2026
Deadline for Submission of Nominations	12pm (midday) on Friday 6 November 2026
Deadline for Completion of fit and proper persons test	12pm (midday) on Friday 6 November 2026
Election	Should it be necessary to hold an election, this will take place in early November 2026

Further information

You can find more information about the Council - including the role description, Council's primary responsibilities, and the Standing Orders - on our [Council](#) webpage.

The webpage also provides details of current Council members, past agendas and minutes, the University committee structure, meeting dates for Council and its Committees, and details of Committee membership and terms of reference.

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