

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY THE 19TH OF FEBRUARY 2026 AT 6PM
ROOM 201, MCINTYRE BUILDING AND ZOOM

Present : As per sederunt

Apologies: A Garg, D Keane, A Mathur, K Yu, L Barr, K Kirkpatrick

Attending: B Hay, P Swinton (clerk), S Cairns

- 1) Welcome, Apologies and Sederunt
- 2) Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Minute of previous meeting approved.

D Calvert said work on the University's AI policy is ongoing and the SRC is providing input to the University's consultation. Updates will be provided at future meetings.

- 3) QAA TPR Action Plan

D Calvert provided some context on the QAA TPR Action Plan. In the wake of Ethan Brown's death, the University undertook several reforms of its academic and policy governance, and the way it communicates with students. The University referred itself to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Scotland (QAA) who undertook a review, interviewing staff and students to discern institutional problems and explore solutions. The resulting report featured a list of recommendations which the University has accepted in full. As part of its response to the report, an action plan has been developed which requires the sign-off of the SRC President and University Principal.

L Thompson asked for clarity on the degree calculations process in the action plan.

D Calvert said the degree calculations outlined would be used by staff as part of a new, centralised system.

L Thompson asked if students would have access to the system. She said clarity for students on their degree calculations would be helpful

D Calvert said the system is currently intended for staff only, however, he would raise L Thompson's point in further discussions with the University.

E Eliza-Pérez asked for clarity on the 'categories of risk' mentioned in item 1.2.

D Calvert said these categories refer to groups of students whose degree calculations the University scrutinises to ensure they have been calculated correctly. He said high-risk

students include those who have submitted multiple extenuating circumstances requests, or those who have had periods of illness which have affected their studies.

Council members indicated they were happy for D Calvert to add his signature to the Action Plan.

4) Council Reports

Written Reports Received

a) SRC President: Duncan Calvert

D Calvert is on the shortlisting committee to appoint the new Senior Vice-Principal & Deputy Vice-Chancellor. This staff member will replace F Coton who has announced he is standing down.

Wolfson Hall Student Accommodation has been closed due to the presence of RAAC concrete in its construction. All students who were living in the accommodation have been moved into Havannah House and have received compensation in the form of campus meal cards, Morrisons shopping vouchers, travel cards and a rent break for the rest of semester. At an extraordinary meeting of the Estates and Sustainability Committee, it was decided that the RAAC concrete would be treated and the James Watt Nanotechnology Fabrication Centre would be moved into Wolfson Hall.

A letter from a coalition of student and staff groups advocating on behalf of Gazan students was approved by the University in December. A meeting between members of the coalition, D Duncan and R Sandison is planned for w/c 23rd February. The meeting will discuss increased support for Gazan students.

The SRC met with the Dean of the College of Arts & Humanities to discuss provisional student registration. The CoAH has removed the ability for students to provisionally register, on advice from Academic Policy and Governance. The SRC is disappointed by this decision, however, the other 3 Colleges have not followed suit and the SRC will meet with them to ensure they move forward in a student-friendly direction.

At a meeting of the Study/Support Space Revisioning Project Board, the Library's recladding project was discussed. While the project is essential for ensuring student safety, the work has caused disruption to students using the annexes. There are plans to remove the books from the annexes, however, the books will be available to students before they are stored and there will be support for inter-Library loans. The Colleges of affected subjects have been notified so provisions can be made for affected books.

D Calvert raised a question regarding the University's complaints process at Senate. The Complaints Report outlines that stage 2 complaints are taking 117 days to process, rather than the SPSO's guidelines of 20 working days. The SRC plans to meet with the Complaints team to discuss ways of reducing this time.

2026 marks 140 years of the SRC. Planning is underway for events and activities to celebrate this milestone.

D Calvert met with the Future Funding Student Staff Reference Group on 13/02/2026. Universities Scotland are compiling a report aimed at lobbying the Scottish Government for a more sustainable funding model for higher education institutions. Two groups have been set up to help write the report: a steering group with NUS representation and a reference group. While the SRC is not part of the former, it is part of the reference group and will contribute to discussions. D Calvert expressed concern that the current report outline focuses too heavily on economic productivity, rather than student satisfaction outcomes. Discussions, however, are ongoing and updates will be provided in due course.

N Pooley asked if the University will no longer offer catered accommodation, now that Wolfson Hall will not be used for accommodation.

D Calvert said he believed this was the case but would check with Accommodation Services.

E Eliza-Pérez said the cessation of Wolfson Hall's student accommodation could pose difficulties for students studying on Garscube campus.

D Calvert said the SRC has raised this concern and the issue is being mitigated by supplying students with travel cards. He said, long-term, there are plans to build student accommodation on Gilmorehill campus.

H Watters referenced D Calvert's report's mention of the digitalisation of Library archives and asked if consideration has been given to ensuring the digitalisation would be compatible with text to speech/assistive technology. She said some of the current Library digital resources are not always accessible with assistive technology.

D Calvert said there are some accessibility features within the Library's digitalisation and search optimisation projects. He said he was unsure if text-to-speech is one of these so will find out and provide an update.

b) VP Student Support: Frank Chen

LGBT+ History Month activities are currently underway across campus and will culminate with the LGBTQ+ Cabaret event at Hunterian on 27/02/2026. An email has been circulated inviting council members to attend and speak. F Chen thanked N Gillies for their work on LGBTQ+ History Month activity planning. The SRC's LGBTQ+ timeline exhibition installation in the JMS remains in place and will continue to expand across w/c 16/02/2026.

Following the SRC's open letter to the Principal regarding campus accessibility, several developments have now been confirmed. As of last year, accessibility maintenance funding has been increased and Estates have now confirmed the lift replacement programme will continue, with an average of 3 lifts to be replaced per year. Communications around lift outages are being explored to make these more formalised. Supportive evacuation procedures have also been revised. Pilot schemes are also being developed for accessibility grading and a virtual access guide.

F Chen said the SRC has advocated to the University on behalf of neurodivergent students for sensory spaces. The University is now moving to the delivery stage with 2 new mobile

sensory ports to be trialled, as well as a dedicated sensory room in the Boyd Orr building. There will also be further exploration of provision in the Library and on Garscube campus. The hope is these spaces will be introduced in the channel between the Boyd Orr and JMS Buildings by Neurodivergent Week in March. The SRC will focus on ensuring these spaces are clearly communicated, accessible in practice and properly evaluated.

F Chen updated Council on the work of the Disability Equality Working Group regarding mobility scooter provision. At a recent meeting, the agreed direction was a move towards phased discontinuation of the University-operated scooter fleet. While 11 scooters are currently housed in the McIntyre Building, the University has been looking for a more permanent location for a decade but has faced concerns regarding fire safety and charging. The SRC understands these operational concerns but communicated that before any formal move to cease provision, there must be an open student consultation and a full equality impact assessment. The University has confirmed that the 3 current users of the service will not be affected and that they will be supported through any transitional period.

The University's Financial Aid team has confirmed the Graduation team will commit £1k to fund up to 20 graduation gown hires. Further details are to be finalised at the end of February.

The SRC's International Cultural Fair will provisionally take place at the GUU on 23/03/2026. The event will feature stalls, activities, performances and culturally authentic food. The SRC aims to collaborate with the Unions on the event and suggestions for activity ideas are welcome from Council members.

L Thompson asked if no new users will be permitted to use the mobility scooters.

F Chen said current and new users will be able to use the service, however, the fleet will not be expanded beyond its current numbers, and the scooters will not be replaced once no longer functional.

N Pooley asked for clarity on the timeframe for campus lift replacements.

F Chen said, while only 3 lifts will be replaced per year, broken lifts will still be repaired.

D Calvert said, while the University's maintenance budget is not fully adequate, he and F Chen will continue to apply pressure to the University where needed to ensure disabled access is prioritised. This will be done via the University's Estates and Sustainability Committee and other channels.

M Corbett asked how the University plans to accommodate students who require mobility scooters once all the scooters have been phased out.

Z Haque said there was discussion of increasing students' Disabled Student Allowances to enable them to purchase a scooter privately. The SRC said, if this is the case, a space on campus must be created for the scooters.

c) VP Student Activities: Eoghan Morris

The SRC's January Welcome was a success. Many events were held with a strong level of student engagement. This year's January Welcome saw a marked increase in events hosted in collaboration with societies, as well as an increase in the number of events overall. E Morris thanked all those involved in the organisation and delivery of the January Welcome.

As part of Estates' Decarbonisation Strategy, a paper on the Gilmorehill and GRID Low Carbon Heat Solution was presented at the Sustainability Working Group. The tenders will be assessed on criteria including ability to decarbonise, social value, affordability and demand reduction, with these assessments being reported to the Estates and Sustainability Committee. E Morris is unsure whether the resulting decisions will be reported back to SWG, so will follow up to clarify.

E Morris thanked N Pooley, B Asmelash and A Chauhan for their input at the Keystone Wayfinding group on 12/02/2026. The workshop was to determine how the wayfinding worked across the University estate and develop a 'lessons-learned' approach to the Keystone Building. There will be future opportunities for the SRC to provide input to the Keystone strategy.

Council members are encouraged to reply to the email circulated about participating in VCS shortlisting. The deadline to express interest is 20/02/2026 and the shortlisting meeting will take place on 25/02/2026. The STA shortlisting meeting will take place on 04/03/2026.

- d) Charities Officer : Molly Corbett
- e) Environmental Officer: Alina Chauhan
- f) International Students Officer: Reilly Gardner
- g) Widening Participation Officer: Amy Hutchison
- h) Widening Participation Officer: Hannah Clarkson
- i) UG MVLS Convenor: Ebrahim Rezaei

In a meeting of Senate, E Rezaei raised the recent Iranian protests. He is currently working with D Duncan to ensure support is available for Iranian and conflict-affected students.

MVLS students and representatives are invited to an MVLS Class Rep mixer event in the Williams Room on 20/02/2026.

- j) UG Science and Engineering Convenor: Salem Gelidi
- k) Biodiversity, One Health & Veterinary Medicine School Rep: Elena Eliza-Pérez
- l) Business School Rep: Ali Matough Essa
- m) Engineering School Rep: Santiago Rivero Fafian
- n) Geographical & Earth Science Rep: Chloe Chigumba
- o) Humanities School Rep: Sarah Millar
- p) Law School Rep: Wesley Chew
- q) Mathematics & Statistics School Rep: Stephanie Shields
- r) Physics & Astronomy School Rep: Daniel Keane
- s) Social & Political Sciences School Rep: Laurie Barr
- t) First Year Rep: Caelyn Bailey
- u) General Representative: Laura Thompson

v) General Representative: Fangning Yu

5) AOCB

A Chauhan referenced the SRC's divestment strategy's demand that the University divest from companies who derive more than 10% of their profits from the arms industry. She asked if the benchmark of 10% was decided by the SRC or the University.

B Hay said he would look at the work of the previous Sabbatical team here and follow up with A Chauhan.

A Chauhan said members of the Divestment Coalition recently had a training session with the ex-President of the University of York Student Union. He said the 10% benchmark is presenting difficulties for divestment, as now the University must scrutinise every investment to ensure it does not breach this threshold. He said this task is difficult for asset managers as this information is not publicly accessible. A Chauhan asked if the SRC could issue a demand for the University to divest from all arms investments.

D Calvert said a meeting should be set up to look at how York achieved divestment and where the SRC's divestment campaign activity should be focused going forward.

A Chauhan asked if the SRC could meet with the Divestment Coalition to devise a new strategy for divestment which could be proposed to the University.

D Calvert said the SRC could get in touch with the coalition.

N Pooley asked when the SRC's contract with Domino's pizza for Academic and Welfare Forum and Welcome Week will be renewed.

D Calvert said there is no contract in place with Domino's for Academic and Welfare Forum. If voted upon, Council members could request pizza from another supplier for these forums, as long it is supplied a receipt for the SRC Accounts team.

B Hay said the SRC's contract with Domino's and all other commercial suppliers/attendees for Welcome Week is an operational matter which he has responsibility for. This contract is agreed year-on-year, with the coming year's agreement likely being signed in the coming weeks.

F Chen said the SRC will have its East and Southeast Asia Mixer event in the QMU on 20/02/2026 to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Council members are encouraged to attend.

D Calvert said the SRC's LGBTQ+ Cabaret Event will take place on 27/02/2026 and Council members have been contacted with an invitation to be involved as a narrator.

D Calvert said the SRC's Spring Election will take place on 04/03/2026 – 05/03/2026. D Calvert wished good luck to all Council members running for election.

L Thompson said last year there were concerns raised about election rules being broken. She asked if the SRC has considered implementing a harder-line stance on breaches of election rules.

D Calvert said he understood the concerns raised but that ultimately discretion on these matters lies with the returning officer. He said the rules and regulations have already been confirmed for this year's elections, however, this point would be taken forward for next year's elections.

B Hay added that, often on photographic evidence supplied, it can be difficult to establish if a rule has been broken. He said there have been situations where candidates who have broken rules have been removed from running, however, this is quite rare.

6) Date of next meeting – Thursday 19th March 2026