

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY THE 18TH OF NOVEMBER 2025 AT 6.00 PM

WILLIAMS ROOM, MCINTYRE BUILDING AND ZOOM

Present: As per sederunt

Apologies: A Garg, B Asmelash, K Kirkpatrick, A Mathur, A Shaikh, L Holmes, H Clarkson, D Keane, N Gillies

Attending: B Hay, P Swinton, S Cairns

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

S Millar proposed the minutes of the previous meeting for approval.

CJ Adebayo Omoaka seconded this.

Minutes of previous meeting approved.

- 3) Council Reports

Written Reports submitted -

- a) SRC President: Duncan Calvert

At the Estates and Sustainability Committee, an update was provided on the number of lifts on campus which are out-of-order - currently 10 out of 145. The Estates team have resolved to undertake repairs as soon as possible, with a significant part of their maintenance budget allocated to this area. A proposal for a Disability Estates Group was also discussed, and D Calvert said the SRC would have membership of this, if established.

D Calvert and T Killeen from The Advice Centre have been looking at the University's Interruption of Studies guidance for students. This guidance is currently in its consultation stage, with the SRC expressing concerns that students on an Interruption of Study are not currently eligible to apply to the University's hardship fund. The SRC has had positive conversations with APG Policy Manager, C Omand, as well as Director of Student Life, A Strachan, on this, with the expectation that students will soon be eligible to apply for financial help from the University. The SRC

has also submitted a list of comments on the guidance document to C Omand, with feedback received positively.

At Finance Committee, D Calvert asked Executive Director of Finance, G Caldow, to share a proposal on the formalisation of deposit procedures. D Calvert said current procedures do not work in favour of students. A proposal has now been shared with the SRC and this will go to SMG with the SRC's comments. Council will be updated on progress in due course.

D Calvert discussed the EmilyTest with University Secretary and COO, D Duncan, as well as with the University Principal and Vice Chancellor, A Schofield – the latter discussion taking place in a filmed interview published by the University Comms Team. Positive developments from these discussions include the University agreeing to sign up to the Community of Practice. D Calvert advocated for the University to sign up to EmilyTest Charter and was advised that the University would continue an ongoing review of its position on this. The SRC will continue to lobby the University to sign up to the charter.

In a meeting with Commercial Services, D Calvert spoke to Head of Student Accommodation, A Gibbons, about concerns over the University's temporary accommodation policy. Currently there is no central database for compiling temporary accommodation requests from students who find themselves homeless or between contracts. The team are now looking at creating this database and have contacted their software provider regarding this. D Calvert also asked for the number of temporary rooms available for next session. No definitive answer was provided, however, D Calvert will continue to follow up on the matter.

- b) VP Education: Ayush Garg
- c) VP Student Support: Frank Chen

At the previous Council meeting, S Maharaj raised concerns regarding student reports of poor treatment from Counselling and Wellbeing Services. F Chen raised these reports with C Craig who has taken them back to her team for further discussion. C Craig asked for more specific examples of the treatment in question, so that further investigation could take place. F Chen asked Council members with any specific examples of this treatment to pass the details to the Sabbatical Officers, so these could be taken to C Craig to inform investigation.

F Chen and N Pooley will attend the EmilyTest annual conference on Thursday 20th November, with the hope they can return having engaged in meaningful discussions.

While the University has not committed to signing up to the charter, it is sending two staff members to the conference, reflecting the Principal's commitment to further explore the EmilyTest. F Chen received a request from L Thompson to publicise information around the EmilyTest charter to students during the SRC's Sixteen Days of Activism campaign. F Chen discussed this with the SRC's Comms team, as well as the University Comms Team, with the plan to raise awareness of the EmilyTest during this campaign.

Disability History Month was launched on Monday 17th November with a successful lunch event. The Disabled Student Society and Arthritis UK attended to speak to students. F Chen noted that, regrettably, the University's Disability Services did not attend, despite attending the event last year. F Chen plans to raise the absence at Disability Equality Group and ask that the team attend next year. 10 events have been planned for Disability History Month, with information online on each. A charity called Birds of Paradise Theatre Company will also be invited to deliver training to clubs and societies on how they can make their societies and events more inclusive.

An International Student Day social media takeover took place on Monday, 17th November, undertaken by R Gardner. The takeover received good feedback from cultural societies who contributed videos.

The Trans Day of Remembrance Vigil will be hosted by GULGBTQ+ on 20/11/2025 in the cloisters, with the event being supported by the SRC. F Chen said the SRC are in contact with the society regarding last-minute logistical changes, however, the likelihood is the event will go ahead at the original time.

The Fight For the Night march will take place on 27/11/2025. Council members are encouraged to attend. The SRC will be holding its own placard-making session for the march and the QMU will be hosting a cross-campus placard-making session too. The SRC's GBV Vigil will be held on 08/12/2025 to conclude its Sixteen Days of Activism campaign.

Planning for the December Exam Destress campaign is underway. The hope is that hot drink vouchers will be made available to students again, as they were last year. Planned events include a Paws Against Stress session in the Williams Room on 18/11/2025. F Chen and B Asmelash are planning more events, including a trip to a Christmas market, painting and craft sessions and a gingerbread-making session.

A Chauhan asked why GULGBTQ+ have asked to move the TDOR vigil.

F Chen said they asked the SRC to consider changing the time of the vigil as they are concerned about a possible Justice for Palestine protest happening at the same time against an Engineering Society event. He said the protest concerns the invitation of arms companies to an Engineering Society dinner event.

A Chauhan asked if the SRC has asked the Engineering Society to change their event plans.

F Chen said the Engineering Society's event is being entirely organised by themselves and it would not be appropriate for the SRC to seek to change their plans.

A Chauhan said both societies are in the Divestment Coalition. Engineering Society are meeting the Divestment Coalition on 19th November to discuss the situation. She said the hope is that a resolution is reached and the GULGBTQ+ vigil can go ahead at the original time.

d) VP Student Activities: Eoghan Morris

E Morris said the student kitchen on level 3 of the Fraser Building opened on 17/11/2025.

E Morris met with General Representatives and First Year Representative to discuss their ideas for the year. He said he is planning to try and action some of these ideas in partnership with GUEST and the Eco-Hub.

E Morris said the Halloween event at the Hunterian went very well. He thanked all those involved in the organisation and delivery of the event.

e) Charities Officer : Molly Corbett

M Corbett said a Movember challenge event would take place on 29/11/2025 and encouraged Council attendance.

f) International Students Officer: Reilly Gardner

g) Widening Participation Officer: Hannah Clarkson

h) UG MVLS Convenor: Ebrahim Rezaei

i) UG Science and Engineering Convenor: Salem Gelidi

j) PG Arts & Humanities Convenor: Kelly Yu

k) Biodiversity, One Health & Veterinary Medicine School Rep: Elena Eliza-Pérez

l) Critical Studies School Rep: Liberty Holmes

m) Culture & Creative Arts School Rep: Hannah Watters

- n) Education School Rep: Freya Brown
- o) Engineering School Rep: Santiago Rivero Fafian
- p) Geographical & Earth Science Rep: Chloe Chigumba
- q) Law School Rep: Wesley Chew
- r) Molecular Biosciences School Rep: Julia Stephen
- s) Social & Political Sciences School Rep: Laurie Barr
- t) General Representative: Laura Thompson

4) AOCB

N Pooley reminded Council members that the SRC's Sixteen Days of Activism campaign begins next week. She said activities have been advertised on the SRC and FemCollab's social media and she encouraged Council members to attend events. Placard-making will take place on the 25th and 26th November. She said both the SRC's and the University's Comms teams will be promoting GBV resources and that the University tower will be lit up purple for the start of the campaign.

A Chauhan said, up until last week, there was a situation where 5 fully-funded University students exceeded their visa deadlines and were told by the University that an extension was not possible and that they must drop out or defer. She said, however, the University has now extended the deadline for these students. A Chauhan said this is not an isolated incident and that there are issues with the University's funding model for international undergraduate students – chiefly, that they require funds from sponsoring charities upfront, with this amount being in the region of £60k per student. She said other universities do not have this policy in place and that the University does not initially intimate to sponsors the full funding amount – this is only disclosed to students and sponsors after they have been accepted and are applying for visas. She said students and sponsors believe they only need to fund £10k initially, as this is the standard UKVI requirement for international students, and that the £60k requirement places them in a difficult financial position. A Chauhan said she is aware of 3 students who deferred their studies and are considering dropping out due to this. She added that, when these students arrive in Scotland, they are eligible for Scottish Education Funds and are considered home students, so their tuition fees come down significantly. As such, she said requiring them to pay £60k at the outset is unnecessary.

D Calvert said he has spoken to the University about this issue already. He said he will follow up with Visas and Immigration Compliance about this to find out if students are being asked for £60k up front by the University. He said compassionate communication is key when contacting students about these matters so he will ask to see the communications which have been sent out to students on this so far. D

Calvert added that he will speak to External Relations to ask if there is anything the SRC can do to help safe passage into the UK be prioritised for students, with financial matters being addressed later.

A Chauhan referenced the Engineering Society's dinner potentially being protested due to the society inviting arms companies to attend. She said the society organised the dinner using funds from the SRC and, as such, she believes this to be a lapse in SRC policy. She said considerations must be taken during the grants approval process so that funding is not directed towards supporting arms companies, GBV or hosting pro-life speakers on campus, as she believes that would be a contravention of previous SRC statements of support on several issues.

D Calvert said there has been a misunderstanding regarding the funding of the Engineering Society's dinner event. He said the society applied for funding and did not list the companies who would be invited to the event. D Calvert said funding was awarded to keep the ticket price low for students attending the event. He said the SRC has no control over which companies societies invite to their events and that sometimes this can result in invites being extended to organisations whose values do not align with the SRC's. To prohibit clubs and societies from inviting who they want to their events would be a contravention of freedom of academia and freedom of speech. He said the SRC would only step in if it was deemed that a person/group being invited to campus presented a threat to student safety and that this is not the case in this instance. He said he acknowledged A Chauhan's concerns and that grant procedures would be reviewed in the future.

B Hay added that the SRC refused to affiliate a pro-life society in a previous year and was subsequently threatened with legal action by lawyers working on behalf of the society. He said the SRC had to concede or it would have faced a lawsuit. B Hay said sometimes it is not about what the SRC wants, but rather, legal compliance and ensuring the SRC can continue to provide its services to students – provisions which could be jeopardised by costly legal action. He added that, while students hold differing personal opinions and viewpoints, it is important that societies receive equal access to funding opportunities. He said the SRC's funding is solely given to support societies directly and not to support specific companies.

A Chauhan asked if future meetings of the Welfare Forum could be hybrid to increase accessibility.

D Calvert said he and B Hay would discuss the possibility of this.

L Thompson referenced an Instagram post by the SRC and said it displayed with a message saying it possibly contained AI content.

S Cairns said the photo in question looks to be falsely flagged. He said the SRC Comms team do not use AI for the creation of photo or video content.

J Stephen said many international students are not receiving communications from the University regarding their visa requirement to register attendance through the SafeZone app. She said many international students recently received an alarming email stating that if they did not start registering their attendance in the next two weeks, their visas would be withdrawn. She said she has concerns around the alarming style of communication from the University, as well as the fact undergraduate students did not receive any information on this matter prior to the email. She proposed that the University communicate clearly to international students what they need to do to satisfy their visa requirements.

D Calvert said the University must ensure it is being compassionate in its communications. He said he would raise this matter with Student Academic Services, as well as UKVI Compliance.

CJ Adebayo Omoaka said students with other types of visas also receive very alarming emails from the University.

D Calvert said he would raise the matter on behalf of all types of visas.

L Thompson said there was a similar issue recently where the MSci cohort were told that if they did not check in on the SafeZone app while on placement, their place on the course was at risk. She said students were not informed they had to check in while on placement and that the communications they did receive were confusing.

D Calvert said the SRC would investigate this.

R Gardener said SafeZone communications need to go from one collective University-wide system, rather than from individual Schools.

D Calvert reminded Council members to send payment for Cross Campus Dinner, taking place this year on Friday 21st November.

- 5) Date of next meeting – Thursday 11th December, 2025