

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

31 March 2020

Report of the Recruitment of the next Principal



The Selection Process – requirements of the Code

The Code states that the governing body is to ensure that the appointment process enables student, staff and trade union input to be considered, reflecting the academic and non-academic aspects of the Principal's role.

The Code states that membership of the selection committee is expected to consist of one elected or union member, one student member and adequate representation of the academic community.

The Sub-Committee decided that the selection interviews were to be a two interview stage process so as to provide the opportunity to have a wider input of stakeholders on the interview panels, whilst ensuring that there was 3 core members interviewing at both stages.

The Process

The Board of Governors established an Appointment Committee to oversee the process and to appoint a Selection Committee.

To support recruitment, the University undertook an APUC competitive tender process and appointed executive search agents Perrett Laver (PL)

Early September 2019: stakeholder consultation

The university, via Perrett Laver actively engaged stakeholders to identify views on the type of characteristics required in a potential candidate for the Principal, in line with best practice.

This included an extensive series of meetings with both internal and external stakeholders (Chancellor, Chairs' Committee, Executive team, Heads of School, SMG grades & support heads, open staff forums, Student Union Presidents and Elected students and TU representatives) as well as a process for an online consultation to ensure all have the opportunity to input. The survey received 180 responses.

The themes that emerged broadly included:

Celebration of strengths of RGU being employability & student experience; applied research; widening access and student support; region; campus; friendly and loyal staff.

General support for current strategy, not seeking a wholesale change in direction.

Priorities for the next Principal were identified as:

Need to ensure financial sustainability

Maintaining and improving University's reputation

Maintaining and improving student recruitment

Maintaining and improving staff morale and engagement

The feedback of the consultation influenced the drafting of the job description and wider role profile.

Mid Autumn 2019: Recruitment phase commenced, and the vacancy was promoted in THE as well as through activities by Executive search agents.

3 December 2019 – Longlisting meeting – a good field of applicants was received and the Appointment Sub-Committee identified a longlist.

The longlisted candidates were then interviewed by PL and a report of candidates compiled for the Appointment Committee.

30 January 2020 – Shortlisting – from the longlisting recommendations from PL, a shortlist of 6 candidates was identified.

12 February 2020: Interview 1 (long short list) & Informal Information gathering for candidates 6 candidates attended interview where they were asked questions on a number of topics. They also had a tour and a meeting with the current Principal.

Three candidates progressed to stage 2. Psychometric testing was then carried out on these three candidates.

5/6 March 2020: Stage 2: Opportunity for one to one meetings with Executive and selected few other SMG (unassessed). **Assessed by 3 Focus groups and Formal Interview** with a presentation topic of:

If you are appointed Principal of Robert Gordon University, outline what you would plan to do within the first 90 days.

The presentation was to be 10 minutes in length, no audio-visual aids, however candidates were invited to provide a handout.

The Focus Groups were designed to be candidate lead with a member of Governance & Academic Quality in attendance. Those at the focus groups were not provided with any candidate details in advance.

The Decision

The final stage of the process involved a panel interview. The panel used a scoring matrix which was informed by the psychometric testing of the candidates. After the panel had agreed their scoring of candidates, the panel received the feedback from the focus groups. Whilst there was some consistency within some of the focus groups, there was no consistency across the focus groups. The panel discussed in detail the feedback, took cognisance of the references received and reflected on the panel scoring of the candidates. The panel reached a unanimous decision in respect of which candidate to appoint.

The decision to appoint was reached and was taken to Remuneration Committee on Monday 9th March 2020 for consideration and approval of the remuneration package that was to be offered.

Final Stages

After reaching the appointment decision the university obtained final references and due diligence was completed by the University Solicitor. The successful candidate also underwent the required medical.

Diversity Overview

In preparation of the recruitment process the university ran an Advance HE course "Diversifying Senior Recruitment" on 6 November 2019, to ensure that all Governors regardless of what part of the process they may be involved with had received recent unconscious bias training. Governors that were due to take up appointment from 1st January 2020 were included.

Gender

The gender split for those involved in the recruitment process is detailed below for all 3 focus groups and for the two selection panels:

Focus Groups: Research, Consultancy and Business Development Group

Assistant Vice Principal, Business & Economic Development
Head of Business Development
Reader, Gray's School of Art
Research Student rep to Academic Council
Research Funding Manager
Head of Research Strategy & Policy
Professor, Scott Sutherland School Architecture and Built Environment
Head of the Graduate School
Professorial Lead, National Subsea Centre
Lecturer/ UCU research staff representative, School of Pharmacy & Life Sciences
Head of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Group
Student President, Communications
(gender split- 6 female: 6 male)
In attendance (Deputy Academic Registrar, Governance & Academic Quality - female)

Focus Group: Student Experience Group

Director of Student Life
Acting Head of School, Heath Sciences
Cleaning Services Manager
PA and Project Officer, Academic Administration
University Solicitor
Web & Applications Team Lead
Head of Scott Sutherland School Architecture and Built Environment
Student President Sport
Head of Employability and Professional Enrichment
Academic Strategic Lead, School of Engineering
Senior Lecturer, School Applied Social Sciences, EIS rep.
Student President, Education
(gender split - 4 female: 8 male)
In attendance: (Academic Quality Officer, Governance & Academic Quality - female)

Focus Group: Governors

2 Lay Governors

TU Nominated Staff Governor (professional & support staff/ UNISON)

Director Enhancement Learning, Teaching and Access (DELTA)

(gender split - 2 female: 2 male)

In attendance: (Assistant Chief Academic Officer and Secretary to the Board - female)

Selection Panel Stage 1

Chair

2 Lay Governors

Staff Governor - nominated by TU for Academic Staff

Staff Governor - elected by Professional & Support Staff

External member

(gender split - 4 female: 2 male)

In attendance: (Assistant Chief Academic Officer and Secretary to the Board - female)

Selection Panel Stage 2

Chair

Vice- Chair

Lay Governor

Staff Governor - elected by Academic Council

Staff Governor - elected by Academic Staff

Staff Governor - elected by Professional and Support Staff

Student Governor

Director of HR

External (Scottish University Principal)

(gender split - 4 female: 5 male)

A diversity report on the candidates at the stages of the application process from Perrett Laver is attached to this report.