PROPOSALS IN RESPECT OF CONVOCATION

AGENDA ITEM 7.2

Court is asked to: CONSENT TO the amendments to Charter and Statutes as set out in Annex B to this report.

PROPOSALS IN RESPECT OF CONVOCATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL CONVOCATION – FACILITATING ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

1. Introduction

1.1 The University’s Charter, Statutes and Ordinances provide for the establishment of a body called Convocation. Convocation is comprised of all graduates of the University as well as certain members of staff.1 Convocation has several roles and functions. It appoints 100 members to the University’s Court, recommends candidates for membership of the Board of Trustees, and it can “discuss and pronounce an opinion on any matter relating to the University”.2 It meets formally once per year.

1.2 Since the inception of the University (including Convocation), the University’s approach to alumni engagement has evolved. Indeed, at one time, the University did not engage directly with its alumni. Now, alumni directly contribute to the University’s development in many different ways, including: providing opportunities for current students, supporting meetings and events, philanthropy, and supporting University representatives travelling overseas. The University is increasingly dedicating resource to support this participation: our Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) was established in 1990, and has, among other things, a mission to develop and deliver the University’s alumni relations programme and priorities. In the context of such evolution, it is sensible to take stock from time to time and consider whether historic mechanisms and structures are best suited to support current (and future) ambitions.

1.3 In 2015, the University undertook a major consultation process which led to the development and approval of the University Strategy 2016 – 2023. The consultation highlighted a strong view by staff that the University needs to streamline its approach to governance and decision-making, to reduce the burden on staff and improve institutional efficiency. As one of the statutory elements of the University’s

1 For example, the Vice-Chancellor and other members of the senior team, as well as members of Senate and members of academic staff.

2 Statute 25.
governance structure, Convocation was included within the scope of work undertaken to identify possible improvements to governance and decision-making.

1.4 Against this backdrop, the University sought feedback from members of Convocation with a view to better understanding members’ views on the current structures and possible options for the future. All members of Convocation for whom the University holds email addresses were contacted and asked to comment on a series of suggestions. A summary of responses received is set out in Annex A to this document.

1.5 The Board of Trustees is mindful of the comments from some members of Convocation regarding the method of seeking feedback. The Board has particularly noted concerns about the response rate, the length of time in which members were requested to provide comments and the University’s engagement with members of Convocation for whom we do not have an email address.3

1.4 That said, the Board notes that the purpose of this exercise was to ‘take the temperature’ of opinion amongst Convocation members, and believes that the range of views expressed through the responses received are sufficient to inform its formulation of proposals for the consideration of Court. In making the proposals below, the Board is not solely relying on feedback expressed by members of Convocation through this process. The Board has also considered standards of good governance, the changing landscape of Higher Education, and in some cases Board members’ own experiences as alumni/members of Convocation. There will of course be further opportunity for discussion at the meeting of Court, before a vote is taken on the proposals being submitted to it for approval.

2. Proposals submitted to Court in 2017 in respect of Convocation

2.1 Name and Membership
2.1.1 Whilst Convocation has a formal status in the University’s constitution, in recent years the words ‘alumni association’ have also been used as part of the title of Convocation (“Convocation and the Alumni Association”), to address the lack of awareness of what ‘Convocation’ is.

2.1.2 In 2014 it was agreed that ‘Convocation and the Alumni Association’ would be used interchangeably, however, this nomenclature has proved wordy and somewhat confusing (see illustrative comments at Annex A).

2.1.3 The membership of Convocation has likewise proved confusing: with many non-alumni members not realising that they were, in fact, members.

2.1.4 The Board was encouraged by the high level of support expressed by respondents for the proposals to modify the name and membership of Convocation, and considered that the feedback has provided a helpful insight into the views of members. As discussed in more detail in Annex A, 87% of respondents were in favour of changing the name of ‘Convocation’ to ‘the Alumni Association’ and 91% were in favour of modifying its membership.

3 The consultation period was 9 – 23 October. The consultation was sent to all members of Convocation for whom the University holds an email address, over 57,000 members. This represents 44% of the total number of members of Convocation for whom we have some contact details (including those for whom we have only phone numbers).
The Board of Trustees therefore proposes that:

- The name of ‘Convocation’ should be changed to ‘the Alumni Association’; and
- The membership of ‘the Alumni Association’ (formerly Convocation) should be modified. The new membership should consist of the following:
  - The Chancellor
  - The Honorary Fellows
  - The Graduates and Honorary Graduates of the University, together with all former students of the University who hold an academic award of the University that required at least nine months full-time study or an equivalent period of part-time study
  - Associate Members.

To give effect to these recommendations, the Charter and Statutes must be amended. As required by s14 of the Charter, Court is therefore asked to CONSENT TO the amendments to Charter and Statutes as set out in Annex B, subject to any minor amendments as may be requested by the Privy Council.

2.2 Powers

2.2.1 As noted above, Convocation appoints 100 members to the University’s Court, recommends candidates for membership of the Board of Trustees, and it can “discuss and pronounce an opinion on any matter relating to the University”.

2.2.2 The Board is not minded to amend the power of Convocation to recommend candidates for membership of the Board of Trustees. Convocation Representatives on Court are considered separately in paper ref. 7.1, and as stated there, the Board hopes to at least maintain the current strength of the alumni ‘voice’ on a reimagined Court.

2.2.3 However, the Board considers that Convocation’s current power of being able to “pronounce an opinion” is best construed, in modern times, as having opportunity to provide input into the University’s strategic direction and activities. There are many instances of Convocation adding value in this way – including contributions by more than 2,000 alumni to the development of the University’s Vision and Strategy. However, this power has been construed by some (including some respondents to the most recent request for feedback) as empowering Convocation to take an oversight role. The Board believes that this latter interpretation is no longer meaningful and can, in some cases, impede effective collaborative debate.

2.3.4 Whilst some members of Convocation undoubtedly believe that Convocation should play an oversight role, the Board notes that the majority of respondents to the recent request for feedback do not (see Annex A). Furthermore, the Board is mindful of the many ways in which the University is audited, accredited, regulated and assessed. Whilst Convocation may once have performed a role as part of a system of checks and balances in holding the University’s officers to account, in the present day there is an abundance of sector and governmental oversight and regulation. As noted in paper ref 7.1, the ways in which universities are regulated, and overseen more broadly, have evolved significantly since the formation of the University (including

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4 Categories of Associate Membership are currently set out in the Standing Orders of Convocation. It is anticipated that these categories will be revisited, with a view to potentially expanding the possible categories of associate membership.
Convocation) – and particularly so in recent years. It is hard to see how Convocation can play an appropriate and accountable oversight role.

2.3.5 In bringing proposals for reform in this regard, the Board is motivated by a desire to comply with standards of good governance. The Board is particularly conscious that good governance, as articulated in the Higher Education Code of Governance (the CUC Code), requires unequivocal accountability of universities’ governing bodies. By streamlining layers of oversight in the University’s structures and processes, its governance would be strengthened. The new regulator, the forthcoming Office for Students, will also require the University’s governing body to be held unequivocally accountable for governance matters.

2.3.6 If an oversight role was necessary or desirable, the Board considers (as did many respondents to the consultation – see Annex A) that the structure of Convocation – including the number and dispersed nature of its members – does not enable Convocation to perform that function.

2.3.7 The Board is conscious that, to give real meaning to the power/opportunity to contribute to the strategic direction of the University, Convocation would need robust mechanisms through which this dialogue can be achieved, and for this reason the Board is keen to:

- Safeguard the role of Convocation Representatives on a ‘reimagined’ Court (see paper ref. 7.1), and
- Establish the annual Alumni Forum in place of the Convocation AGM as an opportunity for two-way dialogue and a refreshed approach to alumni engagement.

2.3.8 Implied within some of the responses to the consultation is a resistance to Convocation being ‘downgraded’ from a constitutional element of the University to an advisory role for DARO. The Board has noted this concern and recognises that the future Alumni Association structure needs to clearly be a body with a status that is highly valued through engagement and support with the University including DARO. In recent years DARO has sought to both broaden and deepen the University’s partnership with its alumni base, in the UK and internationally, in support of the University’s strategic objectives. This range of partnership activities includes mentoring, career networks, fundraising and communications, volunteering, and support for the University’s academic societies, sports clubs and hall associations. It is envisaged that this spirit of engagement and partnership will be further strengthened within the proposed new structures including the active support of the proposed new Alumni Association.

The Board of Trustees therefore recommends that:
The core power of the ‘new’ Alumni Association, as set out in the Statutes, should be modified as follows:

“Comment upon the development and policy of the University, through the Alumni Association Representatives on Court and the annual Alumni Forum annual meeting, and otherwise contribute to building an engaged and supportive alumni community”.

To give effect to this proposal, it will be necessary to amend the Charter and Statutes. Court is therefore asked to CONSENT TO the amendments to Charter and Statutes

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5 Box H, page 79 of the https://consult.education.gov.uk/higher-education/higher-education-regulatory-framework/supporting_documents/HE%20reg%20framework%20condoc%20FINAL%20October%20FINAL.pdf
3 Proposals for further consideration in due course

3.1 The Board is conscious that the University’s request for feedback in respect of Convocation (and the responses to it) has thrown up several matters of important detail. Those matters do not require the consent of Court. In this category are the role of (and appointments to) the Convocation and Alumni Association Committee; and the future role of Hall Associations and Branches. Whilst these issues are undoubtedly important, they do not require the consent of Court and are therefore not as time-critical as the issues identified above. The Board has therefore not yet considered or taken a view on these more detailed matters. Once the key strategic and constitutional issues as set out above have been considered by Court, the Board will move to consideration and discussion of subsidiary issues. The Board hopes to work with the University’s Senior Team, DARO, and alumni themselves to develop further proposals over the coming months.
REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

1. Executive Summary

1.1 172 members of Convocation responded to the request for feedback, and the University is very grateful to members of Convocation for their contributions. Overall, most responses were positive about the case for change in respect of Convocation, and a significant number of respondents simply agreed with all the proposals suggested in the accompanying paper. That said, some respondents felt that no changes whatsoever should be made to Convocation. Most respondents commented on issues/proposals (presumably those that mattered most to them), and so responses have been analysed by reference to each issue/proposal in turn.

1.2 Certain of the proposals, whilst not unanimously favoured, had particularly significant support:

- 87% were in favour of changing the name of ‘Convocation’ to ‘the Alumni Association’
- 91% were in favour of modifying its membership
- 82% were in favour of modifying its powers.

1.3 17% of respondents expressed concerns or dissatisfaction over the timeframe given for responses, with those respondents feeling that the timescales envisaged in the accompanying paper felt too ‘rushed’ and asking the University to take more time to consider and discuss the proposals in the paper.

1.4 Further, several responses asked questions relating to operational detail which will need to be addressed in moving forwards. For example:

- The future role and status of Branches and Hall Associations
- The future of the ‘Convocation medal’
- Issues regarding the financing and banking arrangements of Convocation
- Operational responsibility for certain of the events currently organised by the Convocation and Alumni Association (CAAC).

2. Responses in general

2.1 172 individual members of Convocation responded to the request for feedback, although only 151 of those answered the questions set out in the accompanying paper - some members of Convocation wrote to suggest initiatives for alumni engagement, for example.6 Some members of Convocation submitted collective responses,7 and in those instances each individual named in that collective response has been treated as a separate respondent.

2.2 The clear majority of respondents were alumni (160), with much lower numbers of respondents from Senate (4), Academic Staff (5), Associate Members (1) and University Officers (2).

2.3 72% respondents explicitly acknowledged that there was a need for change of some kind. By way of example:

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6 All suggestions have been passed to DARO for consideration. Unless otherwise stated, percentages in this document relate to the number of respondents who addressed the consultation paper directly in their response rather than to the total number of responses.

7 Examples included married couples, the Convocation and Alumni Association Committee (CAAC), and a group of former Chairs/Vice-Chairs of CAAC.
“We as a University should be proud of the role that our Convocation plays but I agree we need to change how it works to get it better suited to the 21st century and our wide and varied alumni base”.

2.4 A number (42%) of respondents provided unequivocal responses in favour of all the proposals as set out in the consultation document. Some (5%) provided unequivocal responses against all of the proposals that were put to members of Convocation. However, the majority of responses were more nuanced; with members supporting or challenging the various proposals, or only commenting on the issues that mattered most to them. More detailed analysis has therefore been conducted by reference to each proposal put forward.8

3. The proposals

3.1 Name of Convocation

3.1.1 Most respondents (121) had a view on whether the name ‘Convocation’ should change; of those respondents, and the majority of those respondents supported a change of name:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents in favour of “Convocation”</th>
<th>Respondents in favour of “Alumni Association”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.2 Of those who preferred to retain ‘Convocation’, the following reasons were given:

- A perception that the term ‘Convocation’ bestowed a greater amount of prestige, and/or better reflected the age and status of the University.
- A preference for the term ‘Convocation’ being linked to the broad membership currently in existence (and an accompanying preference for not changing that broad membership).
- Not believing that there is a reason for changing the status quo, including disbelief that the word ‘Convocation’ is difficult to understand or confusing.

3.1.3 In contrast to such views, many respondents explicitly stated that their reason for preferring the name ‘Alumni Association’ was that ‘Convocation’ was confusing or impenetrable. By way of illustration:

“Get rid of the name ‘Convocation’ that’s the occasion when you graduate far too confusing. People understand ‘Alumni’ add another word – a purposeful word and we shall all get it”

“changing the name… is a good idea because no one really knows what convocation means”

“This would make a clean break from the convocation idea which was never clearly understood by most alumni including me. This was probably the reason you got such a low turnout in the convocation elections. We just didn’t associate the elections with alumni, so we did not see a reason to vote!”

8 For the avoidance of doubt, for the purposes of analysis, where a member of Convocation submitted an unequivocal response in favour of the proposals as a whole, that has been recorded as a response in favour of each of the proposals in the consultation document; where an unequivocal response against the proposals as a whole was submitted, that has been recorded as a response against each of the proposals in the consultation document.
3.1.4 No members suggested a name other than ‘Convocation’ or the ‘Alumni Association’.

3.2 Membership of Convocation
3.2.1 The membership of Convocation currently consists of certain senior members of University staff, alumni, members of Senate, members of academic staff, and associate members. The consultation paper suggested that the membership of Convocation should be modified, to encompass graduates and honorary graduates of the University.

3.2.2 The majority (108) of respondents had a view on the future membership of Convocation, and the majority of those with a view agreed that the membership should be changed along the lines suggested in the consultation paper:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents in favour of change</th>
<th>Respondents against change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unequivocally</td>
<td>With caveats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.3 Of those who were against changing the membership, the reasons given were:
- Not believing that there is a reason for changing the status quo.
- A preference for the inclusive nature of Convocation, in drawing together the various ‘groups’ of University members.
- Concerns that modifying the membership would lead to a diminishing of the collegial feel of Convocation (one respondent referred to the proposed membership as an ‘Old Boys Association’).

3.2.4 19% of respondents who were generally in favour of change provided caveats to their support. Those caveats were:
- A wish to extend membership to those who are not necessarily ‘graduates’ (for example those who have studied for diplomas or certificates).
- A wish to avoid disenfranchising current members of Convocation who might not otherwise meet the ‘new’ criteria for membership: this includes current associate members of Convocation, for example.
- Noting that it would be sensible to include the Chancellor and the Honorary Fellows in any revised membership.

3.3 Powers/Role of Convocation
3.3.1 The core power of Convocation as set out in the University’s Statutes is to “discuss and pronounce an opinion on any matter relating to the University and may enter into communication directly with the Board of Trustees, Court, or Senate on any such issue”. In the consultation paper, it was proposed that this was no longer appropriate. 104 respondents addressed this issue in their response to the consultation.

3.3.2 Respondents hold a range of (sometimes diametrically opposed) views as to the powers and role of Convocation, although the majority were in favour of change:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents in favour of changes</th>
<th>Respondents against change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unequivocally</td>
<td>With caveats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.3 At one end of the spectrum, some respondents had strong feelings that Convocation should play a strong role in University decision-making, by providing ‘checks and balances’:

“In recent years, so many surprise corporate failures have taken place in so many unlikely places, that it seems to me that this (‘shareholders’) reserve power/safeguard is more essential than ever”

3.3.4 At the other, members feel that there is no need, or space, for Convocation to have a formal governance role:

“…it definitely should not have a formal role in the running of the business of the university”

“What I find hard to see is any genuine consultative role for alumni. Not only are they so numerous and dispersed but the age range means that for many it will have been so long since their student days that they are likely to be out of touch with all the changes at the University and tertiary education generally. I cannot see how many past students could make a useful contribution to strategic or any other matters which are the responsibility of the University’s management”.

3.3.5 Several responses have suggested that what matters is not Convocation’s power to ‘pronounce’ but rather it is ensuring that the University has a specific mechanism (or mechanisms) to listen to the views of alumni and take them into account. Many of those responses praise the role of the Convocation Representatives of Court in this regard, whilst noting that the current structure and composition of Court might not be optimal for these purposes:

“I strongly feel that Convocation Representative on Court should be retained in whatever nomenclature makes sense. I don't think we can underestimate the role that these individuals play as a sounding board to the future direction of our University. Even it if is occasionally something that senior management might not want to hear”.

“It has been evident for some time that the status quo does not offer sufficient opportunity for two-way dialogue and active engagement, as described”.

“A statutory role within an ‘upper chamber’ of University governance gives voice and authority to that engaged body of opinion”.

3.3.6 Few respondents commented on the proposal to create an annual Alumni Forum (9 in total) although those responses were broadly positive, and noted the potential to open a meaningful two-way channel of communication between the University and its alumni in a formalised way. Of those responses, many commented positively on the plans to better utilise digital technologies to broaden participation (and particularly for international alumni). For example:

“increasing the use of digital tools for engaging the alumni in real time or close to real time - online discussions, crowd sourcing and ideation, etc”.

9 The role, structure and composition of Court was outside the scope of the Convocation consultation paper, although the Board of Trustees is considering this separately.
4. **Convocation/Alumni Association Committee (CAAC)**

4.1 The Board of Trustees has not yet considered matters that relate to the Convocation and Alumni Association Committee. The information below is therefore provided for information only at this stage, for the sake of completeness.

**Role of CAAC**

4.1.1 108 respondents expressed a view as to the future role of CAAC, with a majority in favour of change:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents in favour of change</th>
<th>Respondents in favour of a representative/operational function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Method of appointment**

4.1.2 Members of CAAC are currently elected by and from members of Convocation. The consultation paper proposed that instead members of CAAC should be selected and approved by a nominations committee.

4.1.3 112 respondents addressed this issue in their responses, with a majority in favour of a move away from elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents in favour of elections</th>
<th>Respondents in favour of moving to nomination/appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unequivocally</td>
<td>Unequivocally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With caveats</td>
<td>With caveats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.4 Of those in favour of retaining elections to the Committee, some respondents pointed to ways in which the administrative burden caused by elections could be reduced – such as:

- Removing the need for ‘proposers’ and ‘seconders’ of candidates standing in elections (and therefore the need for the University to check the eligibility of those proposers and seconders).
- Moving to electronic only voting.
- Improving the current electronic voting system.

4.1.5 Respondents in favour of retaining elections to the Committee provided the following general reasons for their preferences:

- Valuing independence and democracy:
  “Whilst accepting elections to any governing body are somewhat cumbersome to arrange and are often not well supported they do nevertheless represent a vital element of independence and democracy and as such a potential barrier to "coup d’état" administration”

- Concerns about a committee ‘appointing in its own image’:
  “I feel it is bad practice to create a self-nominated body (even if it will often mean that the existing body will be twisting arms and using contacts to get people to stand, so in effect it comes to much the same thing). But the possibility of outsiders putting themselves

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10 And few members commented on the future nomenclature of such a group.
11 And indeed the collective response by CAAC also makes these points.
forward, should there be a particular issue or movement that engages normal mug-wumpers, should always be there”.

4.1.6 Respondents in favour of committee members being ‘selected’ in the way proposed in the consultation paper generally supported this as a way of bringing greater diversity to a committee:

• in terms of protected characteristics (such as gender, race and disability):
  “Creating a committee which represents the diversity of the university’s membership over the years as well as its future needs, bringing together a wealth of experience and interest which is equally diverse, would seem a more appropriate direction to take than the outcome of an election where seldom are the large number of candidates known in an equitable way, if at all”.

“I would like to see specific mention of disability along with gender and ethnicity”.

• in terms of diversity generally:
  “it is still the same names that come around again and again”

“I assume that degree / faculty background is implicit – the committee should where possible represent the broad range of subject backgrounds at the university as well as other factors such as age, gender, and ethnicity”.

4.1.7 Where respondents provided caveats to their preference for selection over election, mostly those caveats made clear that any selection process should widely and prominently advertise available positions with a view to maximising applications and providing a diverse pool of applicants. Some respondents also felt that the proposed maximum term for committee members was too long.
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CHARTER AND STATUTES

Amendments are shown in track changes: text in strikethrough represents a deletion, unlined text represents an insertion.

Charter of Incorporation

PREAMBLE

EDWARD VII, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith.

TO ALL TO WHOM these presents shall come, GREETING:

WHEREAS Petitions have been presented to Us by University College Bristol in the said City and by others praying Us to erect a University within the said City for the promotion of Arts Sciences and Learning and of the objects for which the said College was established and to grant a Charter with such appropriate provisions therein in that behalf as shall seem to Us meet and fit.

And whereas the Society of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol also presented a Petition to the same end. And

whereas We have taken the said Petitions into Our Royal consideration and are minded to accede thereto.

Now therefore Know Ye that We by Virtue of Our Royal Prerogative in that behalf and all other powers enabling Us so to do of Our special grace certain knowledge and mere motion by these Presents do for Us Our Heirs and Successors grant will direct and ordain as follows:

1. University of Bristol

There shall be from henceforth for ever in Our said City of Bristol a University by the name and style of “The University of Bristol” by which name the Chancellor and other Members of the University for the time being are hereby constituted one body politic and corporate with perpetual succession and a Common Seal and with full power by and in such name to sue and be sued and without any further licence to take by gift or otherwise purchase and hold grant demise or otherwise dispose of real or personal estate and with other powers by this Our Charter prescribed.
2. Visitor

We Our Heirs and Successors Kings and Queens of the Kingdom aforesaid shall be and remain the Visitor and Visitors of the University of Bristol through the President of Our Board of Trustees for the time being and in exercise of the Visitorial Authority We and Our Heirs and Successors shall have the right from time to time and in such manner as We or They shall think fit to direct an inspection of the University its buildings laboratories libraries and general equipment and also of the teaching examinations research and other work done by the University.

3. Powers

The University shall have the powers following:

(1) To grant and confer Degrees and other academic distinctions, including Degrees and other academic distinctions awarded jointly with other institutions, to and on persons who shall have pursued an approved course of study in or under the auspices of the University and shall have passed the examinations in or approved by the University under conditions laid down in its Statutes or Ordinances provided that degrees representing proficiency in technical subjects shall not be conferred without proper security for testing the scientific or general knowledge underlying technical attainments.

(2) To admit Graduates of other Universities to Degrees of equal or similar rank in the University.

(3) To confer Degrees of the University on any persons who hold office in the University as Professors Readers Lecturers or otherwise or who shall have carried on independent research therein.

(4) To grant Diplomas Certificates or other distinctions to persons who have pursued a course of study approved by the University under conditions laid down by the University.

(5) To confer Honorary Degrees or other distinctions on approved persons PROVIDED THAT all Degrees and other distinctions shall be conferred and held subject to any provisions which are or may be made in reference thereto by the Statutes Ordinances or Regulations of the University.

(6) On good cause shown to deprive persons of any Degrees Diplomas Certificates or Distinctions granted to or conferred upon them.
(7) To provide for instruction in such branches of learning as the University may think fit and also to make provision for research and for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge.

(8) To examine and inspect schools and other educational institutions and grant Certificates of proficiency and to provide such lectures and instruction for persons not members of the University as the University may determine.

(9) To accept the examinations and periods of study passed by Students of the University at other Universities or places of learning as equivalent to such examinations and periods of study in the University as the University may determine and to withdraw such acceptance at any time.

(10) To affiliate other institutions or to admit the members thereof to any of its privileges and to accept attendance at courses of study in such institutions in place of such part of the attendance at courses of study in the University and upon such terms and conditions and subject to such regulations as may from time to time be determined by the University or to recognise any members of the teaching staff of any College or institution whether affiliated to the University or not as teachers of the University.

(11) To co-operate by means of Joint Boards or otherwise with other Universities and Authorities for the regulation and conduct of Matriculation and other Examinations for the examination and inspection of schools and other academic institutions and for the extension of University teaching and influence in academic matters and for such other purposes as the University may from time to time determine.

(12) To enter into any agreement with any other institution for the incorporation of that institution in the University and for taking over its property and liabilities and for any other purpose not repugnant to this Our Charter.

(13) If necessary to promote a Bill or Bills in Parliament to confirm or carry out any such agreement as above referred to.

(14) To institute Professorships Readerships Lectureships Teacherships and any other offices required by the University and to appoint to such offices.

(15) To institute and award Fellowships Scholarships Exhibitions Bursaries and Prizes.

(16) To provide Halls for the residence of Students.

(17) To make provision for Research and to furnish Scientific Advice for public purposes and for these objects to enter into such arrangements with other institutions or with public bodies as may be thought desirable.
(18) To do all such other acts and things whether incidental to the powers aforesaid or not as may be requisite in order to further the objects of the University as a Teaching and Examining Body and to cultivate and promote Arts Science and Learning.

4. **Authorities**

The Authorities of the University shall be the Chancellor Pro-Chancellors Vice-Chancellor Pro-Vice-Chancellors the Court the Board of Trustees the Senate and the [Convocation Alumni Association](#).

5. **Chancellor**

The Chancellor of the University shall be the President of the Court and [Convocation Alumni Association](#) and shall hold office for such period as shall be determined by Statute. The Chancellor shall be elected by the Court of the University on the nomination of the Board of Trustees.

6. **Pro-Chancellors**

There shall be a Pro-Chancellor or Pro-Chancellors of the University who or any one of whom may subject to the Statutes of the University in the absence of the Chancellor or pending a vacancy in the office of Chancellor exercise the functions of the Chancellor except the conferring of Degrees or the appointment of members of the Court and may preside at meetings of the Court.

7. **Vice-Chancellor**

There shall be a Vice-Chancellor of the University who shall be the principal Academic Officer of the University and ex officio Chairman of the Senate and who shall in the absence of the Chancellor confer degrees.

8. **Pro-Vice-Chancellor**

There shall be a Pro-Vice-Chancellor or Pro-Vice-Chancellors of the University who or any one of whom may subject to the Statutes of the University act for the Vice-Chancellor pending a vacancy in that office or during the absence or inability of the Vice-Chancellor or at the request of the Vice-Chancellor and may when so acting confer Degrees.

9. **Treasurer and Other Officers**

There shall be a Treasurer and other proper officers of the University.
10. **The Board of Trustees**

With effect from 1 January 2016, the name of the Governing Body of the University was changed from “Council” to “the Board of Trustees”. After this date, all references in the Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and otherwise to “Council” shall be changed to, and shall be construed as, references to “the Board of Trustees”.

**Powers of the Board of Trustees**

There shall be a Board of Trustees which shall be the Governing Body of the University and have power to direct the use of the University Seal and subject to the Statutes of the University shall have the government and control of the finances of the University and of the affairs and property of the University. The Board of Trustees shall submit a report to each annual meeting of the Court, including a report of changes to the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances.

**The Trustees**

Statutes of the University shall regulate the election and continuance in office of the Trustees the filling of vacancies among the Trustees and all other matters relative to the Board of Trustees which it may be thought are proper to be so regulated.

**Statutes**

The Board of Trustees may make Statutes and amend add to or repeal the Statutes for the time being but no such Statute and no such amendment addition or repeal shall be valid or operative until allowed by the Privy Council.

**Ordinances**

Ordinances may be made by the Board of Trustees for the regulation of all matters not required by this Our Charter to be dealt with by Statute.

11. **The Court**

**Constitution of the Court**

There shall be a Court which shall advise the Board of Trustees on any matter relating to the University. The Board of Trustees shall be required to report to the Court and to take into consideration any views expressed by the Court. The constitution of the Court shall be defined by Statute.
Except as herein provided and subject to the Statutes of the University the Court may determine all matters relating to the 
appointment and election of Members of the Court and their respective periods or terms of office and all other matters relating to the 
constitution of the Court.

Statutes of the University shall regulate the election and continuation in office of the Members of the Court the filling of vacancies 
among the Members and all other matters relative to the Court which it may be thought are proper to be so regulated.

Provided that Statutes for which this section provides shall be made or amended by the Board of Trustees only with the consent of the 
Court, except that, if the Court at two consecutive annual meetings withholds its consent to an identical proposal by the Board of 
Trustees to make or amend such a Statute, the Board of Trustees may at its next meeting make or amend the Statute accordingly 
notwithstanding that the Court shall have withheld its consent.

12. The Senate

Powers of Senate

There shall be a Senate which shall subject to the Statutes and Ordinances of the University and the control and approval of the Board 
of Trustees have the regulation and control of the Curriculum and Education afforded by the University and such other powers as may 
be conferred upon it by Statute or Ordinance.

Statutes of the University shall define the powers of the Senate.

13. The Faculties

Faculties

There shall be such Faculties as may from time to time be constituted by the University.

Board and Deans of Faculty

There shall be a Board and a Dean of each Faculty with such powers respectively as may be prescribed by Statute or Ordinance.
14. **Convocation** - The Alumni Association (formerly known as Convocation)

**Constitution of Convocation - the Alumni Association**

There shall be an Alumni Association of the University which shall consist of the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellors, the Honorary Fellows, the Graduates and Honorary Graduates of the University, together with all former students of the University who hold an academic award of the University that required at least nine months full-time study or an equivalent period of part-time study, the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Members of the Senate, such other Members of the staff and such other officers of the University as may be determined by Statute or Ordinance, the Graduates of the University and such other former students of the University as may be determined by Statute or Ordinance, and Associate Members as may be determined from time to time.

The Chancellor if present shall preside at its meetings.

Ordinances may prescribe the conditions of registration and fix a fee if it shall be considered necessary.

*Provided that Statutes concerning the Convocation for which this section or section 15 below provides shall be made or amended by the Board of Trustees only with the consent of the Court, except that, if the Court at two consecutive annual meetings withholds its consent to an identical proposal by the Board of Trustees to make or amend such a Statute, the Board of Trustees may at its next meeting make or amend the Statute accordingly notwithstanding that the Court shall have withheld its consent. With effect from 1 January 2018, the name "Convocation" was changed to "the Alumni Association". After this date, all references in the Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and otherwise to "Convocation" shall be changed to, and shall be construed as, references to "the Alumni Association".*

15. **Union of Students**

**Union**

A Union of Students of the University may be constituted by Statute or Ordinance.

**Representation of Convocation - the Alumni Association and Union**

*Regulation thereof*

The Convocation - Alumni Association and the Union of Students shall have such and so many representatives on the Court and on such conditions as may be provided by the Statutes of the University. Ordinances of the University may subject to the provisions of
this Charter and of the Statutes prescribe and regulate the constitution functions privileges and all other matters relating to the Convocation Alumni Association and to the Union of Students.

16. Statutes

Initiative in making statutes

The Board of Trustees shall have power to make Statutes.

Powers of statutes

All Statutes which are not repugnant to the provisions of this Charter or the Laws of the Realm shall be operative and have effect when allowed by the Privy Council and not before. Such allowance shall be conclusive evidence of the Statutes so allowed being authorised by the provisions of this Charter.

The Statutes of the University may direct that any of the matters by these Presents authorised or directed to be prescribed governed or regulated by Statutes of the University shall be prescribed governed or regulated by Ordinances of the University.

17. Ordinances

Initiative in making ordinances

Academic ordinances
Ordinances shall be made by the Board of Trustees of the University. Provided that in matters referring to Courses of Study Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates, other academic awards or distinctions affiliation of Colleges and recognition of teachers Ordinances shall be made by the Board of Trustees only with the consent of the Senate.

Amendment etc., of ordinances

Ordinances may add to amend alter or repeal Ordinances from time to time in force.

18. Examiners and Examinations

External examiners
All Examinations held by the University shall be conducted in such manner as the Statutes and Ordinances shall prescribe provided that at least one external and independent Examiner shall be appointed for each subject or group of subjects forming part of the course of studies required for University Degrees but this proviso shall not apply to Examinations for admission or entrance to the University.


Regulation of proceedings

The Board of Trustees the Senate and the Faculties respectively may from time to time make regulations for governing subject to these Presents and the Statutes and Ordinances of the University the proceedings of those bodies respectively. The power to make regulations shall include the power to add to amend alter or repeal any theretofore made.

20. Eligibility

All posts and offices in the University, membership of any of its constituent bodies and all courses of study and academic awards in the University shall be open to any person, irrespective of gender, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, disability or age, subject to such conditions and regulations as may properly be prescribed or provided for by the University.

21. Bar to Dividends

The University shall not make any dividend gift division or bonus in money unto or between any of its members except by the way of prize reward or special grant.

22. Power to hold Real Property

In addition to the buildings lands and premises of the University used and occupied for the immediate purposes thereof the University shall have power to hold lands tenements and hereditaments.

23. “Special Resolutions”

The Board of Trustees may at any time alter amend or add to these Presents and their Provisions by a Special Resolution in that behalf and such alteration amendment or addition shall when allowed by Us Our Heirs or Successors by and with the advice of Our Privy Council become effectual so that these Presents shall thenceforward continue and operate as though they had been originally granted and made as so altered amended or added to as aforesaid. This Article of these Presents shall apply to this Charter as altered amended or added to in manner aforesaid. A “Special Resolution” means a Resolution passed at one meeting of the Board of Trustees and confirmed at a subsequent meeting held not less than one calendar month nor more than three
calendar months after the former provided that the Resolution be passed at each meeting by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the Trustees present and voting.

24. Definitions

In this Our Charter the “Statutes” mean the Statutes set forth in the Schedule hereto or any Statutes altering adding to or repealing the same or any of them which may hereafter be made and may be allowed by the Privy Council.

“Ordinances” means Acts of the Board of Trustees made as provided for in this our Charter.

25. Construction

Our Royal Will and Pleasure is that these Presents shall ever be construed benevolently and in every case most favourably to the University of Bristol and the promotion of the objects of this Our Charter.

Statute 2

Members of the University

The following are Members of the University:

The Chancellor and Pro-Chancellors
The Treasurer
The University staff
The University students
The Trustees
The Members of Court
The Members of Convocation
The Alumni Association
The Honorary Fellows
The Emeritus and Honorary Professors
The Emeritus Deans

Statute 3

The Chancellor
Role
1. The Chancellor shall be the President of Court and Convocation the Alumni Association and shall have the power to confer degrees.

Election
2. The Chancellor shall be elected by Court on the nomination of the Board of Trustees and shall hold office for a maximum period of ten years, unless Court by special resolution determines otherwise. A special resolution for this purpose is a resolution considered as a separate agenda item at a properly constituted meeting of Court and passed by a majority of those present and voting.

Resignation
3. The Chancellor may resign at any time by a letter sent to Court through the Secretary.

Statute 11

Membership of Court

Members
The members of Court shall be as follows:

Category I – University
The Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellors, the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Treasurer, the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Chair of Convocation the Alumni Association

The Honorary Fellows

The Trustees
The members of Senate
The Emeritus Professors
The Emeritus Deans
The Registrar, the Secretary, the Librarian and up to ten holders of such other offices as the Vice-Chancellor shall from time to time specify

For renewable three year terms: Fifteen elected members of the support staff, the method of election to be determined by Ordinance
For renewable four year terms: One hundred graduates of the University elected by Convocation the Alumni Association

Category II – Benefactors
a) As members for life:
Individual donors to University funds nominated by the Board of Trustees
b) As members for five years:
The representatives of each of such corporate donors to University funds as the Board of Trustees may nominate
Category III – City of Bristol
a) The Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol and ten persons appointed by the Society for an initial term of up to three years with renewable three-year terms thereafter
b) The Chief Executive of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative and ten persons appointed by the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative for an initial term of up to three years with renewable three-year terms thereafter
c) The President of the Bristol Trades Union Council and ten persons appointed by the Bristol Trades Union Council for an initial term of up to three years with renewable three-year terms thereafter
d) One person appointed by the Bristol Area Members Committee of the Co-operative Group for an initial term of up to three years with renewable three-year terms thereafter
e) Eight representatives of the voluntary sector in Bristol nominated by such body or bodies as from time to time shall be approved by Court for this purpose

Category IV – Local Authorities
Elected members or officers of local authorities in Bristol and the surrounding area appointed by the relevant local authority as follows:
Bristol City Council: Fifteen persons
Bath and North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Somerset County Council and Wiltshire County Council: Three persons each

Category V – Special Appointments
To be appointed for an initial term of up to three years with renewable three-year terms thereafter:
a) Three persons appointed by the President of the Privy Council
b) Three persons appointed by the Chancellor of the University

c) One person appointed by each of such universities and colleges, up to a maximum of twenty, as Court on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine
d) One person appointed by each of such learned bodies and national and international organisations, up to a maximum of forty-five, as Court on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine
e) One person appointed by such of the institutions affiliated to or associated with the University, as listed in its Ordinances, as Court on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine
f) One person appointed by each of such National Health Service bodies as Court on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine

Category VII – House of Commons and European Parliament
The Members of Parliament elected for the parliamentary constituencies lying wholly or substantially within the City and County of Bristol, the Districts of Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire and the Counties of Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire
The Members of the European Parliament elected for the South West region

Category VIII – Holders of local offices
Such holders of local offices as Court on the recommendation of the Board of Trustees may from time to time determine, subject to a limit of sixty, which may include:
Lord Lieutenants of Bristol and adjoining counties; Lord Mayors and Mayors of local cities and towns; head teachers of local schools and principals of local colleges; local judges; the president, chief executive, head or leader or other officers of learned societies, religious organisations, charities, museums, libraries, professional bodies, and other organisations involved in the arts, the law, education, health and social services, trade and industry

Vacancies
Vacancies arising among the appointed members shall be filled as soon as possible by the appointing authority for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Resignation
Any member of Court may resign by a letter sent to Court through the Secretary.

**Statute 15**

**Membership of the Board of Trustees**

1. **Trustees**

The Trustees shall be as follows:

*Class I – Lay Trustees*

The Treasurer

For renewable three-year terms, subject to a maximum of three such terms unless Court by special resolution determines otherwise, where a special resolution for this purpose is a resolution considered as a separate agenda item at a properly constituted meeting of Court and passed by a majority of those present and voting:

Up to fifteen persons elected by Court, on the nomination of the Nominations Committee of Court
One member of Convocation the Alumni Association, appointed as determined by Ordinance (the Convocation Alumni Association Trustee).

Lay Trustees in Class I may not be members of the University’s staff.

*Class II – University Staff*

The Vice-Chancellor

A Pro Vice-Chancellor, nominated by the Vice-Chancellor

For renewable three-year terms, subject to a maximum of three such terms:

Three members of academic staff, appointed as determined by Ordinance (each an Academic Trustee)

Two members of the support staff, appointed as determined by Ordinance (each a Support Staff Trustee).

For the avoidance of doubt, the term of office of any Trustee in Class II shall end immediately if the appointed individual ceases to be a member of support staff or academic staff as appropriate.

*Class III – Students*

For renewable one-year terms, subject to a maximum of three such terms:

Two students or Sabbatical Officers, appointed as determined by Ordinance (each a Student Trustee).

2. **Right to attend**

The Chancellor, Pro-Chancellors and Chair of Convocation the Alumni Association, if not Trustees, and the Registrar and Finance Director, shall have the right to receive papers and attend meetings, but shall not have the right to vote on any issue.
3. Vacancies

All vacancies arising among the appointed or elected members shall be filled as soon as possible by the appointing or electing authority for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Vacancies arising among the lay Trustees elected by Court shall be filled at the discretion of the Board of Trustees, on the nomination of Court’s Nominations Committee, and confirmed at the next Annual Meeting of Court.

4. Resignation

Any Trustee may resign by a letter sent to the Board of Trustees through the Secretary.

Statute 23

Membership of Convocation

Members
1. The members of Convocation shall be as follows:
   The Chancellor
   The Honorary Fellows
   The Graduates and Honorary Graduates of the University, together with all former students of the University who hold an academic award of the University that required at least nine months full-time study or an equivalent period of part-time study
   The Associate Members
   The Pro-Chancellors
   The Vice-Chancellor
   The Pro-Vice-Chancellors
   The honorary fellows
   The members of Senate
   The professors, readers, lecturers and other members of the academic staff
   The officers of the University
   The graduates of the University, on such conditions as to fees as the Board of Trustees may prescribe
   Such other former students of the University as Convocation may by Standing Order determine, on such conditions as to fees as the Board of Trustees may prescribe
   The honorary graduates of the University
Associate Membership
Categories of associate membership may be made by standing order.

Register
The Registrar shall keep a register containing the names of all members of Convocation-The Alumni Association, which shall be conclusive as to the entitlement of any person to vote in Convocation an election relating to the Alumni Association.

Statute 24
Meetings of Annual Convocation Alumni Forum

Frequency
1. Convocation-The Alumni Forum shall meet be held at least once a year. The Chair may call a meeting at any time, and shall call a meeting to be held within eight weeks of the receipt of a written request to do so from no fewer than fifty members.

Chair
2. The Chancellor if present shall preside at meetings of Convocation-the Alumni Forum. Convocation-The Alumni Association shall elect a Chair who will preside in the absence of the Chancellor, and will be Chair of the Standing Committee of Convocation-the Alumni Association.

Quorum
3. The quorum of Convocation shall be fifty. If there is not a quorum present, the Chair shall adjourn the meeting to a time later the same day. If there is still no quorum present, the meeting may be adjourned to another day as the Chair thinks fit.

Notice of meetings
4. Not less than twenty-eight days before the day fixed for a meeting of Convocation-the Alumni Forum, the Secretary shall send notice of the meeting to all members of the Alumni Association. Not less than twenty-one days before the day appointed for the meeting, any member of Convocation wishing to bring forward business at a meeting shall give the Secretary written notice of it. Not less than seven days before any meeting, the Secretary shall send members a statement of all business, and no business shall be considered at the meeting except that included in the statement. Notice of meetings and elections shall be regarded as duly given if posted to a member’s last advised address, but no notice need be sent by the University if it has evidence that the member no longer resides there.

Procedure
5. Procedural matters relating to meetings of Convocation-the Alumni Forum shall be prescribed by standing orders the Chancellor of Convocation.
Reports
6. At each Annual General Meeting of Convocation Alumni Forum the Vice-Chancellor or nominee will report on the affairs of the University and Convocation Alumni Association will receive an account of meetings of Court.

Statute 25

Powers of Convocation Alumni Association

Convocation Alumni Association shall have the following powers:

Court
1. Convocation Alumni Association shall appoint by election one hundred members of Court.

Advice
2. The Alumni Association Convocation may comment upon the development and policy of the University, through the Alumni Representatives on Court and the annual Alumni Forum, and will otherwise contribute to building an engaged and supportive alumni community appropriate to a world class university, discuss and pronounce an opinion on any matter relating to the University and may enter into communication directly with the Board of Trustees, Court, or Senate on any such issue.

Statute 29

Committees

Power to appoint committees
1. The Board of Trustees, Court, Senate, boards of Faculties, Convocation Alumni Association and the University of Bristol Union may appoint committees to deal with any matter, and such committees may include persons who are not members of the bodies appointing them. The Board of Trustees shall establish an Audit Committee, Nominations Committee, Staff Committee and Remuneration Committee.

Powers and duties
2. The powers and duties of such committees shall be such as the bodies appointing them direct, save that the Board of Trustees may not delegate its power to decide that it is desirable that there should be a reduction in the number of academic staff by way of
Regulations
3. The Board of Trustees may make regulations governing the proceedings of committees, but subject to these every committee may regulate its own meetings and procedure.

Membership
4. The Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Vice-Chancellor shall be members of every committee of the Board of Trustees and Court and of their joint committees, save as otherwise provided by Statute or Ordinance. The Vice-Chancellor shall be a member of all committees of Senate and Faculties. The Deans shall be members of all committees of their Faculties.