

## 6. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL AND ITS MEMBERS

The following is a statement of the primary responsibilities of the Council:

### 6.1 Financial Responsibilities

The Council is responsible for the financial health of the institution – ensuring the University's solvency, approving the financial strategy, approving budgets, ensuring that HEFCW funds are used for the purpose specified in the Financial Memorandum, receiving and approving annual accounts.

All higher education institutions have charitable status under the Charities Act 1993. Members of the governing body must ensure that the property and income of the institution are applied only in support of purposes which are charitable in law.

*Detailed work in this area is carried out by the Resources Committee on behalf of the Council, which will report regularly to the Council. However, the Council itself must approve the annual budget, the overall financial strategy, and the annual statement of accounts. It should also ensure the solvency of the University and safeguard its assets.*

### 6.2 Audit & Risk

The Council is entrusted with public, and sometimes private, funds, and has a particular duty to observe the highest standards of corporate governance and to ensure that there are clear systems of financial control and accountability, procedures for assessing and managing risks, and processes for dealing with grievances and conflicts of interest.

*Normally the Council will rely on audit processes and the work of the Audit & Risk Committee – which it appoints – to give assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control system, to ensure probity and value for money.*

*The HEFCW Audit Code of Practice specifies the responsibilities and requirements of the audit process, and the Audit Committee follows the Code carefully. In particular, it appoints, and receives reports at every meeting, from both Internal and External Auditors. The Committee approves a strategic plan for the internal audit service, and it also considers the annual accounts after they have been cleared by external auditors. The Council should consider an Annual Report from the Audit & Risk Committee (normally at its December meeting).*

*With regard to risk management, the University has established a Risk Management Task Group for this purpose, which reports to the Executive. This Task Group will, however, provide an Annual Report to the Audit & Risk Committee.*

### 6.3 Estates

The Council is ultimately responsible for the University's land and buildings. It

should approve the estates strategy, including provision for a planned programme of maintenance.

*Here again, detailed work is carried out by the Resources Committee, where particular attention is paid to proposals for the development or disposal of buildings, premises or land owned by the University. Detailed aspects of the Estates Strategy will be considered by the Resources Committee, but the Council should approve the Estates Strategy itself.*

#### **6.4 Human Resources**

The Council is responsible for the institution's employment policies – including ensuring that pay and conditions are properly determined, and determining the terms and conditions of the Vice-Chancellor and certain other posts. It also has a duty to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

*Detailed work on this matter is now carried out by a Human Resources Task Group. This formally reports to the Executive, and it is the Executive's responsibility to bring relevant matters to the attention of the Council. The Council should formally approve the Human Resources Strategy, and specific employment policies.*

*All appointments and contracts of employment are made on the authority of the Council, but in practice these duties are delegated to senior managers, and to professional HR officers led by the Director of Human Resources.*

*The Council delegates its responsibility for setting the pay, terms and conditions of senior staff to the Remuneration Committee. This particularly applies to officers whose appointments are governed by Ordinances e.g. the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Heads of Colleges, Schools and Central Services.*

*Salary negotiations are undertaken at a UK level on behalf of all Universities by the Universities & Colleges Employers Association (UCEA).*

#### **6.5 Students' Union**

The Education Act 1994 requires the Council to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that the Students' Union operates in a fair and democratic way, and is accountable for its finances.

*This aspect is overseen by the Students' Union Task Group (chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Students) which formally reports to the Executive, which in turn brings any relevant matters to the attention of the Council. The University and the Students' Union have publicized a 'Relationship Agreement' which defines the constitutional strategic and operational relationship between the University and the SU.*

#### **6.6 Health & Safety**

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council carries ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of staff, students and visitors to the University's premises. The Council's responsibilities include ensuring that the

institution has a written policy on health and safety, and arrangements for its implementation.

*The Council has a Health & Safety Committee which provides it with regular reports, but the Council itself must approve the University's Health & Safety Policy.*

*On the management side, a Safety Executive (Task) Group exists to oversee the implementation of the Health & Safety Policy.*

## **6.7 Strategic Planning**

The Council is responsible for approving the mission and strategic vision of the University. It has a duty to enable the institution to achieve its primary objectives; teaching, research, and contributing to the health, the economic, social and cultural life of the community. The Council is the only body able to approve the Strategic Plan and it should monitor the University's performance.

*The Council now has a Strategy Committee which will consider long-term institutional strategy, but also the production of the University's Strategic Plan - which has to be submitted to HEFCW.*

*Much of the detailed strategic planning work will be led by the Executive.*

## **6.8 Bilingualism**

Bangor University has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality. To this end, and in accordance with the Welsh Language Act (1993), the institution has adopted a comprehensive Language Scheme.

*The Council has a Bilingualism Committee which has responsibility for approving and monitoring the University's Language Policy and Scheme.*

## **6.9 Executive Management**

The Council should appoint a Vice-Chancellor and approve arrangements for the executive management of the University.

*The Council has formally approved in October 2004 revised arrangements for the management of the University, and it has agreed an Ordinance governing the composition and terms of reference of the Executive. The Council receives a report from the Executive at every meeting.*