

Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 (GRPB Act) Report for the period May 2025 to July 2026.

Percentage of Women on the Court (Governing Board)

The below data is at 1 August 2025. The majority of our Court and Court Committee members begin their terms of office on 1 August in the relevant year.

2025/26	Total Members	% female		Lay		Staff/Student	
		Lay	Non-Lay	M	F	M	F
Court	25	28%	36%	10	4	7	4

Number of Vacancies/ Numbers of Applications from Women/ Women Appointed

In April 2025, the University advertised one Court vacancy and three Court Committee vacancies. Interviews with shortlisted candidates were held in early May 2025. Two female candidates were appointed to the Court Committees.

We worked with Women on Boards to attract more female candidates to each role and this worked extremely well, with 44% female applicants overall from 29 applications.

Information about the current composition of the Court can be found here: [Court - Heriot-Watt University](#)

Whether the GRPB Act was used to meet the Gender Representation objective

Section 1 of the GRPB Act sets a “gender representation objective” that a Board has 50% of non-executive members who are women. The Court of Heriot-Watt University has a total of 25 members of whom 56% are lay (or non-executive) members. As at 1 August 2025, 28% of the lay members were female.

Section 5 requires the University to take steps as it considers appropriate to encourage applications by women. Whenever publishing vacancies for lay members of Court or of Court Committees, the University specifically encourages applications from women and from those with other protected characteristics that are under-represented.

Section 6 requires the University to take such other steps as they consider appropriate with a view to achieving the gender representation objective. The initial target was to meet the objective by 31 December 2022, but the University continues to monitor its gender diversity and to aim for a better gender balance on the Court.

All Court members now complete mandatory training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for governors every three years. This includes members who are involved in Court and Court Committee recruitment. The recruitment processes for Court Committee vacancies have been assessed against an Advance HE EDI Toolkit and advertising materials were adapted to try and appeal to wider range of candidates. Women in Boards were also engaged to assist in the May 2025 recruitment process and this helped to ensure a significant number of applications from women.

We also made changes to how we operate, making sure we are reducing barriers to more diverse groups considering taking part on our governance opportunities such as:

- Removing a requirement to travel from the role descriptor;
- Adjusting the timing of meetings to make them more accessible to members from Dubai/Malaysia;
- Making the majority of meetings online so members outside Scotland only need to travel once or twice a year;
- Collecting EDI monitoring information and benchmarking against staff/student data;
- Fulfilling our EDI requirements as outlined in the Scottish Code of Good Governance;
- Adopting Internal Audit recommendations relevant to Court and Court Committee EDI, including the development of online training in Leading EDI; and
- Continually considering diversity against legislative requirements in our everyday activities.