

# Standing Orders for Academic Council and Subordinate Bodies



*These Standing Orders apply to Council, its Committees, Faculty Committees, and School Boards.*

<b>Holding of Meetings</b>	
1.	Each year Academic Council shall determine a schedule of its meetings for the following year and arrange for these to be published on the web. All subordinate bodies are expected to set a schedule of meeting dates for the coming year, either at the first meeting of the year or towards the end of the preceding year.
2.	The minutes of each meeting shall include the date of the next meeting, unless this has not yet been set.
3.	Any meeting may be cancelled by the Chair if there is insufficient business. However, where cancellation would result in a Board or Committee not satisfying a statutory or regulatory requirement to meet within a certain period, an invitation to submit agenda items must be issued to members before a decision on cancellation is taken.
4.	In addition to the scheduled meetings, a special meeting may be convened at any time by the Chair or the Vice-Chancellor, or by a written request from at least three members outlining the proposed business of the meeting. If it has been requested by members, the meeting must be held within fourteen days. [Statute No. 5, s.5(3)].
5.	All members shall be given three working days written notice of a meeting and of its business, with notice dispatched in time to be received by members at least three working days prior to the meeting. Shorter notice is permitted only where there is urgent business which must be transacted in a shorter period. Notice of meetings shall normally be given by circulation of an agenda, without requiring a separate notice in advance. Additional information about an item already on the agenda may be circulated with a supplementary agenda or be tabled at the meeting, so long as three days notice has been given of the nature of the item. (See s.11 re consideration of items with less notice).
6.	Members wishing to place an item on the agenda shall provide the Secretary with written notice at least seven days prior to the meeting. The Chair may exercise discretion as to whether or not to include it in the agenda. If any three members of Council request that an item be placed on the agenda, it shall be included.
7.	The quorum for Academic Council is ten members. [Statute No. 5, s. 5 (1)] The quorum for all other subsidiary bodies is one third of the members or, if that is a fraction, the next higher whole number. The exception to this is that the quorum for School Boards is five members or one third of the membership, whichever is greater. Staff who are on an Outside Studies Programme are not to be included in the calculation of a quorum.
8.	Members serving <i>ex officio</i> may appoint someone to serve in their place [Statute No. 8, s. 5(d)], but elected members and others cannot do so.

	Members cannot assign their voting rights to another member as a proxy; no member can exercise more than one deliberative vote. When an appointed member of a Board or committee will be absent for six months or longer, the appointing body may appoint a replacement member for that period.	
8A.	For Council committees, the positions of members of committees appointed by Council, and elected student members of Council committees, who are absent from three consecutive meetings without leave of that committee, shall become vacant.	
9.	(1)	Any member unable to attend a meeting may record her or his apology by advising the Secretary or Chair prior to the meeting.
	(2)	Where a member anticipates being absent for two or more consecutive meetings, he or she should apply to Academic Council for leave of absence. Leave of absence may be granted only by resolution of Academic Council. Academic Council may grant leave of absence for reasons such as travel commitments, illness, bereavement (or similar compassionate grounds), or for any other reason Academic Council considers appropriate.
10.	Where the President of Academic Council decides a meeting of Academic Council is not feasible or is not warranted due to lack of sufficient business, or decides that a matter is urgent and requires determination before the next meeting, he or she may authorise a matter to be determined by circulation. Any decision made by this means has the full authority of an Academic Council decision. The following procedural requirements apply:	
	(a)	The item will be circulated by email.
	(b)	The proposal must contain adequate background information to explain the matter; an explicit recommendation on which all members are asked to vote; the name of the person or body making the recommendation; and a deadline for voting which is at least three working days. Members must be given the options of declaring an interest, voting yes or no, or suggesting an amendment or alternative, or requesting that the matter be considered at a meeting.
	(c)	Voting can be by email, letter or fax.
	(d)	The majority needed for a decision is a majority of all members, i.e. an absolute majority.
	(e)	Non-respondents are not counted; it is not permissible to treat silence as a vote for or against the proposal.
	(f)	If an absolute majority vote in favour of the proposal prior to the deadline, then that can be taken as a decision and actioned then, rather than having to wait for the deadline.
	(g)	If five members request that a meeting be held to decide the matter, then the item shall be held over to the next meeting or a special meeting convened.
	(h)	The decision shall appear as an information item in the agenda of the next meeting ["Decisions taken by Circulation"], and be included as part of the minutes of that meeting, with a resolution number and the date the decision took effect.
11.	In exceptional circumstances, and with the consent of the President, a member may participate in the meeting by teleconference, videoconference or other electronic means.	

	Any such participation shall be indicated in the minutes. Subject to the prior consent of two thirds of the members, a meeting may be held entirely by any of these means, provided all participating members are capable of communicating with each other instantaneously at all times during the proceedings.
<b>Conduct of Business</b>	
12.	The Deputy President of Academic Council is elected for a one year term. (Statute No. 5, s. 4). Each other committee shall elect a Deputy Chair annually from amongst its members; normally this shall take place at the first meeting of the year, and the Deputy Chair's term shall be for a calendar year.
13.	In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair shall chair the meeting. If both are absent, the meeting shall elect a Chair for that meeting. (Statute No. 5, s.4).
14.	The meeting shall not consider any items of business of which three working days notice has not been given, unless an absolute majority of the members agree.
15.	The order of business outlined in the agenda may be altered by the agreement of a majority of members present.
16.	Where an item of business is of a confidential nature, the meeting may move into camera to discuss it. If the meeting wishes to resolve upon a matter which was discussed in committee, it should first resolve to resume from committee and then resolve upon the matter. The minutes shall not record the discussion in committee.
17.	A special meeting shall consider only the business specified in the agenda or notice of meeting, unless an absolute majority of members agree to consider another item or items.
18.	A meeting may adjourn any business to a future meeting. An adjourned meeting shall consider only the uncompleted business of that meeting, unless an absolute majority of members agree to consider another item or items.
19.	Except where these Standing Orders require an absolute majority (i.e. 50% of the total membership at that time, whether or not all members are present), all decisions require only a simple majority (i.e. a majority of those present and voting).
<b>Rules of Debate</b>	
20.	The Chair exercises a considerable amount of discretion in running the meeting. The meeting is not required to follow strict rules of debate unless the meeting so resolves or the Chair so rules.
21.	The Chair shall call speakers in the order which their intention to speak was noticed by the Chair, except that:
	(a) precedence shall be given to the Vice-Chancellor or any person acting in that position, if he or she so wishes;
	(b) the Chair may call speakers in a different order if the Chair believes that this would facilitate resolution of the business before the meeting;
	(c) members raising points of order, points of explanation or points of clarification take precedence over substantive debate.

22.	Where a member is outlining a point of order, explanation or of clarification, the Chair may instruct the member to discontinue speaking if the Chair believes that the point is not valid or that sufficient explanation has been given.
23.	A motion or amendment may be moved by any member, including the Chair. Except for motions or amendments moved by the Chair, every motion must be seconded by another member; any motion or amendment not seconded shall not be discussed further.
24.	A motion may be amended or withdrawn by the mover. If the seconder does not agree to such an amendment of the motion, the amended motion must find another seconder if it is to be considered by the meeting.
25.	An amendment to a motion must be voted on <i>before</i> the motion itself. Sometimes it may not be necessary to proceed with an amendment, if the mover and seconder are prepared to modify their motion accordingly. If the amendment negates the intent of the motion, then it should instead be a foreshadowed motion, which is voted on only <i>after</i> the original motion has been considered. If all amendments are defeated or withdrawn, the question shall be put as originally proposed.
26.	At the discretion of the Chair, a "straw vote" may be conducted to test the feeling of the meeting, but such vote shall have no formal standing.
27.	The Chair may rule that the meeting or a part of it follow strict rules of debate, or the meeting may so resolve. In such cases the meeting shall then follow these additional procedures:
	(a) a matter shall not be discussed unless there is a motion which has been moved and seconded;
	(b) speakers shall alternate between those for and against the motion;
	(c) no member shall speak twice during a debate;
	(d) a procedural motion cannot be moved by a member who has already spoken on the matter under debate;
	(e) the mover of the motion is entitled to a right of reply before the motion is put to a vote.
28.	Any procedural motions, if seconded, shall be put to a vote immediately without amendment or debate, unless the Chair declines to accept the motion. The motions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ That debate on this item be limited to a further x minutes.</li> <li>▪ That the question be put (<i>i.e. that the motion or amendment be put to an immediate vote</i>).</li> <li>▪ That the speaker be no longer heard (<i>i.e. that the member then speaking not be allowed to continue</i>).</li> <li>▪ That the meeting proceed to the next item of business (<i>i.e. that no further discussion or vote take place on the current item</i>).</li> <li>▪ That the motion lie on the table (<i>i.e. not be considered further at this meeting</i>).</li> <li>▪ That the debate on this item be adjourned (<i>i.e. to another date or indefinitely</i>).</li> <li>▪ That the meeting do now adjourn (<i>i.e. that the meeting finish and any unfinished business be postponed till an adjourned meeting</i>).</li> </ul>

29.	Each resolution shall be decided on the voices or by a show of hands, unless the meeting resolves to conduct a ballot. Each member (including the Chair) shall have one deliberative vote. Where there is an equal number of votes recorded for and against, the Chair shall have the casting vote. [Statute No. 5, s.5(2)]. Any member who voted against or who abstained from voting on a motion which was passed by the meeting, may require that this be recorded in the Minutes.
30.	No resolution may be rescinded or substantially amended within six months except by the agreement of an absolute majority of members, unless a higher body has referred the resolution back for reconsideration. A meeting shall not rescind a motion carried at an earlier stage of that meeting.
31.	Any of these Standing Orders concerning rules of debate may be suspended for the time being if a motion to that effect is carried by a majority of members present. Should questions which are not dealt with in these Standing Orders arise at any meeting, the decision of the Chair shall be final.
32.	A member can move dissent from a ruling of the Chair on whether or not to allow a motion or from a ruling not covered by Standing Orders, but not on matters of procedure or points of order. If such a motion is moved, the Chair shall vacate the chair while the motion is under consideration. The mover and the Chair shall have the opportunity to speak, after which the motion shall be put to the vote.
<b>Observers</b>	
33.	Members of the university are entitled to attend as non-participating observers, provided they advise the Secretary in advance and space is available. However, the meeting may resolve to exclude any or all observers for the discussion of particular items of business. The meeting may, at its discretion, invite an observer to participate in the discussion.