



## UNIVERSITY SENATE

### SENATE STANDING ORDERS

#### **SEN1 Appointment to Senate/Board Committees and Ad Hoc Working Groups (Statute 4 and Ordinance 6.3)**

The membership and election process for Senate is set out in Ordinance.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost will recommend joint Board/Senate appointments to the Nominations Committee of the Board of Trustees (BoT), on behalf of Senate, and report them to Senate at the next meeting. The Nominations Committee of the Board will approve appointments and re-appointments to joint Board/Senate committees, on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Ad Hoc Working Groups will be established by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (on behalf of Senate) for any issue deemed appropriate by the DVC within the remit of Senate, including BoT membership and effectiveness reviews. The DVC will also approve the membership of such groups.

#### **SEN2 Attendance at Meetings**

Attendance is an obligation on members and will be recorded and monitored.

Apologies shall be sent to the Secretary in advance of the meeting when attendance is not possible.

Members cannot send a deputy to act in their place unless under exceptional circumstances and by approval of the Chair. Any deputies attending Senate will be classed as attendees only and are not entitled to vote.

Attendance at meetings of Senate and Senate Committees by persons other than those persons identified in the Terms of Reference is by approval of the Chair.

Divisional Heads of Professional Services and other appropriate members of the University may be invited by the Chair to attend meetings on a non-voting basis, but with a right to speak.

The academic staff members of the Board of Trustees shall be invited to attend meetings of Senate during their period of Board of Trustee office, even if they are not members of Senate (see Standing Order 23 below).

Members of Senate should identify themselves by name and School when first speaking at any meeting of Senate.

#### **SEN3 Agenda, Reports and Minutes**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost previews all business proposed for Senate's consideration and agrees Senate's agenda.

As a matter of good practice, the Secretary will normally issue a formal notice of an ordinary Senate meeting, to all those who are entitled to receive them, along with an agenda and papers, no later than seven days before the date of the meeting. The deadline for special meetings is 48 hours before the meeting.

Where (in the opinion of the Chair) seven days' notice is not possible due to the urgent nature of the business to be considered at a meeting, the agenda and papers will be sent to members as early as reasonably possible and in any event three days in advance of the meeting, unless the Chair considers that the urgency is such that the three day notice requirement should be waived.

Members of Senate may submit to the Secretary items for discussion at a Board of Trustees meeting. The Chair has discretion over the inclusion of proposed items of business on the agenda, though must advise Senate of the basis for any decision for inclusion or rejection.

Specific mechanisms by which members can bring ad hoc business to Senate are as follows:

- Members may contact the Clerk with suggestions/requests for future agenda items. A reminder of how to do this will be included on all Senate agendas;
- A Written Question session will be included on the agenda for each meeting of Senate, and questions submitted in writing to the Governance Office two weeks before each Senate meeting at the latest will receive formal answers by University Officers, either in writing or orally at the meeting. The author of a written Question may ask a supplementary question at the meeting, and Senate will be allowed to debate the issue raised.
- The agenda for each meeting will also include a "Vice-Chancellor's Question Time" item, when the Vice-Chancellor will respond to questions from the floor.

Senate is "digital by default". All paper circulations will therefore be in electronic format, unless a request for a hard paper copy is submitted to the Secretary no later than 14 days before the date of the meeting. In exceptional circumstances, paper copy requests may not be possible.

All agenda items must be sponsored by a member of Senate. All items for the agenda should be written reports, submitted electronically to the Secretary, unless agreed otherwise by the Chair. Items which request approval from Senate will normally need to be approved and recommended by a committee of Senate or the University Executive in the first instance. Persons who require an item to be received by a Senate committee should contact the secretary to that committee for guidance on their agenda processes.

The agenda for each meeting will include a "Vice-Chancellor's Question Time" item, when the Vice-Chancellor will respond to questions from the floor. The Vice-Chancellor's Questions segment is an opportunity for senators to ask questions to Senate on topics which would not usually merit a formal item on the agenda. Senators can ask any question provided it fits within the remit of Senate business. The Vice-Chancellor is the final authority on what is deemed within the remit of 'Senate business'.

At the first Senate meeting of each academic year, the provisional senate business schedule (which is compiled by the Governance Team in view of committees' workplans, regular items of business - including regulatory requirements - and the milestones in the implementation of academic strategy) shall be submitted to Senate for information. This provides transparency regarding the business that can be expected to come before Senate as a matter of routine, and also provides an opportunity for members to consider prospective items for inclusion on future Senate agendas.

Authors of papers must write appropriately and succinctly for the audience and all papers must be accompanied by a cover sheet. The rationale and decision sought must be articulated clearly. In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Chair, late papers may be circulated separately or tabled at the meeting. The Secretary must be informed in advance of the meeting and as soon as possible of any late papers.

Minutes of meetings will be recorded by the Secretary and approved by the Chair before circulation. The minutes of a previous meeting must be approved by the Senate. The Secretary must be advised in writing,

not less than twenty-four hours before the meeting, of any proposed amendment to the unconfirmed minutes of Senate.

**SEN4            Composition of Senate (Ordinance 6.3)**

The composition of Senate is set out in Ordinance.

**SEN5            Chair of Senate (Ordinance 6.4)**

The Vice-Chancellor takes the Chair. In the absence of the Vice-Chancellor, the chair shall be taken by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost or their nominee

The Chair's ruling on procedure is final.

**SEN6            Election of Membership**

**Ordinance 6** – election processes are set out in Ordinance.

**SEN7            Classification of Information/Confidentiality**

Senate operates on the principle of transparency, unless there is good reason to impose confidentiality.

The author of any paper containing confidential information should mark it “confidential” and it should not be shared with any person outside of the University without the approval of the Chair.

Senators have a responsibility to disseminate and communicate Senate business (before and after the meeting as appropriate) to their constituents (other than confidential business).

Senate members are responsible for ensuring the secure storage and disposal of confidential Senate documents, whether in electronic or paper form.

**SEN8            Conflict of Interest**

Any member who believes that he or she may have a direct or indirect personal or financial interest in any matter to be discussed shall state that interest (which shall be minuted) and shall neither speak nor vote on that matter, nor shall the member be counted in the quorum at the meeting. For the purpose of this Standing Order, 'financial interest' shall include any directorship or shareholding which may be relevant but shall exclude any interest which a member of the University shall have in the allocation of funds to a Faculty/School or other section of the University solely by virtue of membership of that Faculty/School or section. A member who has declared an interest may be permitted to speak and to vote and to be counted in the quorum if the Chair of the meeting rules that the interest declared is so remote or insignificant that it cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to influence a member in the consideration or discussion of, or in voting on, any question with respect to that matter.

**SEN9            Decisions between meetings and Chair’s Action**

Where necessary for the good of the University, the Chair is authorised to act on behalf of Senate between meetings, and at other times to deal with urgent business which requires a formal decision before the next available meeting of the Senate, subject to report of any action taken to the next meeting of the Senate. The decision will be confirmed by the Chair in writing. This is on the basis that, if any such matter is expected to be of significant interest or the subject of significant debate, members of Senate will be consulted by correspondence (either in writing or electronically – by email) before any decision is taken, or a special meeting of Senate will be scheduled. See **SEN10 below** for more information on how Senators may be asked to make decisions without a meeting.

**SEN10          Decisions without a meeting**

The Chair of Senate may decide that circumstances are exceptional and that it would be expedient in the best interests of the University for decisions to be made electronically via email.

A decision made in this form shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Senate duly convened and held, provided that:

- (a) a report setting out the proposed decision with an explanation of the reasons for it and instructions for how a member of Senate is to signify their agreement (or dissent) to the decision is sent to all members entitled to receive notice of a meeting (the "report"); and
- (b) the decision is agreed to by a simple majority of such members (provided that majority would form a quorum at a meeting of Senate) in accordance with the instructions specified in the report.

A procedural defect of which Senate is unaware at the time does not invalidate decisions taken by Senate.

The Secretary/Clerk will be responsible for the conduct of any decisions taken without a meeting of Senate, including keeping accurate records and reporting the decision to the subsequent meeting of Senate.

### **SEN11 Conduct during meetings**

The conduct of a debate will be determined by the Chair, who will not unreasonably refuse any member the right to speak. The Chair may require a member to leave a meeting in the event of his or her disruptive behaviour.

Senate should proceed by consensus wherever possible, resorting to formal procedural mechanisms only when all other solutions have been exhausted.

The Chair has discretion to accept or reject for debate a formal motion, or an amendment to a formal motion, moved by a Senate member, and to determine the order in which amendments and motions are taken. Proceedings on any amendments must be completed before any decision is taken on the substantive motion [as amended]. Where there is more than one motion, the motion under consideration must be disposed of before proceedings on any subsequent motions are embarked upon.

The Vice-Chancellor may at any time put a motion to Senate whose effect will be to terminate the item of business under discussion at the time. A motion to this effect shall be decided upon without debate.

### **SEN12 Frequency of meetings (Ordinance 6.4)**

Senate shall meet at regular intervals throughout the Academic Year, and not less than three times per Academic Year. The Vice-Chancellor may call a meeting at any time, and shall call a meeting on receipt of a written request to do so from no fewer than twenty members of Senate. Any such meeting will be summoned on the earliest convenient day, normally in term time. A statement of the reasons for calling the meeting, and the nature of the business to be transacted and the wording of any resolution, shall accompany the notice of summons. No other business, except that so indicated, shall be considered at the special meeting.

The Chair has the power to adjourn a meeting of Senate either temporarily or to an alternative date.

Any meeting of the Senate shall be postponed:

- (ii) if half an hour after the time set for the commencement of the meeting insufficient members are present to constitute a quorum
- (iii) in exceptional circumstances e.g. COVID-19 emergency

### **SEN13          Format of Senate meetings**

Senate meetings may be held physically (usually, but not necessarily restricted to University premises) or 'virtually' using digital communications tools. In exceptional circumstances, where no such physical or virtual meeting is able to take place, and where Chair's Action is not deemed appropriate, Senate members may be asked to approve specific items by email. Senate members may also be sent information electronically in between meetings that require their feedback/input. Members are required to submit their feedback to the report author concerned, copied to the Clerk to Senate, who will record all comments for a formal report to Senate at its next meeting.

### **SEN14          Quorum**

The quorum for Senate shall be one third of the membership (rounded to the nearest whole number),

Where members have been authorised to attend by telephone or video call, members attending by such means will form part of the quorum for the meeting.

The quorum may be challenged twice in any meeting; thereafter any challenge to the quorum shall be out of order.

In the event of a successful challenge to the quorum, the options available to the Chair are to:

- a. adjourn the meeting to an alternative date;
- b. close the meeting and defer all the business to be transacted to the next ordinary meeting of Senate;
- c. proceed with the meeting but clearly show in the minutes that the meeting was not quorate. Any business requiring a decision will have to be referred to the next available meeting of Senate unless it is considered appropriate for it to be dealt with using the urgent business procedure of Senate.

### **SEN15          Questions Procedure**

A Written Question session will be included on the agenda for each meeting of Senate, and questions submitted in writing to the Governance Office two weeks before each Senate meeting at the latest will receive formal answers by University Officers, either in writing or orally at the meeting. The author of a written Question may ask a supplementary question at the meeting, and Senate will be allowed to debate the issue raised. If too many questions are submitted that would mean a disruption of the formal business of Senate, or if questions are not deemed to fit within the remit of Senate, the Chair and Secretary reserve the right to refuse questions or to defer them to a future meeting.

The agenda for each meeting will also include a "Vice-Chancellor's Question Time" item, when the Vice-Chancellor will respond to questions from the floor. The Vice-Chancellor's Questions segment is an opportunity for senators to ask questions to Senate on topics which would not usually merit a formal item on the agenda. Senators can ask any question provided it fits within the remit of Senate business. The Vice-Chancellor is the final authority on what is deemed within the remit of 'Senate business'.

### **SEN16          Reporting Arrangements**

A report from the academic staff members of the Board of Trustees shall be received at each meeting of Senate.

A report from Senate will be included in the DVC & Provost report to the Board of Trustees.

## **SEN17          Reserved Business**

The Chair may require student members to withdraw when matters are discussed relating to individual members of staff or individual students of the University and may withhold from student members papers relating to such matters.

## **SEN18          Secretary**

A member of the University Governance team will act as the Secretary and Clerk to Senate.

## **SEN19          Standing Orders**

Senate's Standing Orders shall be reviewed annually by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost and any amendments are approved by Senate by a simple majority.

These Standing Orders will be issued to all new members of Senate on appointment.

## **SEN20          Voting**

Decisions should normally be made on the basis of consensus by a simple majority. A formal vote can be held where the Chair deems it appropriate, or if requested by a Senate member.

Only Senate members have the right to vote at Senate meetings unless they are precluded from doing so by a conflict of interest. Attendees who are not members of Senate may speak at Senate meetings to provide guidance, advice and opinion, but shall not be entitled to vote.

Voting on any issue will be by a show of hands, with the Secretary acting as teller, and decisions are taken by simple majority. The Chair may vote and has the right to exercise a casting vote if a vote is tied.

The Secretary must record the number of votes cast for and against any proposition, and the number of abstentions, in the minutes of the meeting.

## **SEN21          Working Groups – Ad Hoc**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost has the authority, delegated to him/her by Senate, to set up ad hoc working group(s) for the purposes of:

- Shortlisting academic members of the Board of Trustees;
- Reflecting on Senate's effectiveness over the preceding year.

The terms of reference of such a working party or group shall prescribe the maximum period, not normally exceeding one year, within which it shall submit its final report.

**Endorsed by:** Prof Hugh Brady, Chair of Senate,

Prof Judith Squires, DVC & Provost,

**Approved by Senate:** 11 October 2021