ORGANISATIONAL REGULATION O4: STANDING COMMITTEES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

CONTENTS

REGULATION

1.   **AUTHORITY FOR REGULATION**

This Regulation is made in pursuance of Article 17 of *The Robert Gordon University (Scotland) Order of Council 2019*.

2.   **STANDING COMMITTEES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

The following shall be Standing Committees of Academic Council:

        Academic Development Committee
        Honorary Degrees Committee
        Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee
        Research Committee
        Research Degrees Committee
        Student Appeals Committee

3.   **POWERS**

A Standing Committee shall have the following powers in addition to any other powers conferred upon it by Academic Council:

(i)   to consider any matter which comes within its remit and any other matter referred to it by Academic Council, and to make recommendations and to report to Council thereon;

(ii)   to co-opt persons, as appropriate, to the Standing Committee, provided that:

        (a)   co-opted persons do not exceed one third of the number of appointed members as defined in its composition, and

        (b)   the name of any co-opted person is reported to Academic Council;

(iii)   to invite any persons whose knowledge and experience will be of value to attend meetings of the Standing Committee;

(iv)   to consult other Standing Committees and persons on matters of mutual interest; and

(v)   to establish user groups or working groups, as appropriate, which would normally be created to undertake specific, time-limited tasks.

4.   COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

4.1   Academic Council shall prescribe the composition of each Standing Committee and appoint members where relevant/appropriate. The Principal, as Chair, may attend, as a full member, any meeting of any Standing Committee of Academic Council.

4.2   A co-opted person attending a Standing Committee is not a full member of that Standing Committee unless Academic Council has specified that person is a full member.

4.3   No member of staff (with the exception of the Principal and Vice-Principals) shall be a member of more than two of the Standing Committees of Academic Council.

4.4   Membership of Standing Committees shall be phased in such a manner as to promote continuity of membership.

5.   PERIODS OF OFFICE

5.1   The first period of office of a member of a Standing Committee, other than a member *ex officio*, shall normally be three years and the period shall end on the last day of August.

5.2   A member of a Standing Committee, other than a member *ex officio*, shall be eligible for re-appointment provided that a person shall not be a member for more than two consecutive periods. The first period of office, if less than three years through the filling of a casual vacancy, shall not be reckoned in determining the eligibility of a member for re-appointment.

5.3   Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 5.2 of this Regulation, Academic Council shall have power exceptionally to extend the number of consecutive periods of three years for which a person may serve as a member of a Standing Committee.

6.   CASUAL VACANCIES

6.1   A Standing Committee shall, as soon as possible, make arrangements to fill a casual vacancy on a Standing Committee in accordance with the composition of that Standing Committee as prescribed by Academic Council.

6.2   A person appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall hold office for the unexpired period of office of their predecessor and shall be eligible for re-appointment in accordance with paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of this Regulation.

7.   CONVENER AND VICE-CONVENER

7.1   The Convener of a Standing Committee shall be appointed in accordance with its composition.

7.2   Each Standing Committee shall appoint a Vice-Convener from among its members.

8.   VOTING

8.1   Only a full member of a Standing Committee shall be entitled to vote at a meeting of that Committee.

8.2   A co-opted person attending a meeting of a Standing Committee shall not be entitled to vote at a meeting of that Standing Committee, unless Academic Council has specified that that person is a full member.

8.3   A person attending a meeting of a Standing Committee by invitation shall not be entitled to vote at that meeting.

8.4   The Convener of a Standing Committee shall have a deliberative vote and a casting vote.

9.   QUORUM

The quorum for a Standing Committee, and its Sub-Committees and other groups, shall be not less than one-third of the number of full members of that Standing Committee, Sub-Committee or group unless otherwise stated.

10.   SUB-COMMITTEES

Standing Committees will from time to time establish Sub-Committees in order to assist them in undertaking their remits. The current Sub-Committees are outlined in Annex 4.1 to this Regulation. Sub-Committees, their memberships and Conveners will be reviewed not less than every three years.

11.   REVIEW

The purpose and constitution of all Standing Committees shall be reviewed from time to time by Academic Council.

SCHEDULE 4.1: ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Remit

To advise on the future shape and structure of the academic portfolio in response to ongoing market analysis and performance analysis, and approve course developments and collaborative ventures based on criteria and financial parameters agreed by Academic Council and the Executive. In pursuance of this role it:

(i)   undertakes an annual course portfolio review in order to monitor performance and identify courses/areas where future viability is a potential risk.

(ii)   maintains oversight of key performance indicators that relate to course performance, which have a particular external relevance.

(iii)   assesses the potential impact of external changes (including Funding Council guidance) on the course portfolio in order to inform future portfolio developments.

(iv)   initiates, where appropriate, specific portfolio developments.

(v)   considers and approves annual planning numbers and monitors achievement.

(vi)   monitors institution-wide and School partnerships.

(vii)   considers and approves rationales (including financial information) for all formal academic collaborations involving delivery of academic awards/credit.

(viii) monitors, annually, the activities undertaken for each Memorandum of Understanding.

(ix)   considers all new award bearing proposals including those for corporate clients.

(x)   considers and approves changes to existing courses involving changes:

  −   comprising more than 25% of the course's overall SCQF credit;

  −   to course titles;

  −   to convert existing courses to additional and alternative modes of study, with particular reference to costing issues relating to the development of such courses.

(xi)   considers and, as appropriate, approves proposals to cease delivery of courses.

(xii)   considers any other issues as delegated by Academic Council.

Composition

Ex Officio

Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience (Convener)
Vice-Principal for Economic Development
Vice-Principal for Research and Community Engagement
Vice-Principal for Strategy and Planning
Director of Finance
Head of Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment
Principal, International College at Robert Gordon University (ICRGU)
Senior representative from North-East of Scotland College (NESCol)
Deans of School

SCHEDULE 4.2: HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

Remit

To consider nominations for the award of Honorary Degrees.

(See also *Academic Regulation A8: Honorary Awards*).

Composition

Ex Officio

Principal (Convener)
Any two Vice-Principals (nominated by the Principal)

Ordinary Members

One Student President (nominated by RGU Union)
Two representatives nominated by Academic Council and drawn from its membership

In Attendance

Chair of the Board of Governors (or nominee advised by the Chair of the Board of Governors)
Head of Fundraising and Alumni Services (or nominee)
Clerk to the Committee

SCHEDULE 4.3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Remit

(i)   To consider policy matters and practice relating to teaching, learning and assessment, and the student experience, to formulate appropriate procedures relating to these, and determine appropriate actions for implementation to be considered through its Sub-Committees.

(ii)   To develop and appraise the effectiveness of the University's quality assurance processes, including annual monitoring, consider the outputs of these processes, and develop appropriate mechanisms for maintaining the academic standards of the University, and for the sharing of best practice.

(iii)   To maintain a strategic oversight of the development and implementation of the University's enhancement of the student learning experience.

(iv)   To maintain oversight of specific institution-level performance indicators that relate to learning and teaching and the student experience.

(v)   To consider and recommend revisions to the *Academic Regulations* to Academic Council, as proposed by the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee, and consider recommendations from the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee and the Student Experience Sub-Committee.

(vi)   To report and make recommendations to Academic Council as appropriate.

(vii)   To consider equity and diversity in relation to teaching, learning and assessment provision and the student experience.

Composition

Ex Officio

Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience (Convener)
University Secretary and Vice-Principal for Corporate Services
Deputy Academic Registrar
Director of Academic Administration
Director of IT and Digital
Director of Library Services
Director of Student Life
Head of Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser
An RGU Union President

Ordinary Members

Dean (Vice-Convener)

One senior academic representative from each School who is an ex officio member of the respective School Academic Board.

In attendance

Head of Planning and Insight
Quality Officers

Responsibilities of Members

(i)   To contribute to the discussions and decision-making of the Committee.

(ii)   To act as a conduit between the Committee and the respective School/Department.

SCHEDULE 4.4: RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Remit

To advise the University on the appropriate strategic direction, priorities and activities in order to be internationally, nationally and regionally recognised for excellence in translational research, enterprise and innovation in key thematic areas and to demonstrate tangible success in applying that research for the benefit of the wider community and to the University's course portfolio. In pursuance of this role the Committee will:

(i)   support the Vice-Principal for Research and Community Engagement in developing coherent strategies to deliver the University's strategic priorities to maintain, sustain and enhance the research activities of the University, its research profile, and ensure an effective and cohesive research culture throughout the University;

(ii)   regularly monitor overall performance in research activities against key performance indicators as determined by the University from time to time, and within the context of the *Research Excellence Framework*, including the identification and monitoring of risks associated with research;

(iii)   regularly review Schools' research plans and monitor performance against targets;

(iv)   oversee the development of, and compliance with, the University's research governance and research ethics policies and associated procedures, and advise on good practice as appropriate;

(v)   ensure the University has a clear strategy to support the career development of researchers, and monitor the impact of the strategy, with particular reference to the UK-wide *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, the *Athena SWAN* programme, requirements for research data management, and the UK-wide *Vitae* programme;

(vi)   monitor and advise the University on the implications of changes in the external environment including, *inter alia*, international, national and government priorities and initiatives;

(vii)   advise and report on a regular basis to Academic Council on issues related to research.

Composition

Ex Officio

Vice-Principal for Research and Community Engagement (Convener)
Associate Deans for Research
Dean of Graduate School
Director of Library Services (or nominee)
Director of National Subsea Centre
Head of Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Head of Research Strategy, Culture and Performance
Interdisciplinary Research Theme Champions

Research Development and Impact Manager

Research Information Systems and Research Data Manager

Ordinary Members

Up to five researchers

SCHEDULE 4.5: RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE

Remit

(i)   To support the Vice-Principal for Research and Community Engagement and Dean of Graduate School in developing and enhancing the University's Graduate School and provision of research degree programmes.

(ii)   To oversee the development of, and compliance with, the University's regulations and policies for research degrees.

(iii)   To approve the registration and transfer of research students onto, and within, programmes of research leading to higher degrees.

(iv)   To make recommendations to Academic Council for the awards of MRes, MSc by Research, MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorates.

(v)   To monitor research student performance indicators and experience, including consideration of the annual Research Degree Appraisal Process.

(vi)   To support the training and career development of postgraduate researchers with particular reference to the UK-wide *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, the *Athena SWAN* programme, requirements for research data management, and the UK-wide *Vitae* programme.

Composition

Ex Officio

Dean of Graduate School (Convener)
Vice-Principal for Research and Community Engagement
Research Degree Coordinator from each School

SCHEDULE 4.6: STUDENT APPEALS COMMITTEE

Remit

To consider, on behalf of Academic Council, any appeals by students against decisions of Assessment Boards or, in the case of students registered for research degrees, against decisions of examiners or the Research Degrees Committee, or appeals in respect of misconduct, and to take the action that it considers to be appropriate and in accordance with *Academic Regulation A3: Student Conduct, Appeals and Complaints* and *Academic Regulation A6: Research Degrees* as appropriate.

In pursuance of this role it:

(i)   considers any matter included within the stated purpose of the Committee together with any other matters referred to it by Academic Council and to make decisions on such matters;

(ii)   invites individuals, from within or outwith the University, whose knowledge and/or experience will be of value, to attend meetings of the Committee;

(iii)   authorises the Convener to act on behalf of the Committee;

(iv)   makes recommendations to Academic Council on any matters affecting the academic or administrative procedures of the University that result from the Committee's consideration of a particular appeal(s).

Composition

The Student Appeals Committee shall consist of three senior academic members of staff* from outwith the School(s) involved in the appeal, one of whom shall be selected as convener, and a RGU Union President.

The Committee's secretary will select the convener.

The Student Appeals Committee shall have a quorum of four.

The Student Appeals Committee shall reach decisions only by consensus.

The secretary to the Committee shall be the Deputy Academic Registrar, *(or nominee)*; the secretary shall not be a member of the Committee.

*   For consideration of non-academic misconduct appeals, senior representatives from support services may be used

ANNEX 4.1: SUB-COMMITTEES

1.   QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

1.1   Academic Regulations Sub-Committee

Remit

(i)   To consider revisions to the Academic Regulations and make recommendations to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

(ii)   To promote good practice and consistency in the application of the Academic Regulations.

(iii)   To monitor and advise on the implications of national initiatives/legislation.

(iv)   To consider institutional priorities as directed by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

Composition

Ex Officio

Academic Quality Officer (Convener)
University Secretary and Vice-Principal for Corporate Services
Deputy Academic Registrar
Director of Academic Administration
RGU Union Administrator
University Solicitor

Ordinary Members

An academic representative from each School
One Student Officer
One representative from Student Life

Responsibilities of Members

(i)   To contribute to the discussions and decision-making of the Sub-Committee.

(ii)   To act as a conduit between the Sub-Committee and the respective School/Department.

1.2   Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee

Remit

(i)   To formulate and monitor the University's response to sector and societal developments related to equality, diversity and widening access.

(ii)   Working in partnership with the RGU Union, to inform strategic equality and diversity priorities and direction, based on robust evidence, data, involvement and consultation with the University's Equality and Diversity Forum and other appropriate stakeholders.

(iii)   To review, approve, and monitor the equality and diversity outcomes to ensure appropriate progress and consistency across the University in support of its commitment to the promotion of equality and the elimination of discrimination.

(iv)   To ensure data-gathering, analysis, measuring and evaluating impact for different protected characteristics and other widening access groups against the public sector duties, to eliminate discrimination, promote good relations and foster good relations.

(v)   To monitor and contribute to the implementation of the University's equality outcomes and associated action plans.

(vi)   To ensure University equality outcomes, related reporting and initiatives are widely shared and discussed across the University at all levels (including at Committee, Academic Council and Board levels), to help promote an understanding of the relevance to specific functions and teams.

(vii)   To consider the recommendations of, and other matters raised by, the Equality and Diversity Forum.

Composition

Ex officio

University Secretary and Vice-Principal for Corporate Services (Convener)
Vice-Principal for Strategy and Planning
Director of Human Resources
Director of Student Life
Head of Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment
Head of Marketing
Head of Research Strategy, Culture and Performance
University Solicitor
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser
President of Education and Welfare, RGU Union
Vice-President (Welfare), RGU Union

Ordinary Members

At least two members nominated from the membership of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee
Two members nominated from the membership of the Equality and Diversity Forum

Equality and Diversity Forum

The operation of the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee will be supported by an Equality and Diversity Forum.

Remit

(i)   To provide a forum to consider, align and support the delivery of different types of equality and widening access activities, reporting and self-evaluation.

(ii)   To consider, reflect on and evaluate the impact of the University's equality outcomes and activities.

(iii)   To consider intersectionality of protected characteristics and other access issues considered within data-gathering and analysis, and to make recommendations to the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee.

(iv)   To consider what equality and diversity awareness-raising, training and development is required within the University, and to make recommendations to the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee.

(v)   To establish, consider and support the recommendations of equality and diversity-focused working groups.

Composition

University Secretary and Vice-Principal for Corporate Services (Convener)
Director of Human Resources
Director of Student Life
Deputy Director of Estates and Property Services
Disability and Inclusion Manager
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser
Head of Access and Widening Participation
Human Resources Manager
Official from a trade union representing academic staff of the University that is recognised by the University for negotiation purposes
Official from a trade union representing support staff of the University that is recognised by the University for negotiation purposes
President of Education and Welfare, RGU Union
Project Coordinator, Student Life
Vice-President (Welfare), RGU Union
All Staff Equality Champions and Network Co-ordinators

All Student Equality Champions

1.3   Student Experience Sub-Committee

Remit

(i)   To lead and facilitate, on behalf of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Sub-Committee, the quality of the student experience in respect of academic, co-curricular and extra-curricular provision and services.

(ii)   To contribute to the development of policies and practice designed to enhance the student experience, informed by feedback from across the University and externally.

(iii)   To contribute to the development and monitoring of institution-level enhancement activity, aligned to the University's Strategy, as it pertains to the student experience.

(iv)   To oversee the partnership agreement between the University and RGU Union.

(v)   To review and monitor the effectiveness of student-facing support services through oversight of the annual appraisal process, including sharing relevant insights and aligning enhancement activities with the School appraisal process.

(vi)   To use relevant data, for example, student questionnaire feedback with the aim of increasing student retention, student success, and student satisfaction, including appropriate focus on students with particular needs where identified.

(vii)   To consider key trends in the external environment, including national initiatives/legislation, and consider their implications for the student experience.

(viii)   To receive minutes and reports from the following:

          (a)   Aberdeen Universities Military Education Committee;

          (b)   Healthy Universities;

          (c)   any other ad-hoc working groups as appropriate;

(ix)   To facilitate the maintenance and enhancement of close and transparent links between all colleagues in the University involved in the student experience and remind members of their responsibilities to act as a conduit between the Sub-Committee and their respective School/Department.

Composition

Ex Officio*

Director of Student Life (Convener)
Director of Library Services
Head of DELTA (Vice Convener)

Head of Employability and Community Engagement
Head of Marketing and Communications
Head of Sport
Digital Learning Lead, DELTA
Academic and Professional Development Lead, DELTA
Disability and Inclusion Manager
RGU Union General Manager
All RGU Union Presidents

Ex officio members may appoint nominees

Ordinary Members

An academic representative from each School (nominated by Dean of School)
6 Student School Officers

In attendance

Secretary, Department of Governance and Academic Quality

It is expected that the Sub-Committee will regularly invite attendance from key stakeholders across Schools, services, the student body and externally.

2.   RESEARCH COMMITTEE

2.1   Research Integrity and Ethics Sub-Committee

Remit

To develop and monitor the implementation of a quality management system for the University in respect of research governance and, so far as it is reasonably possible, the maintenance and enhancement of ethical standards in the conduct of research (including consultancy and professional practice) undertaken by employees and students of the University. In pursuance of this, it will:

(i)   define the standards to which all research (including consultancy and professional practice) conducted in the University will adhere;

(ii)   develop and monitor procedures to ensure:

  − best ethical practice is followed;

  − the facilitation of knowledge, understanding and effective dialogue of ethical issues amongst employees and students;

  − adherence to relevant legislation relating to, inter alia, the use of animals in scientific procedures;

<dl><dd>− and that all actual and potential participants, the University, employees and students are protected against conduct deemed to be unethical;</dd></dl>

(iii)   monitor and audit compliance with the University's research policies and procedures;

(iv)   maintain effective dialogue, through regular reporting, with the School Ethics Review Panels (or their equivalent);

(v)   maintain a watching brief of national initiatives, concordats, codes of practice and legislative requirements in respect of research governance, research integrity and research ethics, and advise the Research Committee as appropriate;

(vi)   routinely receive reports from the Animal Welfare and Ethics Review Board (AWERB);

(vii)   report to the University's Research Committee concerning its work and any specific issues it wishes to draw to the Committee's attention.

Composition

Ex Officio

Vice-Principal for Research and Community Engagement
Head of Research Strategy, Culture and Performance
Dean of Graduate School
School Ethics Review Panel (SERP) Conveners

Ordinary Members

Commercial Manager, Business and Economic Development
External Lay Member
Liaison Librarian - Research Support, Library Service
Representative from Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Board (AWERB)
Research Information Systems and Research Data Manager
Statistician, Lecturer, School of Engineering

Quorum

Two-thirds of the members must be in attendance for the Research Integrity and Ethics Sub-Committee to be quorate.

Operating Procedures

The Sub-Committee will:

(i)   conduct routine business electronically, but will meet in full session once each academic session for a formal review of that session's business and at any other times as required and determined by the Convener;

(ii)   require its members to declare any personal interest prior to considering its business and to be appropriately qualified for membership of the Sub-Committee;

(ii)   require proposals for research to be considered as follows:

Approved – the proposal is granted ethical approval without amendment;

Conditionally Approved subject to amendment – the proposal is granted ethical approval subject to relatively minor amendments and authority is delegated to the Convener to confirm that the response received from the principal researcher conforms with the Sub-Committee's requirements;

Deferred – consideration of the proposal is deferred to a future meeting pending receipt of substantial amendments, clarification or further information;

Rejected – the proposal is refused ethical approval as it is not capable of appropriate amendment.