

ORGANISATIONAL REGULATION O3: ACADEMIC COUNCIL

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REGULATION

1. AUTHORITY FOR REGULATION

This Regulation is made in pursuance of Articles 16 and 17 of [The Robert Gordon University \(Scotland\) Order of Council 2019](#) and the requirements of the [Higher Education Governance \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#).

2. REMIT

- (i) Academic Council shall be responsible to the Board of Governors for the overall planning, co-ordination, development and supervision of the academic work of the University.
- (ii) Academic Council shall be responsible to the Board of Governors for the planning, co-ordination, development and supervision of the research work of the University.
- (iii) Academic Council shall be responsible for maintaining the academic standards of the University.
- (iv) Academic Council may establish such Standing Committees, Boards and working groups as it considers necessary for the purposes of enabling it to carry out its responsibilities and shall determine their membership and functions. Such Standing Committees, Boards and working groups may appoint Sub-Committees and determine their membership and functions.

3. CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

There shall be two categories of membership:

- (a) Ex officio members;
- (b) Elected members (see also [Schedule 3.2](#) of this Regulation).

4. COMPOSITION

Ex Officio

Principal (Chair)
University Secretary and Vice-Principal for Corporate Services
Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience (Vice-Chair)
Vice-Principal for Research and Community Engagement
Vice-Principal for Strategy and Planning
Deans of School and the Graduate School

Elected

Two members of academic staff from each School (preferably one male, one female), not including the Graduate School

At least 5 students (to include one undergraduate student, one taught postgraduate student, one research postgraduate student, and one RGU Union Sabbatical Officer)

In attendance

Other officers may be in attendance at meetings

5. PERIODS OF OFFICE OF MEMBERS

- 5.1 The period of office of elected members shall be three years commencing 1 September. Where elected members demit office before the expiry of their period of office, persons elected to fill vacancies thus arising shall serve only for the unexpired period of office.
- 5.2 Student members of Council shall normally serve for a period of one year.

6. ORDINARY MEETINGS OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

A minimum of three ordinary meetings per annum shall be held.

7. COMMITTEES OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

In furtherance of its remit, Academic Council shall establish Standing Committees, School Academic Boards, Course/Programme Management Teams and Assessment Boards in accordance with [Regulation O4](#), [Regulation O5](#), [Regulation O6](#) and [Regulation O7](#) respectively.

8. STANDING ORDERS OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Academic Council shall establish a set of Standing Orders for its proceedings which are subject to periodic review (see [Schedule 3.1](#) of this Regulation).

SCHEDULE 3.1: STANDING ORDERS

1. COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY AND DELEGATION OF POWERS

1.1 Collective Responsibility

Any decision of Academic Council is a decision taken by the members collectively and each individual member has a duty to stand by it, whether or not he/she was present at the meeting when the decision was taken. (Refer also to [paragraph 5.5](#) of these Standing Orders).

In the event that a member has a reservation regarding a particular decision they may ask for their dissent to be formally recorded in the minute, as long as this is explicitly requested at the meeting.

1.2 Delegation of Powers

Academic Council may grant delegated authority to the Chair to act on its behalf between meetings on matters of routine business and where, in the view of the Chair, the business does not merit the convening of a special meeting (refer also to [paragraph 3](#) of these Standing Orders). The Chair shall be answerable to Academic Council for any action which he/she takes on its behalf and a report shall be made to the next meeting of Academic Council detailing any Chair's action taken.

For urgent or exceptional circumstances, a special meeting of Academic Council shall be convened.

2. AUTHORITY OF CHAIR

The Principal as Chair shall preside at all Council meetings. In the absence of the Principal a nominated Vice-Principal shall preside. If neither is present at a meeting ad hoc arrangements shall apply, and an Acting Chair may be chosen by Council members to preside.

It shall be the responsibility of the Chair to preserve order, to ensure competent decision-making, and to ensure every member shall obtain a fair hearing. The Chair shall decide all questions of order, competency and relevancy that may arise.

The ruling of the Chair on any question under the Standing Orders, or on points of order or explanation, shall be final unless challenged by not less than three members, and unless two-thirds of the members present vote to the contrary.

If the Chair calls a member of Academic Council to order, or wishes for any other competent purpose connected with the proceedings to speak himself/herself, the member speaking shall there upon cede to the Chair and no other member of Academic Council shall be heard while the Chair is speaking.

3. QUORUM

A quorum for all meetings of Academic Council shall be one-third of the current membership, rounded up to the next whole number.

If there is no quorum when a meeting is due to commence or before business has been completed, the meeting may proceed. Any decisions made shall be put to the absent members electronically for ratification. If there is dissent and a decision cannot be ratified by all members, the Chair shall decide whether an extraordinary meeting should be held, or whether the matter can be deferred until the next scheduled meeting.

Members contributing to meetings by the use of telephone or video conference shall, for the purposes of the quorum, be regarded as being in attendance.

4. MEETINGS

4.1 Schedule of Ordinary Meetings

Academic Council shall normally hold a minimum of three ordinary meetings per annum.

The dates of ordinary meetings in any academic year shall be determined not later than the end of the preceding academic year.

4.2 Postponement or Cancellation of Meetings

The Chair of Academic Council may, in special circumstances (of which the Chair of Academic Council shall be sole judge), alter the date of any ordinary meeting of Academic Council.

4.3 Special Meetings

A special meeting of Academic Council may be requested in writing at any time by the Chair, or not less than eight Council members, and indicating the matter(s) to be considered. The period of notice of a special meeting may be less than that for an ordinary meeting.

5. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS AND PROCEEDINGS

5.1 Agendas and Papers

An agenda will be prepared for all meetings and will serve as the notice of meeting. Agendas will specify the business to be transacted, and the order in which the business is to be brought before the meeting. The Secretary to Academic Council shall circulate an agenda to all members of Council normally not less than one week before the date of the meeting.

The Principal shall determine the agenda for all meetings of Academic Council.

Council members wishing to have items considered for inclusion within the agenda for a scheduled meeting must have notified the Secretary to Academic Council and supplied the appropriate paper(s) normally at least ten days before the date of the meeting.

5.2 Minutes

The minutes, including amendments if required, shall be taken as approved once all objections have been either sustained or rejected by Council.

Copies of the approved minutes shall be published on the web provided that items of confidential business, which have been separately minuted at the discretion of the Chair, shall be excluded from this circulation.

After the minutes have been approved, and before the next business on the agenda, any Council member may ask any question in regard to matters arising from the minutes.

5.3 Debate

Members, when speaking, shall address the Chair. In the event of more than one member speaking or seeking to speak at the same time, they shall be heard in the order in which they are called upon by the Chair.

Members shall direct their speech strictly to the question under discussion, or to a point of order.

5.4 Points of Order

Any member may speak on a point of order and should do so as soon as possible after the alleged infringement, citing the particular Standing Order which is being infringed. The Chair shall give a ruling on the point of order. Thereafter, the business of the meeting will resume in accordance with the agenda.

5.5 Decision-Making

The Chair is responsible for leading the meeting to reach decisions. Decisions shall normally be made on the basis of agreement by consensus but, where the Chair believes it to be in the interest of the progress of a debate, or where it is proposed and seconded by two members present, the Secretary may be asked to count and record a vote by a show of hands. A decision shall be carried by a simple majority of those present and voting. In the case of equality of votes at any meeting of Academic Council, the Chair shall have a second and casting vote.

5.6 Alteration or Revocation of Previous Resolutions

No resolution shall be altered or revoked within six months of its adoption except with the consent of two-thirds of those present.

6. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

All papers and reports submitted to any meeting of Academic Council shall be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged or disclosed to anyone prior to the meeting. Papers, discussion and decisions that Academic Council determines are confidential shall be separately minuted and shall not be made available to anyone other than members of Academic Council and its secretariat.

7. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Academic Council may, at its discretion, permit any person or persons to be in attendance for the whole or part of a meeting, either as an observer or to answer questions.

A member who is unable to attend a meeting of Academic Council cannot nominate a substitute. However, subject to the prior agreement of the Chair, an observer may be allowed to be in attendance.

8. STANDING COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

The Secretary to Academic Council shall be responsible for secretarial arrangements for each Standing Committee, and a report on the proceedings of each Standing Committee shall be submitted to each Academic Council meeting.

The provisions of these Standing Orders shall also apply, as appropriate, to the Standing Committees of Academic Council, School Academic Boards, Course/Programme Management Teams and Assessment Boards.

SCHEDULE 3.2: PROCEDURE FOR THE ELECTION OF ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS

1. Elections shall normally be held in autumn, or as vacancies arise.
2. Each School shall be a constituency, and entitled to have two elected members. In order to promote a gender balance, nominations shall be sought in order to achieve preferably one male and one female elected member for each constituency.
3. The electorate in a constituency is the academic staff of the constituency, excluding *ex officio* members of Academic Council.
4. Elections shall be conducted by the Secretary to Academic Council.
5. When an election is to be held, the Secretary to Academic Council shall notify this to all members of the electorate in the constituency.
6. A candidate must be a member of the constituency electorate.
7. A period of fourteen days shall be allowed for the forwarding of nomination papers to the Secretary to Academic Council. Each nomination must be supported by two members of the electorate.
8. In the event of the number of nominations exceeding the number of members to be elected, the Secretary to Academic Council shall send a ballot paper to each member of the electorate. Ballot papers, to be valid, must be returned to the Secretary to Academic Council by the prescribed closing date (normally seven days from issue).
9. Each member of the electorate shall have the same number of votes as the number of members to be elected, but shall not cast more than one vote for any one candidate.
10. The votes for each candidate shall be counted and those candidates with the highest number of votes consistent with the number of vacancies shall be elected, subject to meeting the criteria outlined in point 2. above. In the event of a tied outcome, a further ballot shall be held to decide between the candidates.
11. If, in the event of a vacancy, no nominations are received from a constituency then no late nominations will be sought and the position shall remain vacant for the remainder of the academic year. If exceptional circumstances can be shown to have led to this omission, it shall then be at the discretion of the Chair of Academic Council to decide whether arrangements would be made to seek a late nomination prior to the end of the academic year.
12. Where a vacancy arises before the end of a period of office for which a member was elected, a by-election shall be held for the unexpired part of the period of office.