

TRINITY LABAN

Standards for the Operation of the Academic Board and its Committees and Working Groups

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1 Co-ordination of Operation of Committees

The Academic Board and its committees and working groups will adopt a common operational standard, using email and the SharePoint sites as much as possible to circulate papers, and operate within a published time scale. The Registrar will co-ordinate the servicing of committees, designating secretaries for each committee.

2 Planning and Scheduling of Committees

- 2.1 The Registrar will annually draft a calendar of dates of committee meetings for the next academic year. The Academic Board will meet at least three times each academic year.
- 2.2 The calendar of meetings will be published to secretaries on e-mail and/or SharePoint.
- 2.3 Changes to the published dates of meetings of committees may only take place with the approval of the Registrar.
- 2.4 The committee secretaries will liaise with their respective chairs to prepare a schedule of principal business for each meeting in the year. The draft schedule will be presented for approval at the first meeting of each committee for the academic year.
- 2.5 Extraordinary meetings of the Academic Board may be convened:
 - at the Principal's discretion;
 - at the written request of at least 25% of members submitted to the Registrar as Secretary to the Academic Board, with the request detailing the matters for discussion.
- 2.6 The Secretary to the Academic Board will normally give members at least seven days' notice of an extraordinary meeting.

3 Composition and Membership

- 3.1 The composition of the Academic Board is determined under the Memorandum and Articles of Association, with the specific list of members approved by Academic Board.
- 3.2 The Academic Board may establish committees and working groups, determining the terms of reference, the extent of delegated authority, the composition and tenure of membership, and the date of the expiry of the committees/groups.
- 3.3 The categories of membership of boards/committees may include: ex-officio, elected/nominated, and co-opted.
- 3.5 Where staff representatives are included in the membership of sub-committees, appointments will usually be made through nomination as set out in the Terms of Reference of the committee. All teaching staff belonging to a subject area will attend subject area meetings, where contractually required.

- 3.6 The terms of reference will specify the length of terms of office for any elected members.
- 3.7 A member who is on authorized leave for a period of one term or less may nominate a deputy from the same constituency, who may not participate in any vote unless specifically agreed by the committee.
- 3.8 If a member is on leave for a period of more than one term, s/he may be deemed to have withdrawn from the board/committee and the vacancy will be filled in the normal way.
- 3.9 Where an ex-officio post is filled by an individual on an 'acting' basis, s/he shall be entitled to the same rights of membership as the substantive post-holder.
- 3.10 The President/Vice-President of the Students' Union may nominate an alternate to attend any meeting with full membership rights. Where a temporary vacancy exists in respect of elected student constituencies, the nominee must be a member of the relevant constituency.
- 3.11 Where the constitution provides for co-opted members, such members may be invited to join the board/committee at the Chair's discretion. Co-opted members will have full rights of membership.
- 3.12 At the discretion of the Chair, the board/committee may permit one or more individuals to attend a meeting as observers or to make an occasional contribution. An observer may speak only when invited to do so by the Chair and has no voting rights.
- 3.13 The Registrar has discretion to attend and speak at the meetings of any board or committee, although he may only vote at boards or committees where he is formally a member.
- 3.14 The Conservatoire aims to maintain openness and transparency in its activities and, to this end, any member of staff may attend any meeting as an observer where practicable, subject to prior request to and approval by the Chair of the meeting.

4 Working Groups

- 4.1 The Academic Board or its committees may create working groups to consider specific issues.
- 4.2 The creation of such groups is subject to:
- The establishment of formally drafted terms of reference; the Secretary to the parent committee will normally co-ordinate the drafting of terms of reference, in liaison with the Chair and the Registrar

- The appointment of a Chair and a Secretary, approved by the parent committee, who will take responsibility for the timely completion of work and reports to the parent committee
- A specified termination date for the group (or a rationale for the creation of a standing group)
- Consideration of whether there are other, less resource-intensive means of discussing the relevant issues, including referral to existing committees/boards/groups or asking staff to prepare proposals for the committee.

4.3 A working group will usually include at least one member from the parent committee.

4.4 Student representation will be sought – as far as appropriate - on working groups, normally through nomination on the part of the Students' Union.

4.5 The sub-committees must inform the Registrar of the creation or closure of working groups.

5 Roles of Committee/Board Members and Officials

5.1 Chair

- The chairs of committees of Academic Board will be specified in the terms of reference, as approved by Academic Board.
- A committee/board meeting will elect an acting chair from among the members, in the absence of the chair/vice-chair, unless the Chair has already nominated a deputy.
- The Chair is responsible for the leadership of the committee/board, working with the Secretary for the preparation and direction of business, and for representing the committee when it is not in session. The Chair is responsible for regulating committee/board meetings, promoting the timely, effective, efficient and transparent conduct of business, with fair opportunities for members to contribute to discussion. The Chair will pay particular attention to the inclusion of any student representatives as equal participants in meetings.
- The Chair should sum up discussion, ensuring that decisions and actions arising from each item are clear, so that they can be recorded accurately. The Chair will suggest a way forward when the outcome of a discussion remains unclear, instigating a vote if necessary.
- The Chair should ensure that the Secretary is aware of any matters under discussion which should be recorded under 'reserved business.' The chair should, however, note the principle that business should be conducted as transparently as possible.

5.2 Secretary

The Secretary will:

- help the Chair to ensure that the Committee observes the terms of reference and the regulations for the operation of the Committee; liaising with the chair to identify business which ought to be discussed by the Committee;
- maintain a list of members of the Committee and conduct arrangements for the election or appointment of new members;
- draft a schedule of principal business for the year, in liaison with the Chair, for the Committee's approval;
- provide the Committee Chair with a draft agenda;
- work with the Chair to agree the agenda in time to meet the deadline for e-mailing and distributing the papers;
- provide reminders on items on the agreed schedule for the year;
- receive and prepare papers for distribution to the members, and ensure that all practical arrangements are in place (booking rooms and other facilities etc.);
- advise the Chair on procedural matters relating to the Committee;
- ensure that the Committee is quorate and assist in making arrangements for a deputy in the absence of the Chair;
- take minutes of meetings and record apologies for absence;
- maintain a list of actions and follow up responses to actions;
- liaise where appropriate with other Committee secretaries to promote the flow of information between Committees.

5.3 Committee/Board members

- It is important that committee members attend meetings regularly and punctually and read papers in advance of meetings, subject to the prompt circulation of papers. Members who unavoidably have to leave meetings early should notify the Chair or the Secretary. Members of committees who are unable to attend meetings must send their apologies for absence to the Secretary in advance of the meeting.
- All members of committees must accept responsibility for carrying out agreed 'actions' within the agreed deadlines.
- Members should avoid tabling papers except in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Chair/Secretary.

Representatives of teaching and support staff

- Representatives of staff are usually appointed through a process of nomination, except for subject area meetings where all subject area staff would normally be expected to participate.

- The Secretary should report to the Registrar the persistent absence of staff representatives from committee/board meetings, to enable the Registrar to check any problems achieving adequate representation at meetings.

Students' representatives

- The Students' Union has three representatives on Academic Board, as determined in the terms of reference. For other committees, student representatives are nominated by the Students' Union from a call for volunteers, or are directly elected by their cohort. Where the Students' Union is unable to provide a nominee for a position of student representative, an officer of the Union may fill the vacancy on a temporary basis, subject to the approval of the Registrar.
- The involvement of students' representatives at meetings is an important part of the institutional quality assurance and enhancement processes. Chairs and Secretaries should make particular efforts to encourage the participation of students' representatives in the committees/boards, helping the students to understand the procedures and to be able to contribute to discussion freely and openly.
- The committee/board secretary should report to the Registrar the persistent absence of students' representatives from committee meetings, to enable monitoring of the effectiveness of student representation.

6 Notice of Meetings

- 6.1 The Committee Secretary will send members an Outlook meeting invite to all meetings of the committee/board at the start of each Academic Year.
- 6.2 All items proposed for inclusion on the agenda of an ordinary meeting must be notified to the Secretary in writing no later than fifteen working days before the due date of the meeting; items will be included on the agenda at the discretion of the Chair.
- 6.3 The Secretary should normally receive items for Any Other Business in advance of a meeting, with the inclusion of these items depending on the discretion of the Chair. The Chair may, exceptionally, use discretion to accept items of any other business at a meeting.

7 Management of Papers

- 7.1 The agenda and other papers will be made available to members, where possible, no later than five working days before the meeting. Chairs will return the draft agenda to the Secretary within two working days to support the timely publication of the agenda.
- 7.2 All items should be submitted to the Secretary for distribution no later than ten working days before the due date of the meeting, except by special arrangement with the Chair/Secretary.
- 7.3 Late and tabled papers should be kept to a minimum and may be submitted only at the discretion of the Chair/Secretary.
- 7.4 Papers for special meetings will be circulated as soon as possible, and normally no later than three working days before the meeting.
- 7.5 Standard format for agenda

The Academic Board may approve a standard agenda for specified committee/board meetings.

The Registrar creates and circulates a template for committee/board agendas with guidance to Secretaries for each section as necessary. Agendas for committees/boards must be drafted using this template.

Subject to consultation with the Chair, the agenda could also include an estimated allowance of time for the discussion of each item.

The agenda will also detail for participants:

- the papers that are attached
- papers to follow the distribution of the agenda;

- items to be tabled or presented orally: tabled papers should be avoided wherever possible and may only be accepted with the agreement of the chair in consultation with the secretary.

* The agenda will indicate starred items for items which – in the judgment of the Chair and the secretary – are only for formal acceptance without further discussion, or only for information. These items will be accepted as received or approved without discussion, unless a member requests that the item be ‘unstarred’ in advance or at the start of the meeting.

7.6 Presentation of papers

- Reports from departments and sub-committees will be submitted to the next available meeting of the senior committee/board. *Reports should be evaluative and set out as succinctly as possible the issues that require attention.*
- Consideration should be given to numbering meetings and the papers presented for ease of reference, although this requirement may be waived for committees other than the Academic Board, as agreed with the Registrar. The present system is as follows: abbreviation of committee followed by academic year/number of meeting/number of paper, e.g.: AB.2024-25-01-01
- The Registrar creates and circulates a template for committee/board papers to Secretaries. Secretaries in turn circulate the template to the committee/board members and papers should be drafted using the template.
- A lengthy paper should start with an executive summary and any proposal or recommendations.
- Secretaries should maintain electronic distribution lists for their committees.

7.7 Minutes

- The Secretary will aim to produce draft minutes for the approval of the chair of the committee within ten working days of a meeting. The chair of a committee should return the minutes to the secretary with comments within five working days.
- The minutes of committees (other than confidential business) should be circulated to members (as ‘unconfirmed’) within fifteen working days of the meeting. The Registrar creates and circulates a template for committee/board minutes to Secretaries. Secretaries must use the template provided for the minutes.
- The record of the discussion of each item on the agenda will include:
 - major points of discussion, including any major areas of disagreement even where a consensus has been reached

- decisions and action, ensuring that there is an explicit 'audit trail' from meeting to meeting.
- The minutes will conclude, where possible, with details of the date, time and location of the next meeting.
- Unless agreed with the Chair, the record of the discussion will not normally attribute specific points to individuals unless they spoke on account of their official positions (e.g. the Head of Finance making a statement about finance) or they led on a particular topic (e.g. presenting a paper).
- The status of minutes may be as follows:
 - Draft (minutes as prepared by the Secretary)
 - Unconfirmed (draft minutes as circulated to the members, with the permission of the Chair but awaiting approval from the committee/board)
 - Confirmed (minutes as approved by the committee/board)
- Chairs and Secretaries should bear in mind that the minutes of committees may be requested by any party under the Freedom of Information Act or be used as evidence of institutional compliance with regulatory requirements.

8 Conduct of Meetings

- 8.1 The Chair will conduct business in consultation with the Secretary, with the aim of promoting effective, efficient, participative and transparent discussion, within the terms of reference. The Chair will have final authority to rule on all issues of order during the meeting.
- 8.2 Tabled papers (i.e. those presented at meetings without having previously been circulated) may only be considered with the approval of the Chair/Secretary; the presentation of tabled papers must be kept to a minimum. Committees will only be asked to make decisions on the basis of oral reports or tabled papers in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Chair, in consultation with the Secretary.
- 8.3 Quorum
- i The quorum for each committee will be set in the terms of reference. The Chair and the Committee must take particular care to ensure an appropriate level of student representation before declaring a meeting quorate.
 - ii Where attendance falls below the majority, the Chair may adjourn the meeting to another date or use the meeting to gather advice on matters of urgent business. The Committee Secretary should inform the Registrar of any case where a meeting is inquorate. Poor patterns of attendance for particular committees may prompt a review of the membership and terms of reference to consider the effectiveness of the Committee.

9 Dissemination of Decisions

- 9.1 The Secretary will ensure the prompt dissemination of decisions and outcomes from a meeting. The Secretary will normally circulate the schedule of actions to those responsible for taking action within ten working days of the meeting. Business requiring the consideration of another committee will be referred to the Secretary by the Secretary of the originating committee.
- 9.2 When the Committee agrees that a policy or a procedural paper should be drafted, the Committee will designate an appropriate person to co-ordinate the process, in liaison with the Secretary.

10 Storing of Committee papers

- 10.1 The final papers and minutes for each Committee meeting are kept on the Registry T Drive in the applicable folder for each Committee. The Secretaries are responsible for ensuring all papers and minutes are saved in the folder and accessible to anyone within Registry who may need them.

11 Confidentiality

- 11.1 Discussion of issues relating to individual members of staff or students or of a commercially sensitive nature will be treated as confidential, on the guidance of the Chair and the Secretary; these items will be treated as 'reserved' and should not be included with published documents or released under the Freedom of Information Act. Care should be taken to protect the confidentiality of personal information in accordance with the requirements and principles of the Data Protection Act.
- 11.2 Discussion of disciplinary issues, salary and payment terms, financial considerations and assessment will be treated as confidential on the advice of the Chair.
- 11.3 The Chair/Secretary will give members guidance on the handling of documents marked 'confidential' or 'reserved business', including who may remain at the meeting for the discussion of such business. The Secretary will prepare a confidential minute of such items separated from the rest of the minutes, which will be available for general circulation and may be available for public consultation under the Freedom of Information Act.

12 Staff Development

- 12.1 The Staff Development Programme will include provision for staff development on the operation of effective committees for chairs and secretaries and for other committee members, arranged in liaison with the Registry.
- 12.2 The Registrar and the Secretary and the Clerk to the Board will provide induction for new members of Academic Board, and for students' representatives on committees.

13 Interpretation and Review of Standards

- 13.1 The Registrar has authority to interpret these standards and will prepare amendments to the standard as required, for the approval of Academic Board.
- 13.2 The Academic Board will review the standards at least once every four years.

14 Review and Development of Committee Structure

- 14.1 The Conservatoire will aim to avoid the proliferation of committees and working groups, ensuring that Academic Board approves any proposals for the establishment of committees, on the basis of an explicit rationale, including:
 - a clear explanation of why the functions of the committee cannot be fulfilled by existing committees;
 - whether any existing committees can be terminated as a result of the introduction of the new committee.
- 14.2 The Academic Board will annually approve the terms of reference and the membership of the Board, its committees and working groups.
- 14.3 Each committee/board will annually review its terms of reference and the list of members of the committee, usually at the first meeting of the academic year.