

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC SENATE STANDING ORDERS
SENATE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(as approved by Academic Senate on 19 October 2018)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Application

- (a) These rules are made by the Academic Senate (Senate) pursuant to Part E of the Academic Governance Policy and apply to all meetings of Senate.
- (b) These standing orders also apply to all meetings of committees of the Senate, to the extent they are applicable and are not inconsistent with any directions of Senate. If so, then these standing orders apply as if each committee member was a Senate member.
- (c) The procedures for the election of members are covered in the *Elections Policy*.

1.2 Definitions

In this protocol, the following words have these meanings:

- (a) Act: Western Sydney University Act 1997 (NSW)
- (b) Resolution: a formal record of the decision of the meeting on any matter.
- (c) Chair: The person authorised to preside at a meeting in accordance with the Act
- (d) Regular meeting: a meeting that is listed in the annual schedule of meetings.
- (e) Electronic Meeting: a meeting to consider urgent matters electronically (also referred to as an E-Meeting).
- (f) Secretary: a person appointed as secretary to the Senate or a Committee.
- (g) Special meeting: a meeting convened to conduct urgent business not able to be dealt with at a regular, scheduled meeting.
- (h) Starring of agenda items: a meeting procedure to identify those items requiring report and discussion.

2 CONVENING MEETINGS

2.1 Ordinary Meetings

- (a) *[Extract from Academic Governance Policy]*

(23) The Academic Senate must meet at least four times each year. At the discretion of the Chair, meetings may be conducted and members may participate with the aid of electronic communication technologies.

2.2 Special Meetings

- (a) In addition, the Senate will meet:
 - i) If Senate decides a special meeting is necessary;
 - ii) If the Chair decides that a special meeting is to be held;
 - iii) At the request of the Vice-Chancellor; or
 - iv) Upon the written request of one third of the members of the Senate, addressed to the Secretary to the Senate specifying the business that the members wish to be considered at the meeting.
- (b) A special meeting held in accordance with (a) above is to be held at a time and date determined by the Chair, except in the case of (a) (iv) where it is to be held no more than fourteen days after the Secretary received the request.
- (c) A meeting of the Senate should be no longer than three hours, unless those present agree that the meeting should be extended. A meeting may be extended with the concurrence of a majority of the members present.
- (d) If there is unfinished business on the agenda at the time at which a meeting is due to end, or when a meeting is no longer quorate, that business is to be deferred to the next regular meeting of the Senate, unless the Senate decides to:
 - i) Adjourn its meeting and reconvene at a later date/time;
 - ii) Hold an Electronic meeting;
 - iii) Hold a special meeting to consider the business; or
 - iv) Refer the business for determination, on behalf of the Senate, to the Senate Executive Committee.
- (e) The Chair of Senate may cancel a meeting if he or she is of the opinion that there is insufficient business to justify the holding of a meeting.

2.3 Electronic Meetings

- (a) If the Chair of Senate forms the view that a matter requires the urgent consideration of the Senate, and there is no meeting imminent, or it is impracticable to convene a special meeting, Senate members may be consulted in writing via an Electronic Meeting.
- (b) A draft motion put before the Senate members in writing via an Electronic Meeting shall become a resolution of the Senate on the date specified in the notice for return of responses.
- (c) The resolution is carried if an absolute majority of Senate members vote in favour of the motion.
- (d) If the resolution is not carried, then the matter is to be referred to the next meeting of Senate for discussion and any resolution.
- (e) A report on the outcome of an Electronic Meeting will be provided to the next Senate meeting.

3. AGENDAS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

3.1 Agendas

- (a) The Secretary is responsible for preparing and sending Senate agendas and any supporting papers to Senate members.
- (b) Any business to be actioned at a meeting must be by way of recommendation included in the agenda for that meeting.
- (c) Members may submit items and documents for inclusion on the agenda only with the consent of the Chair. Any such documents must be submitted to the Secretary at least fourteen (14) days before a regular meeting of the Senate and at least ten (10) days before a special meeting of the Senate.
- (d) If the Chair determines that an item raised by members or its committees should not be placed on the Senate meeting agenda, the Chair must report the reasons at the meeting.
- (e) Items which the Chair considers to require further report and/or discussion during the Senate meeting are starred on the agenda.
- (f) The Secretary is to send to the members of the Senate an agenda for each meeting, setting out the time, date and location of the meeting and the business to be conducted at the meeting at least five working days before the meeting is to be held.
- (g) The Secretary may send an additional agenda to members of the Senate prior to the meeting if the Chair considers that urgent business has arisen after the agenda for the meeting was issued, and at least two working days before the meeting is to be held.
- (h) Only business that is shown on an agenda for a meeting of the Senate should be considered by the Senate at that meeting, unless the Senate, on the motion of the Chair, agrees to consider other business of an urgent and important nature.
- (i) The sending of information to Senate members following the dissemination of the agenda and original supporting information is at the discretion of the Chair.
- (j) An agenda or additional agenda sent in accordance with this part will be dispatched electronically.
- (k) The Chair may include recommendations on an agenda or additional agenda regarding action that the Senate may take in respect of business to be conducted at the meeting.

4 MEETING PROCEDURES

4.1 Apologies and Absences

- (a) [Extract from Academic Governance Policy]

(18) The position of an elected or appointed member of Senate becomes vacant where the member:

- a. ceases to be qualified to hold the position to which they have been elected or appointed; or*

- b. *resigns by notice in writing to the Chair, Academic Senate; or*
- c. *is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Senate, without leave having been granted by the Senate; or*
- d. *in the case of an appointed member, is removed from office by the Vice-Chancellor.*

(28) Elected members of the Academic Senate may only nominate another person to stand in for them in their absence from meetings of Senate, or of one of its working parties or sub committees, if that absence is the result of academic study leave, or sudden illness or misadventure. A nomination for that purpose must be made, in writing, to the Chair, Academic Senate, who will determine whether, and for which specified meetings, the nominee may attend Senate, its working parties and sub committees as a member. If such a temporary replacement is approved by the Chair, the replacement may attend meetings specified by the Chair and exercise all rights and functions of the absent, substantive member.

- (b) Senate notes apologies and grants leave of absence when a member advises the Secretary in writing of their inability to attend the meeting either before or within two working days of the meeting.
- (c) Senate records absences when a member is absent without seeking leave of absence.
- (d) In the case of elected and appointed members who have been absent for two consecutive meetings, Senate will consider granting leave of absence when a member seeks leave (in writing) to miss a third meeting.
- (e) Absent ex officio members may be represented by the acting incumbent of the position. The person representing the member in those limited circumstances may attend meetings of the Senate. Those persons will have all the rights and functions of the absent substantive member.

4.2 Attendance

- (a) Senate members are expected to attend all meetings in person. However, they may, with prior approval of the Chair, attend a meeting by teleconference or other technological means if there are exceptional circumstances that prevent them for attending that meeting in person.

4.3 Quorum

- (a) [Extract from Academic Governance Policy]
 - (26) At any meeting of the Academic Senate, a quorum is one half (or if one half is not a whole number, the whole number next higher than one half) of the total number of its members then in office.*
- (b) If a quorum is not present within thirty minutes of the stated commencement time, the business listed on the agenda for the meeting shall be listed on the agenda for the next meeting (which may be a special meeting, Electronic meeting or meeting of the Senate Executive Committee).
- (c) Business listed on an agenda for the next regular meeting from the previous inquorate meeting of the Senate is to have precedence over other business unless the Senate decides otherwise at that meeting.

4.4 Who Presides at Meetings

- (a) The Chair of Senate presides at all meetings of Senate at which he or she is present

- (b) At any meeting of Senate at which the Chair is not present, the Deputy Chair is to preside, and in the absence of both the Chair and the Deputy Chair, a member elected by and from the members present is to preside.

4.5 Starring of Items

- (a) To improve the efficiency of meetings, a starring system is used to separate agenda items from matters that require discussion. These are designated with an asterisk (*) in the agenda. Senate members will be asked at commencement of a meeting which items, not already starred, they wish to be starred for discussion.
- (b) Agenda items that are not starred shall be taken as having been considered and resolved as approved by the Senate.
- (c) The Senate is to consider items of business in the order in which they are listed on the agenda, unless it decides otherwise, or at the discretion of the Chair.

4.6 Declarations of Interest

- (a) If a member of the Senate has a direct personal or pecuniary interest or involvement in any item considered by the Senate, then that member must immediately declare his or her interest or involvement at a meeting of Senate.
- (b) The Senate must then determine whether or not that member may be present during any discussion or participate in any decision relating to that matter.

4.7 Open and Closed Sessions

- (a) Meetings of the Senate shall be open to members of the University. This includes staff, students and graduates, who may attend meetings of the Senate as observers and shall be admitted subject to the availability of space. Observers shall not be accorded speaking rights.
- (b) The Senate may resolve to go into closed session for the purpose of considering confidential or privileged items, if the meeting is quorate. All non-members who are present shall, with the exception of those non-members as the Senate may determine, be required to leave the meeting room and shall not be readmitted until the Chair declares that open session has been resumed.
- (c) Any matters discussed or documents considered in closed session remain strictly confidential, subject to any legal requirements for disclosure.

4.8 Decisions of Senate

- (a) All matters considered by the Senate are decided by consensus.
- (b) Senate may endorse or approve a recommendation before it, with or without amendment.
- (c) If the Senate cannot resolve a matter by consensus, then that matter is to be resolved by voting on the recommendation(s).
- (d) Voting is normally by show of hands. A secret ballot may be used at the discretion of the Chair with votes distributed and counted in front of members

present at the meeting by the Secretary.

- (e) If there are an equal number of votes for and against a recommendation, the recommendation lapses.
- (f) The Chair does not have a casting vote if there is an equality of votes.
- (g) Non-compliance with these Standing Orders will not in itself invalidate a Resolution of the Senate.

5 MINUTES AND ACTIONING OF SENATE DECISIONS

5.1 Minutes

- (a) The Secretary is to prepare and circulate minutes to members of the Senate for confirmation either with or without amendment at the next regular meeting of the Senate.
- (b) The minutes will record the names of all Senate members present and not present (regardless of whether apologies have been given) at any meetings, and including a record of the arrival and departure of members during the course of a meeting:
- (c) The names of any people in attendance, including as observers
- (d) A summary of all business, including motions transacted;
- (e) All resolutions passed at meetings
- (f) The declarations of interests made under clause 4.4.
- (g) When the minutes have been confirmed they are to be signed by the person who presided at the meeting of the Senate at which they were confirmed.
- (h) The Secretary is to make the minutes available electronically.

5.2 Actioning of Senate decisions

- (a) The Secretary is to notify relevant University staff of Senate decisions that those staff are required to action.

6 PROCEDURES

6.1 Matters not dealt with in Standing Orders

- a) The decision of the Chair is final in relation to procedural matters arising during a meeting of Senate which are not covered in these Standing Orders.

6.2 Changes to Standing Orders

- (a) The Standing Orders will be reviewed by Senate on a biennial basis.