

# THE UNIVERSITY OF KENT

## SENATE: STANDING ORDERS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Statute 6 provides for Senate, Council and Court to “make, amend or repeal Standing Orders for governing the proceedings of those prospective bodies” [Statute 6.4]. The Standing Orders set out below, which relates to the conduct of Senate’s business and meetings, were formally adopted by Senate with effect from its meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1994 (Senate Minute 8558 refers [updated to reflect the University’s new Charter and Statutes from 2010]).

### 2. PREAMBLE

The membership and powers of Senate are set out in Ordinance 6 The Senate (see Appendix 1). The Vice-Chancellor is *ex officio* Chair. The procedure for the appointment of elected representatives is set out in Ordinance 7 The Election of members of the Academic Staff to the Senate and Ordinance 8 The Election of students to the Senate (see Appendix 2 and 3). The definition of reserved and non-reserved business is defined in Ordinance 12 The Regulation of Student Membership of Committees (see Appendix 4).

### 3. STANDING ORDERS

- (i) CHAIR (the Vice-Chancellor is *ex officio* Chair as prescribed in Ordinance)
  - (a) The Chair is responsible for ensuring that each meeting of Senate is conducted efficiently, expeditiously and properly in accordance with the requirements of the University’s Charter, Statutes and Ordinances and, as he/she determines, these Standing Orders and as appropriate to the business before it.
  - (b) That in the Vice-Chancellor’s absence Senate should be chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance or in his/her absence by one of the other Deputy-Vice-Chancellors.
  - (c) That the Chair (or in his/her absence the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Strategy Planning and Performance or Deputy Vice Chancellor) be empowered to act on Senate’s behalf between meetings, should Senate not be able to meet in the timeframe required for action, on any matter within Senate’s powers as set out in Ordinance 6. Senate may also delegate a decision to the Chair or other appropriate member for action outside of the formal meeting.

Any such action will be communicated to the Head of Academic Governance who will ensure such a decision is reported to the next meeting of Senate along with any relevant documents or further information.
  - (d) That the Chair may be suspended from acting in such capacity at a particular meeting where the following conditions are met:
    - (1) A motion that the Chair should be suspended is stated, seconded and supported by four other members of Senate at the meeting.
    - (2) A Deputy Chair (following the provisions of 3(i)(c) above) then takes the Chair.
    - (3) A vote in favour of the motion is supported by two-thirds of the members at the meeting.

The Deputy Chair then asks the Chair to withdraw and the Deputy Chair then decides whether or not to continue or to adjourn the meeting.

(ii) ELECTED MEMBERS

- (a) That in the case of a vacancy for an elected member occurring before the end of the normal period of appointment, arrangements should be made to fill this as soon as conveniently possible, as determined by the Directorate of Governance & Assurance, for the unexpired portion of the original period of appointment.
- (b) That the appointment of elected academic members who do not attend three consecutive meetings without good cause should be deemed to have lapsed and their places refilled by election as soon as conveniently possible, as determined by the Directorate of Governance & Assurance for the unexpired portion of the original period of appointment.
- (c) That substitution for an elected academic staff member who is unable to attend a meeting is not allowed.

Note: Substitution for appointed members and elected student representatives is, however, allowed provided advance notification is given. Substitutes have observer status and are not, therefore, entitled to vote.

(iii) OBSERVERS AND ADVISERS

- (a) That where Senate deems it appropriate one or more persons (i.e. office holders or named individuals) may be invited to attend meetings on a permanent basis or to attend part or all of a meeting either to observe or, where so invited by the Chair, to participate in the proceedings.

Note: In addition the Chair may, at his/her discretion, invite particular individuals to attend a particular meeting in order to observe or participate as he/she considers it appropriate.

- (b) That observers and advisers invited to attend meetings of Senate should not be entitled to vote.

(iv) MEETINGS

- (a) That, except in an emergency or when agreed otherwise by Senate, meetings should be held on a Wednesday afternoon in term-time commencing at 2 p.m.
- (b) That the dates, times and venues of meetings should be published in the University diary and/or any other appropriate place as determined by the Directorate of Governance & Assurance.
- (c) That meetings of Senate should be held when one of the following provisions are met:
  - (1) The Chair, in consultation as appropriate, decides that the business in hand justifies the holding of a meeting previously timetabled.
  - (2) A member, supported by 12 members in writing requests that a meeting be held to consider one or more named matters.
- (d) That if the Chair, in consultation as he/she deems appropriate, decides that the business received for a timetabled meeting of Senate is insufficient to justify the

convening of such a meeting, the meeting should be cancelled or not convened and any business held over until the next timetabled meeting.

(v) QUORUM

The quorum is defined in Ordinance 6, paragraph 6 as “one third of the total membership of the Senate”.

The question of whether Senate is quorate is relevant when decisions are taken or when Senate’s quoracy is challenged. Ordinance 6.6 determines what should be done when Senate is inquorate, as follows:

- (a) Ordinance 6, paragraph 6.6 states that “in the absence of a quorum, no business shall be transacted other than the adjournment of the meeting”.
- (b) Ordinance 6, paragraph 6.6 also states “at the adjourned meeting, the business for which the original business was called may be completed in the absence of quorum. The manner of summoning the adjourned meeting, and the period of notice to be given, shall be prescribed in the Standing Orders”.

The adjourned meeting should be held on the same day and time in the following week or on another day and time as determined by the members present at the inquorate meeting.

(vi) CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

- (a) That it should be assumed that members have read all the circulated papers in advance of the meeting.
- (b) That all members who speak should address the Chair of Senate and keep silence when the Chair speaks.
- (c) That all members should obey any instructions concerning the conduct of the meeting and the timing of agenda items given by the Chair.
- (d) That with the exception of motions from the Chair, all motions put should have a proposer and a seconder and where a seconder cannot be found, the motion should fail.
- (e) That any amendment to a motion put to Senate should have a proposer and a seconder and be put to a vote before the main motion.
- (f) That provided a motion is properly proposed and seconded, the Chair is obliged, after due discussion, to put it to the vote (unless Senate votes that the motion should not be put or votes to proceed to the next item of business).
- (g) That a motion “That the motion now be put.” must, if properly proposed and seconded, be immediately voted on taking precedence over other business including (h) below.
- (h) That a motion to move to the next item of business must, if properly proposed and seconded, be immediately voted on taking precedence over other business except (g) above.

(vii) VOTING

- (a) That only members of Senate present at a meeting are entitled to vote.

- (b) That voting at meetings should be by a show of hands of those for and against a motion and of those who wish to abstain. A simple majority of votes in favour of the motion is required to approve a motion.

Note: In the case of, for example, appointments to sub or standing committees or to Council or other exceptional case as determined by the Chair or by a decision of Senate, voting may be conducted by a secret postal ballot.

- (c) That where Senate considers and takes a vote on a matter in which a member has a conflict of interest, he/she should give the Chair prior notice of interest (except where this is impossible) and/or declare this at the meeting and withdraw for any vote taken.
- (d) That the Chair should be entitled to have a vote if he/she wishes to use this.
- (e) That where there is an equality of votes the Chair may use a casting vote if he/she wishes (i.e. an additional vote to that specified in (d) above). If the Chair chooses not to exercise this power the motion will fail.
- (f) That the numbers of votes and abstentions should be counted by the Head of Academic Governance or his/her representative and announced to the meeting of Senate by the Chair.

(viii) AGENDA

- (a) The agenda for meetings should be divided into non-reserved and reserved items as prescribed in Ordinance 12 and each should include provision for members to raise questions and business items. Other items should be included as determined by the Chair in consultation as appropriate.
- (b) That no additional business to the items on the agenda should be allowed after the deadlines given in (ix) below except with the permission of the Chair.

(ix) NOTICE OF BUSINESS AND CIRCULATION OF PAPERS

- (a) That the following deadlines should be set:
  - A. Submission of reports of Standing or Sub-Committees or items of business: the Head of Academic Governance to be notified at least two weeks before the date of the meeting and actual Paper(s) given to the Head of Academic Governance at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting.
  - B. Items from members should be submitted in writing to the Head of Academic Governance by 12.30 p.m. on the Monday before Senate's meeting.
- (b) The agenda should be published and circulated no later than the Thursday preceding the meeting of Senate. If necessary a second circulation of papers should be made on the Monday before Senate.
- (c) That no paper should be laid on the table at Senate except with the permission of the Chair and as arranged by the Head of Academic Governance or his/her representative.
- (d) That papers should not be published or discussed outside the University except with the express approval of Senate or of the Vice-Chancellor on its behalf.

(x) DEFERMENT OF ITEMS

That an item of business may be deferred where one of the following conditions are met:

- (a) Senate receives a request to this effect from the Chair of the Committee or the individual from whom the item originated;
- or (b) a vote in favour of deferring the item is taken by Senate;
- or (c) the Chair makes such a ruling subject to deferment being for not more than one meeting.

In the last case the Chair's decision is final.

(xi) RECONSIDERATION OF ITEMS

That except where specifically decided otherwise by Senate or with the permission of the Chair, decisions reached by Senate should not be reconsidered for at least one term.

(xii) VIRTUAL MEETINGS

In the event that a virtual meeting is required to be held, this will be undertaken via MS Teams or other virtual meeting facility that is in wide deployment at the University. These Standing Orders will apply to virtual meetings in the same way as physical meetings, with the exception of (vii b) above, where the following will apply:

In the event of a virtual meeting, voting will be by way of a roll call of participants who will be required to verbally respond as to whether they are For or Against a motion, or if they wish to Abstain. The Secretary to Senate will count the votes. A simple majority of votes in favour of the motion is required to approve a motion.

(xiii) INTERPRETATION AND OPERATION OF THESE STANDING ORDERS

- (a) The Chair's interpretation of these Standing Orders shall be final.
- (b) That one or more of these Standing Orders may be suspended where one of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The Chair makes such a ruling.

Note: This provision excludes Section 3(i)(d) above.

- (2) A vote in favour of a motion to this effect is supported by two-thirds of the members of Senate present at the meeting to which the motion is put.

In the first case the Chair's decision is final.

- (c) That the procedure for amending these Standing Orders is as follows:
  - (1) Senate receives a written request (submitted to the Directorate of Governance and Assurance at least 10 days before Senate's meeting) setting out the proposed change(s) and the reasons for the proposal(s);
  - (2) a vote in favour of the proposal is supported by two-thirds of the members of Senate present at the meeting to which the proposal is put.

SHM  
October 2020