

Education Committee Standing Orders 2025-26

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Preamble

The requirement for Council's main committees to have Standing Orders is set out in [Council Regulations 14 of 2002](#), 2.8.(1) Where there is a conflict between the University's legislation and these standing orders, the former shall prevail.

Council has adopted the following common set of principles within which its committees operate:

- **Subsidiarity** Handling of committee business through Council's main committees reflects the principle of subsidiarity, that decisions should be delegated to the lowest level appropriate to that decision.
- **Clarity** There should be clarity regarding the membership of the committee and the role of those in attendance, the flow of business to and from the committee, its terms of reference, delegations (both in matters delegated to the committee and by the committee), the reports coming to the committee and the reporting arrangements of the committee itself (e.g. to Council, to other bodies, to Congregation and the wider community of the collegiate University). Matters such as these are set out in the Standing Orders of a main committee of Council.
- **Flow of business** Where allowed by legislation and timeliness, most items should come to Council through one of its five main committees. Items normally should go to only one of those committees. If an item has to go to more than one, it should do so sequentially, so that a single report comes up to Council. The reason for an item coming through more than one main committee should be clearly documented for Council.
- **Timeliness** Handling also reflects the importance of timeliness. Ensuring timely decision-making may require Chair's Action; in such cases Chair's decisions are reported at the next available meeting.
- **Inclusivity** Consideration should be given to ensuring diverse membership of the committee and to conducting business in a way that encourages the full participation and engagement of all members to achieve effective decision-making.
- **Reporting** Items coming to Council should first and foremost enable Council members to exercise their duties as trustees. They therefore normally address key strategic opportunities and/or significant risks. These may be new risks not necessarily yet reflected in the current risk register.

Reports to Council should be brief and focussed. Detailed consideration, wherever possible, should already have taken place at the level of the reporting committee. Information recording this detailed consideration, in the form of minutes and supporting papers, is accessible to Council members via the SharePoint site.

1. Membership

1.1 Eligibility for membership and procedure for vacancies

Eligibility for membership of all committees is set out in general regulations. See [Council Regulations 14 of 2002](#), 2.1.

1.2 Period of membership

Appointed, elected, and co-opted members of Education Committee, other than student member representatives, shall, in the absence of provision in these regulations, or in the General Regulations of Council for Committees, to the contrary, serve for three years.

Such a member may serve no more than two full terms of office, and on completion of those two terms may not become an appointed, elected, or co-opted member of Education Committee until a full term of office on the committee has passed. General Purposes Committee (GPC) may dispense the member from this requirement.

See [Council Regulations 14 of 2002](#), 2.2.

Student members shall normally serve for one year. If a student member is successfully re-elected for a second term of office as sabbatical officer of the Oxford University Student Union, they shall serve for the full duration of their term of office as sabbatical officer. If a student member ceases to be a sabbatical officer before the end of their term of office, they shall also cease to be a member of the committee.

See Oxford University SU Articles of Association, 21.2.2.

Further provisions concerning members whose appointment to the committee is tied to other matters, e.g. membership of Council, and casual vacancies (where a vacancy occurs mid-way through a period of office), are provided in the regulations governing period of membership.

Ex officio members, e.g. the Proctors and Assessor, shall serve on the committee for the duration of their appointment to the relevant office.

1.3 Composition of Education Committee

Education Committee's composition, including its powers of co-option, are set out in [Council Regulations 15 of 2002](#), 1 and 2:

1.4 Inclusivity and diversity

In reviewing its membership at its first meeting of the year, Education Committee should consider whether to use its power of co-option to provide for a more diverse membership.

1.5 Eligibility to vote

Appointed, elected, *ex officio*, and co-opted members of Education Committee shall be entitled to vote, where at the chair's discretion, a vote is called.

Student members are not entitled to vote. See [Council Regulations 14 of 2002](#), 2.3 and [Council Regulations 13 of 2002](#), 4-10.

Officers in attendance and those invited for particular items are not entitled to vote.

2. Terms of Reference

Education Committee's terms of reference are set out in [Council Regulations 15 of 2002](#), 3-4:

3. Arrangements for Meetings

3.1. Timing

Meetings of Education Committee shall normally be held as follows:

- In-person, between 2pm and 5pm on the Thursday of the 1st Week of each Full Term
- Online, between 11am and 1pm on the Thursday of the 5th week of each Full Term
- In-person, between 10am and 1pm on the Thursday of the 8th week of each Full Term

The Chair may postpone or cancel meetings at their discretion.

The Chair may call an extraordinary meeting at any time.

3.2. Declaration of personal interests

Members and regular attendees of the Committee will be asked to declare any interest that could give rise to conflict in relation to any item on the agenda at the beginning of the item in question. All interests so disclosed will be recorded in the minutes of the Committee. If the chair of the meeting deems it appropriate, the member shall absent themselves from all or part of the Committee's discussion of the matter. Wording reflecting these provisions will be included at the top of every Education Committee agenda.

3.3. Order of Business

The order of business will normally be as follows, for both unreserved and reserved sections of the agenda:

1. Matters requiring active consideration (business that is 'above the line'):
 - 1.1. minutes of the previous meeting (to be taken as read unless any objection is raised);
 - 1.2. matters arising from the minutes;
 - 1.3. other items requiring discussion and/or decision;
2. Matters not requiring active consideration (business that is 'below the line'):
 - 2.1. matters arising from the minutes;
 - 2.2. other items requiring approval or noting.

For all meetings lasting over two hours, there will be a 5-minute break scheduled during the meeting.

3.4 Quorum

No business shall be transacted at any meeting of Education Committee unless a quorum is present. For Education Committee, a quorum is one third of those members eligible to vote upon the business of the committee (rounded to the nearest integer). For joint groups, this must include at least one University and one college member.

A member who is participating in a meeting by telephone, video-conference or any other means of communication which permits all members simultaneously to hear one another, shall be considered present and therefore shall count towards the quorum.

If a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting, or during a meeting a quorum ceases to be present, the business or remaining business of that meeting shall be deferred to another meeting, whether already scheduled or to be scheduled, or shall be dealt with by the Chair acting under delegated authority in accordance with these standing orders (see paragraph 9.2 below).

See [Council Regulations 14 of 2002](#), 2.6-2.7.

3.5 Chair's casting vote

The person taking the chair at any committee meeting shall have a second or casting vote in the event of equality of voting. See [Council Regulations 14 of 2002](#), 1.2.

3.6 Deputy Chair

At the start of each academic year, or at other times as necessary, the committee shall appoint one of its members as deputy chair, to deputise as chair in the event of the chair's absence or for an item in which the chair has a conflict of interest.

4. Attendance at Meetings

4.1 Members

Only individuals appointed, elected or co-opted to the committee or listed in 4.2 and 4.3 below may attend meetings on a regular basis. On occasions when the member is unable to attend the member will still receive the papers and be able to raise any comments or questions through the Secretariat or with the Chair.

4.2 Officers in attendance

Where they are not members of Education Committee, the following officers may attend any meeting of Education Committee for the full agenda:

- Academic Registrar
- Deputy Academic Registrar (Education Policy and Enhancement)
- Head of Education Policy Support
- Policy Officer, Education Policy Support
- Chief Information Officer

These officers may speak if invited.

4.3 Student members

Two of the sabbatical officers of the Oxford University Student Union are entitled to attend the unreserved business of a meeting of Education Committee, but not the reserved business.

See [Council Regulations 14 of 2002](#), 2.3 and [Council Regulations 13 of 2002](#), 4-10.

4.4 Those invited for particular items

Other individuals may be invited to attend for particular items and participate in the discussion.

5. Confidentiality of Proceedings

5.1. Categories and treatment of business

Information classifications match the University's information asset classification system by assigning any business to the category of 'public', 'internal', or 'confidential'.

Unreserved business is the business of Education Committee for which the student members may be in attendance. It may be designated as 'public', 'internal', or 'confidential'.

- 'Public' business is not of a sensitive nature. All 'public' business may be discussed within the wider University and will be published on the University's website and will be open to the public.

- 'Internal' business may be discussed outside Education Committee, with other Education Committee subcommittee members or key departments in the wider University but because of certain sensitivities may not be made known to the wider University through publication on the University's website. 'Internal' papers are labelled as such, and they may be further sub-classified in order to denote where access has been given. For example, 'Internal (Education Committee and Education Committee non-attending officers)'.
- 'Confidential' business is of such a sensitive nature that it must not be discussed with anyone not listed in paragraph 5.2 below, but not to the extent that, in the opinion of the Chair of Education Committee, student members cannot be present for its discussion. Confidential papers are labelled as such and will not be made known to the wider University through publication on the University's website.
- The principles and guidelines on the dissemination of items of unreserved business are set out in paragraph 6.1 below.

Reserved business is the business of Education Committee for which the student members may not be present (see paragraph 4.3 below). It is always 'confidential' and the papers are marked accordingly. The expectation is that this category of business will be used as sparingly as possible. As a principle, items of business are reserved where a breach of confidentiality would have potentially serious consequences. The following matters will be ordinarily categorised as 'reserved' business, and therefore as 'confidential':

- a. issues of particular strategic sensitivity;
- b. issues of particular commercial sensitivity; and
- c. matters pertaining to specific individuals, such as honorary degrees and decisions on appointments, promotions, and other matters concerning the personal position of members of the staff of the University; and the admission of individuals and their academic assessment and personal affairs.

The list above is not exhaustive and there may be occasion on which matters falling outside those categories listed above need to be treated as 'confidential'. If this occurs, the expectation would be to provide the explanation to Education Committee.

The student members shall receive the full agenda (edited as necessary in the opinion of the Chair) but not the papers or minutes relating to reserved business.

5.2. Treatment of 'confidential' business

Business that is designated 'confidential' may be discussed in person only with:

- a. other members of Education Committee;
- b. members of, and officers in attendance at, the committee(s) that have previously considered the issue;
- c. officers in attendance at Education Committee;
- d. officers in receipt of Education Committee papers; and
- e. where the business is unreserved, the student members of Education Committee.

In exceptional circumstances, an Education Committee member may desire to discuss confidential issues with a person outside the groups in a-e above. In such a case, approval must be sought, with reasons, and obtained from the Chair in advance of the discussion taking place.

An Education Committee member may seek further information on an item from the officer specifically named in the paper as being the source of such information. The same designation of confidentiality will attach to the information provided as to the item on the agenda.

At its meeting, Education Committee may alter either the designation of a paper, or its position within the agenda. For example, it may decide that a previously confidential paper should be designated as 'internal'. If a change in designation is thought desirable following the Education Committee meeting in which the item was considered, the Chair has authority to approve such a change.

5.3. Discussion at meetings of Education Committee

Irrespective of the categorisation of business, in all cases views expressed by others present at meetings of Education Committee (either members of Education Committee or those in attendance) during the course of the Education Committee meeting may not be disclosed to, or discussed with, anyone outside the meeting unless that person is either another member of Education Committee, an officer ordinarily in attendance, or, with the exception of discussions of 'reserved confidential' business, the student members.

5.4. Agenda

The agenda for each meeting will be determined by the Chair of Education Committee. Proposals for items for the agenda should be made as early as possible to the Secretariat, and no later than four weeks before the meeting.

Matters that do not require Education Committee's active consideration (i.e. are for approval or note without discussion) will be categorised on the agenda as business that is 'below the line'. Any member of Education Committee may ask that any item from 'below the line' be brought forward (i.e. 'above the line') for Education Committee's active consideration. Requests should be made by noon on the working day before the meeting to the Secretariat, and where possible, include an explanation so as to facilitate any necessary preparation for discussion.

In exceptional circumstances, a member of Education Committee may ask the Chair to bring forward for discussion at an earlier stage of the meeting an item.

6. Papers

6.1. Circulation

Electronic copies of the agenda and papers will be published on [Education Committee's SharePoint](#) site for members of the committee, officers in attendance, and others authorised to see the papers, normally seven days before the meeting.

Members of Council will have access to Education Committee's SharePoint site.

Others for whom it is necessary for the discharge of their duties, as defined by the Secretariat in consultation with Academic Registrar as necessary, shall also have access to Education Committee's SharePoint site.

The Keeper of the Archives shall have access to the Education Committee's SharePoint site to download the agenda and papers for permanent electronic preservation. A hard copy of the committee's papers shall also be sent to the Registry file.

6.2. Retention and disposal of papers

All information concerning Education Committee, including its papers whether in electronic form or hard copy, must be held in accordance with the University's [Information Security Policy](#).

Members of Education Committee and others in receipt of committee papers, including minutes, must ensure that copies of such papers in their personal possession are disposed of in a confidential manner, when no longer needed by them. The secretariat of the committee shall make appropriate arrangements for the confidential disposal of any such papers which are returned to them.

It is accepted that sets of previous papers may be retained in the offices of *ex officio* members of Education Committee, in the offices of senior officers in receipt of papers under these standing orders, and in the offices of Oxford SU.

7. Self-review

Education Committee, as a main committee of Council, shall carry out a self-review of its operations and effectiveness at least every five years and shall report its findings to Council with recommendations for change where appropriate. See [Council Regulations 14 of 2002](#), 2.5.

Education Committee's last self-review took place in 2025.

8. Risk Register

The committee will review its risk register each term to ensure that the appropriate risks are identified and that suitable and effective mitigations are proposed.

9. Delegations

9.1. Powers delegated by Council to Education Committee

Beyond those set out in [Council Regulations 15 of 2002, Part 2: Education Committee](#), Council has made no specific delegations to Education Committee.

9.2. Delegations by Education Committee

The Chair of Education Committee shall have power to give approval to any matter that falls within Education Committee's terms of reference, provided that the Chair is satisfied that the case for urgency is such that approval cannot await the next meeting of the committee, and subject to report of the decision at the next meeting. When the likely need for an urgent decision between meetings is foreseen, a report should be brought to the committee outlining the current position and asking for prospective approval of Chair's action on the committee's behalf. In case of doubt or difficulty, the Chair may, at their discretion, seek approval from other members of the committee by correspondence.

Education Committee has agreed to delegate authority, subject to periodic reports to the committee as appropriate, to make, amend or repeal regulations concerning courses and examinations for undergraduate, graduate or other students, under [Council Regulations 15 of 2002, Part 2: Education Committee](#), 4.(1) as follows:

- Regulations for a new course, together with the course proposal itself, may be approved by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education). Further minor amendments to

regulations for a new course previously approved by the committee may be approved by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) or officers of Education Policy Support;

- Major changes to the special regulations for existing courses may be approved by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) or officers of Education Policy Support;
- Minor changes to the special regulations for existing courses may be approved by divisional boards or individuals with delegated authority of the board; and
- Changes to the general regulations may be approved by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) or officers of Education Policy Support, subject to prior discussion as appropriate with the relevant Panel of Education Committee and the Proctors.

Education Committee has agreed to delegate authority to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and officers of Education Policy Support, subject to periodic reports to the committee as appropriate, to decide on individual applications on matters relating to statutes and regulations concerning courses and examinations for undergraduate, graduate or other students, under [Council Regulations 15 of 2002, Part 2: Education Committee](#), 4.(2).

10. Reporting

10.1. Reports to Council

Education Committee shall make reports and recommendations to Council as it considers appropriate, subject to such policies and guidelines as Council lays down by regulation or otherwise. See [Council Regulations 14 of 2002](#), 2.4(2).

10.2. Annual reports to Education Committee

Education Committee shall receive reports on an annual basis from relevant subcommittees, panels and relevant other groups as appropriate, including:

- Admissions Committee and its Executive Committee
- Continuing Education Strategic Management Board
- Education Portfolio Committee
- Graduate Admissions Committee
- Graduate Access Subcommittee
- Joint Panel on Remission of Fees
- Joint Student Mental Health Committee
- Joint Student Number Planning Subcommittee
- Joint Supervisory Committee for Visiting Students
- Language Centre
- Permanent Private Halls Supervisory Committee
- Proctors' report
- Quality Assurance Subcommittee
- Research Degrees Panel
- Student Life Subcommittee
- Student Welfare and Support Services
- Taught Degrees and Awards Panel
- University of Sanctuary Steering Committee

10.3. Terms of reference of sub-committees and panels of Education Committee

Unless otherwise specified, terms of reference of the following panels and subcommittees of Education Committee may be found via the links and contact details specified at [Committees and panels](#)

- Committee for the Language Centre
- Education Portfolio Committee
- [Graduate Admissions Committee](#)
- Graduate Access Subcommittee
- [Joint Fees and Student Support Advisory Group](#)
- Joint Panel on Remission of Fees
- [Joint Student Mental Health Committee](#)
- [Joint Student Number Planning Sub-Committee](#)
- [Joint Supervisory Committee for Visiting Students](#)
- [Permanent Private Halls Supervisory Committee](#)
- [Quality Assurance Subcommittee](#)
- Research Degrees Panel
- [Sports Strategic Subcommittee](#)
- [Student Life Subcommittee](#)
- Taught Degrees and Awards Panel
- [University of Sanctuary Steering Committee](#)