

General Terms of Reference

Standing and Other Committees of General Faculties Council (GFC) General Terms of Reference

1. Authority

The *Post-Secondary Learning Act* gives General Faculties Council (GFC) responsibility, subject to the authority of the Board of Governors, over "academic affairs" (section 26(1)). To carry out its responsibilities, GFC has established standing committees and appeal boards, and has enacted policies governing the replenishment and operation of those groups, as set out below.

The complete wording of the section(s) of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, as referred to above, and any other related sections, should be checked in any instance where formal jurisdiction or delegation needs to be determined.

- a. There are 9 Standing Committees established by GFC pursuant to §26 and §31 of the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA):
 - i. Executive Committee (and Nominating Committee)
 - ii. Academic Planning Committee
 - iii. Academic Standards Committee
 - iv. Committee on the Learning Environment
 - v. Campus Law Review Committee
 - vi. Facilities Development Committee
 - vii. Undergraduate Awards and Scholarship Committee
 - viii. University Teaching Awards Committee
 - ix. Replenishment Committee
- b. GFC has delegated to each standing committee responsibility and authority to make decisions on behalf of GFC in the standing committee's defined area of responsibility. The delegation of authority to the standing committees is intended to permit GFC to pursue major policy and strategic issues.
- c. GFC may create other committees and establish the terms of reference of such committees.

2. Terms of Office

- a. Where it is required that members of a particular committee also be members of General Faculties Council, the term of office for such members shall be 3 years or the duration of their membership on General Faculties Council, whichever is the shorter. (GFC 28 JUN 1971);
- b. The term of office for student members of General Faculties Council standing committees shall be one year which shall run from May 1 of the year of election to April 30 of the succeeding year. Student members may be re-elected to serve subsequent one-year terms. Nominations for such re-elections shall be brought before General Faculties Council by the Nominating Committee. (GFC 28 FEB 1972) (EXEC 11 JUL 1988)
- c. All students (undergraduate and graduate) who serve in elected positions on GFC standing committees shall be given the option of serving a second one-year term on a GFC standing committee unless the GFC Nominating Committee determines that an election should be held. (EXEC 11 MAR 1996) (EXEC 16 SEP 1996)

No person shall be elected to serve at any one time on more than three GFC standing committees.

3. Eligibility

Eligibility to serve on GFC standing committees, and on bodies to which GFC elects members, shall be restricted to students and to certain categories of staff as set out in the composition of each standing committee.

When the composition of a standing committee is deemed to require representation from groups other than General Faculties Council, the groups shall be given the opportunity to nominate a representative, but the refusal of a group to nominate shall not preclude committee action.

Members are expected and directed to divest themselves of personal and parochial interests and to act in what they consider to be the best interests of the University as a whole.

4. Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs

For all GFC standing committees where the Chair is to be elected from and by the committee members, the Chair shall be elected for a one-year term. At the end of the term, the committee may review the Chair's performance with a view to re-election for a further one-year term. (GFC 27 MAR 1972)

Notwithstanding the above, each GFC Standing Committee should be given the option of deciding whether or not to elect its Chair for one or two years. The election of a Vice-Chair is viewed as advantageous. (EXEC 04 MAR 1985)

The following are the only GFC standing committees where an administrator must be in the Chair:

Executive Committee
Academic Planning Committee
Facilities Development Committee
Academic Standards Committee
Committee on the Learning Environment

Any administrator, like any other member of the academic community, may be elected to chair other GFC standing committees. (GFC 24 NOV 1980) (GFC 30 JUN 1992) (GFC 20 NOV 1995) (GFC 27 MAY 1996)

5. Attendance

There shall be no alternates for any member except for *ex officio* members who may send alternates.

If an elected member is absent from three consecutive meetings or is frequently absent without a reason satisfactory to the remaining members of the Committee, the Chair shall declare the position vacant. (EXEC 21 JAN 1985)

6. Quorum

Except for those standing committees which have a different quorum approved by GFC, the quorum for all GFC standing committees is one-half the voting members (where there is an even number of voting members) or one-half plus 1 member (where there is an odd number of voting members). For instance, for a committee with 11 voting members, the quorum would be 6.

Vacancies (but not absences) on a committee are excluded when counting the voting members in order to establish the quorum, and Committee Chairs are counted as voting members.

A duly-called meeting which starts with a quorum present shall be deemed to have a continuing quorum, notwithstanding the departure of voting members, unless the quorum is challenged by a voting member. In the event of a challenge, the remaining members may choose:

1. to adjourn the meeting; or

2. to continue the meeting, in which case the minutes shall record that it was acting on all further business without a quorum being present; ratification will then be considered at the next meeting.

7. Voting

In all duly-called meetings of the committee at which a quorum is present, motions properly before the meeting shall be adopted on a simple majority of votes cast by standing committee voting members (excluding the Chair). An abstention is not considered to be a vote cast. The Chair votes only in the instance of a tie.

When there is a tie vote, the motion is lost if the Chair abstains. The motion is adopted if the Chair votes in the affirmative and is defeated if the Chair votes in the negative.

E-mail Voting

Where the Chair and/or Secretary of a GFC Standing Committee decide that it is desirable for a business item to be voted on before the next scheduled meeting, an e-mail vote may be held. (EXEC 31 MAY 2004)

The Secretary will have two faculty, staff and/or student Committee Members review the item in detail and act as Mover and Seconder, and all normal procedures will be used in conducting the e-mail ballot, including provision of background material. (EXEC 31 MAY 2004)

The Secretary will ensure that all members have a reasonable amount of time to register their vote. (EXEC 31 MAY 2004)

Upon receiving the item by e-mail, however, any Committee Member may request that the matter be debated instead at the next meeting or at a special meeting, with the Chair determining the appropriate course of action. (EXEC 31 MAY 2004)

8. Attendees at Standing Committee Meetings

Committee Members – may participate in discussions and may move, second and vote on Motions. Includes *ex officio*, appointed and elected members, as set out in the composition of the individual Standing Committee.

Non-Voting Members –members in regular attendance at committee meetings, who may participate in discussion, but cannot move, second or vote on Motions.

Guests – individuals invited to attend a particular meeting and to participate in discussion related to a specific item they were invited to address. Guests cannot move, second or vote on Motions.

Visitors – individuals in attendance at a public meeting to observe committee proceedings, who may speak only if expressly invited to do so by the Chair. Visitors who have permission to speak may speak only once. A visitor cannot move, second or vote on Motions.

Observers - in attendance at a public meeting as an observer only. An observer cannot participate in discussion and cannot move, second or vote on Motions.

9. Delegations and Referrals

Each standing committee has the power to refer or delegate specific matters under its authority to another GFC Standing Committee, to a Sub-Committee, or to an academic or administrative unit unless GFC expressly restricts referral or delegation or the other GFC Standing Committee, Sub-Committee or unit refuses to accept the referral or delegation.

10. Public Access to Committee Meetings

Meetings of General Faculties Council are open as are meetings of all Standing Committees except the GFC Replenishment Committee and when the GFC Executive Committee functions as the GFC Nominating Committee (NC).

This means:

- Agendas and all agenda material, unless the Chair wishes to refuse disclosure as provided by the FOIPP Act, are available to the public;
- Committees may move *in camera* at which point proceedings will be confidential and visitors will be asked to withdraw. (Information regarding *in camera* meetings can be found in Regulation 200/95 of the FOIPP Act.)

The University Teaching Awards Committee (UTAC) is an adjudicative body. While the agendas and action summaries of UTAC are public, adjudication meetings will be held *in camera* and are therefore not open to the public.

11. Public Access to Committee Records

University Governance is the official holder of records of GFC, GFC Standing Committees and its appeal boards. (It is also the official holder of records of the Board of Governors and its Standing Committees.) Material contained in GFC official files is available to the public with the exception of material that relates to *in camera* proceedings or the personal information of an individual.

University Governance has responsibility for the dissemination of GFC Standing Committee minutes. University Governance will also be empowered to release other kinds of information in their hands, for purposes of research, where

- a. other University regulations are not thereby contravened,
- b. the information requested is judged by University Governance not to involve the privacy of others or any violation of privilege, and
- c. the resources of University Governance will not be strained in providing the research service requested and the conduct of its normal business will not be adversely affected.

University Governance may, if it chooses, seek the advice of the Executive Committee or refer requests for decision.

Where University Governance decides not to accede to a request for access to specified material in its hands (other than its minutes), the requester shall have the right to appeal to the Executive Committee of GFC. (GFC 30 MAR 1981)(EXEC 20 MAY 1998)

12. Committee Reports

All GFC standing committees shall submit an annual report to GFC for consideration by Council describing its activities over the previous twelve months. (GFC 25 NOV 1991) (EXEC 08 APR 2002) (EXEC 06 NOV 2006)

Annual reports to GFC should detail the manner in which the Committee's delegated responsibilities have been exercised by describing the Committee's activities of the previous twelve months. Committees which have been delegated decision-making authority should report on decisions taken. Recommendations from GFC standing committees requiring further action should not be included in annual reports. (GFC 09 FEB 1981)

GFC Standing Committees shall submit any further reports as may be required by GFC.

13. Studies

In light of the academic priorities set by the Academic Planning Committee and/or General Faculties Council, all GFC Standing Committees shall initiate studies, when deemed by the Standing Committee appropriate to do so, and respond to requests for studies, opinion, and information within the purview of its general responsibilities, and make reports and recommendations to the appropriate office or committee.

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