

QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY, EDINBURGH

SENATE

STANDING ORDERS

Adopted 30 May 2007

STANDING ORDERS OF THE SENATE OF QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY, EDINBURGH

These standing orders are supplementary to article 14 of The Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh (Scotland) Order of Council 2007 (Scottish Statutory Instrument No 2007/116) (“the Order of Council”).

1. Ordinary meetings

A minimum of six ordinary meetings of the Senate shall be held between the months of October and June each year on such days and at such times as the Senate shall from time to time determine, such determination to be made no later than six months in advance of the first such ordinary meeting.

2. Extraordinary meetings

Extraordinary meetings may be called on the instructions of the Convener, the Deputy Convener or on a requisition signed by not less than one third of the members.

3. Notice of meetings

The Secretary to the Senate shall issue notice of a meeting of the Senate in writing to members and other persons who are to be in attendance at the meeting five days prior to each meeting (and shall use reasonable endeavours to do so seven days prior to each meeting).

In the case of members and senior management who are to be in attendance at the meeting, the notice shall specify the date, time and place of the meeting, the agenda and the business to be considered. In the case of other persons who are to be in attendance at the meeting, the notice shall specify the date, time and place of the meeting, and such other information as is necessary for the purposes of their attendance at the meeting.

Where such notice is not given the meeting may only proceed upon the suspension of this standing order in accordance with standing order 17.

4. Agenda

The agenda for ordinary meetings of the Senate shall be as follows:

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Determination of other competent business

In respect of each matter that has been notified for this purpose to the Secretary by members with at least twenty-four hours' notice, the Senate shall determine whether that matter is appropriate for discussion by the Senate, and, where necessary, determine whether that matter shall be discussed under 'other competent business', 'items for information' or otherwise.

3. Other competent business

The Senate shall discuss such of those matters as have been approved for inclusion under 'other competent business' under agenda item 2.

4. Items for Information

The Senate may only discuss any matter designated as an 'item for information' following a determination to that effect under agenda item 2.

5. Items for discussion

The Senate shall discuss any items which have been approved for discussion in accordance with standing order 4.

6. Reporting

The Senate shall consider any reports from standing committees, ad hoc committees or Working Parties laid before the Senate.

7. Ordinary business

The Senate shall consider ordinary business brought before it.

5. Agenda items - notice requirements

A member who wishes to include an item in the agenda for any meeting must submit a request to that effect to the Secretary with at least ten days' notice. The Secretary will advise the Convener of the proposed agenda item. The Convener will decide whether the item is appropriate for discussion by the Senate. The Secretary will inform the member of the Convener's decision in relation to his or her proposed agenda item. If the Convener agrees to the inclusion of the proposed agenda item, the Secretary will include that item on the agenda and circulate the revised agenda with the notice for that meeting.

6. Agenda items - order of voting

Amendments to an agenda item shall be considered as follows:

1. where there is a single amendment, a vote on that amendment will take place;
2. where there is more than one amendment, a vote will take place on each amendment in the order in which the amendments have been put forward; those amendments which have been agreed (if any) will then be consolidated into a single amendment; and
3. the agenda item (as amended) will then be voted upon.

7. Conflicts of interest.

Members shall, in exercising functions in that capacity, act in good faith in the interests of the Senate and shall declare any circumstances capable of giving rise to a conflict of interest. For the purposes of these standing orders, a conflict of interest means a financial, personal or other interest held by a member or a person connected with the member in relation to a matter to be discussed or determined by the Senate, otherwise than in his or her capacity as member.

8. Decisions of the Senate

No member shall be entitled to have minuted his or her dissent from any decision of the Senate, except at the meeting at which the relevant decision has been passed, provided that any member not present at the meeting at which the relevant decision was passed may at the next meeting have his or her dissent minuted.

No agenda item, nor any amendment to an agenda item, shall be moved if it involves reconsideration of any question or matter which has been decided or adopted by the Senate at any time within the preceding six months, unless it is moved by the Convener, or signed by the mover and by not less than one-third of the total members of the Senate.

9. Minutes

Draft minutes of each meeting of the Senate shall be sent to the members and any senior management who were in attendance at the meeting not later than twenty-one days after each such meeting, and shall be submitted at the next meeting of the Senate for approval as an accurate record.

Other persons who were in attendance at the meeting shall be sent a complete set of the published minutes.

10. Quorum

The quorum for meetings of the Senate shall be fifty percent of the members, plus one.

11. Convener and Deputy Convener

The Principal shall act as Convener at meetings of the Senate, and shall nominate one of the Vice-Principals to act as Deputy Convener in the event of his or her absence.

The Convener shall preside at meetings of the Senate, and shall be entitled to vote on all items of business in the same manner as other members. In the case of an equal number of votes, the Convener shall have a second or casting vote.

Subject to these standing orders, the Convener shall decide all questions of order.

The Deputy Convener shall preside at any meetings at which the Convener is not present. If both the Convener and the Deputy Convener are not present at a meeting, the Secretary to the Court shall appoint one of the Vice-Principals to preside as Acting Convener. The Deputy Convener or Acting Convener appointed to preside over a meeting (as appropriate) shall have the same powers as the Convener would have had in relation to that meeting.

12. Election of members of Senate

12.1 Election of members of Senate by academic staff

The procedure for electing a member to the Senate from amongst the academic staff shall be as follows:

- a) The election procedure will be invoked by the Secretary to Senate upon the attention of the members being drawn to the occurrence of a vacancy.
- b) All academic staff will be issued with papers for nominating candidates for election to the Senate from amongst their number. Completed nomination papers, duly signed by a person proposing, a person seconding and the nominee, must be placed in an envelope and returned to the Secretary within fourteen days from the date of issue of the nomination papers (“the return date”). Nomination forms received after the return date shall be deemed void.
- c) Envelopes containing completed nomination papers shall be opened by the Secretary immediately after the close of the nomination period and not before.
- d) If only one nomination is received, the Secretary will declare by email to all academic staff and/or by posting a notice on the University intranet, the day after the return date, the successful candidate.
- e) If more than one nomination is received, the Secretary will issue to each member of the academic staff, seven days after the return date, a ballot paper, a list of candidates, and accompanying statements from the candidates of not more than one hundred words.
- f) A sealed ballot box will be placed at the University Reception Desk for a period of five working days from the date of issue of the ballot papers. Academic staff will be invited to place their ballot papers in the ballot box by 3.30pm on the fifth day, after which time no further ballot papers will be accepted.
- g) After the deadline for the return of ballot papers referred to at f) above, the Secretary, in the presence of the Head of Quality Enhancement, shall open the sealed ballot box and count the votes. The Secretary shall within a further twenty-four hours declare the result of the election by email to all academic staff and/or by posting a notice on the University intranet. The candidate with the highest number of votes will be declared successful.
- h) Elections will be conducted during the academic session only.
- i) Where the Secretary and/or the Head of Quality Enhancement is/are not available the Principal shall appoint officer(s) of equal standing.

12.2 Election of members of Senate by categories of academic staff

The procedure for electing a member to the Senate from within categories of academic staff shall be identical to the rules set out in standing order 12.1a) to i) except that references to academic staff should be read as if they were references to the relevant category of academic staff.

12.3 Appointment of member of Court by the Senate

The Senate will elect from among its members who are academic staff one member to represent its interests on the Court. An eligible member shall be proposed and seconded by members of the Senate. If there is more than one candidate, a ballot shall be held.

12.4 Appointment of member of Senate by the Students' Association

The Students' Association will determine its own procedure for appointing an office bearer (other than the president for the time being of the Students' Association) to the Senate, and will be notified of a relevant vacancy immediately following the Senate becoming aware of it.

12.5 Determination of procedural questions

The Convener shall be empowered to rule on any procedural matter or question relating to the election of members of the Senate from academic and all other staff, providing that the Convener shall report the procedural matter or question and the ruling to the next scheduled meeting of the Senate.

13. Ordinary business

The Senate shall transact all ordinary business at its ordinary meetings.

The ordinary business of the Senate shall consist of such items as are deemed necessary by the Senate to fulfil the functions delegated to it in terms of article 14 of the Order of Council.

Without limiting the foregoing, the ordinary business of the Senate shall include:

1. the function of conferring on any person (and depriving any person of) higher and other education awards including degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards or distinctions and honorary degrees;
2. the development and maintenance of codes of conduct and regulations required for the maintenance of standards and good order within the University;
3. the approval of new and amended taught and research degree programmes; and
4. the receipt and consideration of recommendations from standing committees of Senate, including those relating to the appointment of External Examiners.

14. Committees of the Senate

The Senate may from time to time set up such standing committees as it deems necessary. The Senate may also from time to time set up such 'ad hoc' committees and working parties as it deems necessary in relation to specific projects.

In relation to any such standing committees, 'ad hoc' committees and working parties, the Senate shall determine their terms of reference and may amend such terms or reference from time to time as it sees fit.

Any committees or working parties set up by the Senate shall conduct their business under these standing orders (necessary changes excepted).

15. Confidentiality and freedom of information

The notice (including any supporting papers) for each meeting of the Senate shall be circulated in accordance with standing order 3, and draft minutes from the previous meeting shall be circulated in accordance with standing order 9. Prior to each meeting, circulation of such notice, supporting papers and draft minutes shall be restricted to the persons entitled to receive them in accordance with standing orders 3 and 9.

After each meeting of the Senate the minutes of the previous meeting (as approved by the Senate) shall be made available to students and staff of the University, unless the Senate, having regard to any duty of confidence or other obligation owed to any party to whom the minutes relate, and to any right of legal privilege in relation to such minutes, determines otherwise.

Any other papers relevant to a meeting of the Senate may be made available upon application to the Secretary. In considering any such application, the Secretary shall have regard to any duty of confidence or other obligation owed to any party to whom the papers relate, and to any right of legal privilege in relation to such papers.

Nothing in these Standing Orders shall prevent the University from disclosing information (including, without limitation, information relating to the business of the Senate or of any of its committees or working parties) under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and/or the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (including any codes of practice or guidance issued thereunder).

16. Modifications to Standing Orders

These Standing Orders shall not be altered or repealed, either in whole or in part, except at a meeting of the Senate held on at least one month's notice, provided that not less than two thirds of the members of the Senate are present at the meeting and shall so decide by a majority vote.

17. Suspension of Standing Orders

In case of urgency any one or more of these standing orders may be suspended at any meeting of the Senate, as regards any business at such meeting, provided that not less than two-thirds of the members of the Senate are present at the meeting and shall so decide by a majority vote.