

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX**  
**STANDING ORDERS OF THE SENATE**

**1. Quorum and Adjournment**

One-third of the total of the actual statutory members of the Senate shall constitute a quorum.

If thirty minutes after the time appointed for the meeting to commence, a quorum is not present, no business shall be transacted other than the adjournment of the meeting. If, during a meeting, the number of members present falls below the quorum, the Secretary shall inform the meeting and business shall be suspended immediately. In such an event, the meeting shall normally be either adjourned or terminated. However, when exceptionally important business remains and where the possibility of regaining a quorum exists, the Chairperson may maintain suspension of the session for a reasonable period of time to allow members not present at the meeting to be summoned.

When urgent matters remain for decision, the Chairperson may, in consultation with the Secretary of Senate, determine the date and time for an adjourned meeting. Notification thereof shall be given, where possible in writing, to members normally at least three days before the adjourned meeting is to take place. An adjourned meeting may consider the business for which the original meeting was called, but may not consider business additional to that for which the original meeting was called.

**2. Calling of Meetings**

Meetings shall be called by the Secretary of Senate, either on the instruction of the Chairperson or at the request of not less than one-third of the statutory members of the Senate.

**3. Suspension of Standing Orders**

In the event of any matter of urgency, the Chairperson may accept a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders (other than those governing quoracy, see Standing Order No 1 above). The member moving such suspension must clearly state the nature and urgency of his or her business, the numbers of the Standing Orders affected and the length of time (not exceeding thirty minutes) he or she desires such suspension to last. At the option of the meeting, a further extension may be allowed. Suspension (and any extension thereof) shall take place only by consent of a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

**4. Student Membership**

A section of certain agenda papers may contain items on reserved areas of business during which, if discussed, the student members shall be

required to leave. Provided such an item is not the subject of discussion, the student members may remain present for, but shall not be entitled to participate in, any formal decision on the item. The reserved areas of business comprise matters relating to any named individual staff member or student, in particular concerning:

- (1) The appointment, confirmation, promotion or dismissal of any member of staff (or any other matter relating to the terms and conditions of employment of an individual).
- (2) The admission or withdrawal of individual students.
- (3) The academic progress, assessment and examination of individual students.

Subject to any overriding powers of the Council, exceptions to the above may be made only with the prior agreement of the Senate.

The student members shall, however, be entitled to participate in and vote on any general discussions of the principles and procedures relating to the above areas of business but not to named individuals.

## **5. Attendance of Non-Members**

The Chairperson, in consultation where possible with the meeting, may invite named individuals to attend a particular meeting, either for the whole of the meeting or for specific items. Such visitors shall have the right to speak, but not to vote. The presence of such visitors must be reported at the beginning of the meeting.

The Registrar & Secretary may arrange for the attendance as part of the Secretariat of such administrative officers as he or she deems appropriate for the proper conduct of his or her responsibilities under the Charter and Statutes. Such officers may address the meeting at the invitation of the Chairperson.

If a nominated trades union observer would be unable to attend a particular Senate meeting for good reason, a non-voting, non-speaking substitute will normally be permitted, by permission of the Chairperson, who must report all requests made under this clause, and his or her decision, at the beginning of the meeting.

## **6. Confidentiality**

Although the agenda, minutes and supplementary papers may be widely circulated for informational purposes, the actual proceedings of the meeting itself are private and statements made by individuals during the meeting are confidential.

## 7. **Organisation of the Agenda**

The agenda shall be organised in four sections:

### I *Procedural Matters*

This section will include the approval of minutes, matters arising not dealt with elsewhere in the agenda, and the Chairperson's Report. On matters in which the Senate is called upon to make a decision, the Chairperson's Report shall, as far as possible, be written and circulated with the agenda.

### II *Matters for Discussion and Decision*

This section will consist of items ripe for decision and for which supporting papers are available. Where an item consists of a presentation of a report in a series, or a return to a previous subject, there should usually be a brief updated summary sheet outlining the relevant background information (eg terms of reference, composition of the group in question, numbers of previous reports or papers, decisions taken in previous discussion, and so on).

### III *Matters for Information and Ratification*

This section will include items for report and approval from subordinate committees. The report from Planning and Resources Committee shall consist only of matters for information and ratification, suitably annotated.

### IV *Other Business*

## 8. **The Preparation and Publication of the Agenda**

- (1) The agenda shall be prepared by the Chairperson and Secretary of Senate. The Chairperson will decide under which category items should be placed (see Standing Order No 7 above). Proposals for the inclusion of items for the agenda shall reach the Secretary of Senate at least ten days before the meeting. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered for inclusion in the agenda, other than in cases of grave emergency, in which case the Chairperson's ruling on such acceptance is final.
- (2) Proposals for agenda items should be made in writing and addressed to the Secretary of Senate both by committees reporting to Senate or by members of Senate. They may be submitted in the form of either carefully worded motions or recommendations. In the case of motions from members of the Senate included in the agenda, the names of the proposers and seconders will be stated.

- (3) Where the only written proposal for an agenda item is a motion or motions, the Chairperson may ask for the preparation of a brief background paper on the issue or issues which have been raised. Such papers must be issued with the agenda.
- (4) The Chairperson may refuse to take a proposed item on the agenda, provided that he or she makes an explanatory report on any such refusal to the meeting of the Senate subsequent to that refusal.

*Note:* It is open to the Senate to overrule its Chairperson's decision after the explanatory report has been made.

- (5) The agenda shall be circulated to all members of the Senate at least seven days before the meeting and supporting papers will be circulated with at least three working days' notice (eg, no later than the previous Friday for Wednesday meetings).
- (6) Except in cases where important germane material has arisen within 48 hours of the commencement of the meeting, the Chairperson must be notified 48 hours before the commencement of the meeting if members wish to raise matters which are not on the agenda, ie under Any Other Business. Each such request must be made by a minimum of five members.

## 9. **Order of Business**

At the meeting, the agenda will be treated in order, that is: procedural items, items for discussion and decision, items for information and ratification and, if time allows, any other business. All items on the agenda shall take precedence over all other business unless the Senate decides otherwise.

No item placed in Section III (for information and ratification), or amendments to the minutes, will be open for rejection, reference back, or discussion under either category II or category IV, unless a member requests in writing to the Secretary of Senate. The request must arrive no later than 24 hours before the meeting and should state which aspects of each particular item ought to be discussed and for what reason.

## 10. **Minutes**

Provided that they have been duly circulated before the meeting, the minutes of the previous meeting(s) shall be taken as read, unless a motion to amend the minutes (the motion may concern only the accuracy of the minutes) has formally been put in accordance with Standing Order No 9. After the confirmation of the minutes, they shall be signed by the Chairperson, and the members shall then be at liberty to ask any questions in regard to matters arising out of them. Such questions shall be allowed for purposes of information only, and no debate on the policy in the minutes shall take place.

**11. Selection of Speakers**

Every member shall stand when speaking and shall address the Chair. When more than one member wishes to speak, the decision as to who shall be given precedence shall rest with the Chairperson.

**12. Chairperson's Ruling**

The Vice-Chancellor is Chairperson of the Senate ex-officio and cannot be removed from the Chair, though he or she may choose to relinquish it to the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

The conduct of the meeting is in the hands of the Chairperson. The ruling of the Chairperson on any question under the Standing Orders, or on any points of order or explanation, shall be final, although he or she shall have the right to reconsider any such ruling.

Members should endeavour to address queries to officers prior to Senate, in order that the information necessary for the good conduct of Senate business can be readily available. The Chairperson will not normally allow time in Senate for questions of a factual character which could clearly have been addressed to officers beforehand.

**13. Interruption and Disorder**

If any member interrupts another while the latter is addressing the meeting, or uses abusive or profane language, or causes disturbance at any meeting, and refuses to obey the Chairperson when called to order, he or she shall be addressed by the Chairperson. He or she may then be required by the Chairperson to withdraw from the meeting.

If, in the opinion of the Chairperson, a member or members or observers are persistently and deliberately violating Standing Orders or in any way preventing the proper conduct of business, he or she may adjourn the meeting forthwith.

**14. Speeches**

No member shall be allowed to speak more than once upon any one item before the meeting, unless on a point of order or information, other than the mover of the Original Motion and the mover of a substantial amendment, each of whom has the right of reply immediately before the motion or amendment is put. But on an amendment being moved, any member, even though he or she has spoken on the Original Motion, may speak again on the amendment. Members shall endeavour to keep their speeches short, normally to no more than five minutes at any one time. The Chairperson may, at any time, ask members to draw their remarks to a close. Members wishing to raise points of order or information (see Standing Order No 20) must first obtain the permission of the Chairperson. Points of information must relate to the matter

immediately under discussion. Any member may formally second any motion or amendment and reserve his or her speech until a later period in the debate.

**15. Motions and Amendments**

The first proposition on any particular subject shall be known as the Original Motion, and all succeeding propositions on that subject shall be called amendments. A recommendation on a subject from a subordinate committee shall normally be regarded as the Original Motion on that subject. Every motion or amendment must be moved and seconded by members actually present at the meeting before it can be discussed and, whenever possible, should be set out in writing. Amending propositions must be germane to, and such as to modify and not negate, the original motion. It is permissible for a member to make his or her speech first and conclude with a motion for amendment. When an amendment is moved to an Original Motion, no further amendment (other than those which constitute minor improvements of wording) shall be discussed until the first amendment is disposed of. Notice of the content of any further amendment may be given before the first amendment is put to the vote.

**16. Substantive Motions**

If an amendment is carried, the amended motion displaces the Original Motion and itself becomes the Substantive Motion, whereupon any further amendment relating to any portion of the Substantive Motion may be moved, provide it is consistent with the business and has not been covered by an amendment or motion which has been rejected previously. After the vote on each succeeding amendment has been taken, the surviving proposition (ie the Substantive Motion as it then stands) shall be put to the vote as the main question and, if carried, shall then become a resolution of the meeting.

**17. Right of Reply**

The mover of the Original Motion shall, if no amendment has been moved, have the right of reply at the close of the debate upon such motion. When an amendment is moved, he or she shall be entitled to speak on it in accordance with Standing Order No 14 and at the close of the debate on such amendment shall reply to the discussion, but shall introduce no new matter. The question shall then be put to the vote immediately and no further discussion shall be allowed once the question has been put from the Chair.

**18. Withdrawals or Additions**

No motion or amendment which has been accepted by the Chair shall be withdrawn without the consent of the Chair. Nor shall any addendum or rider be added to a motion which has been accepted by the Chair without such consent. Should any member dissent, the addendum must be proposed and seconded and treated as an ordinary amendment.

19. **Closing Debate**

The procedural motions that: (a) the meeting move to further business, (b) the question be now put, (c) the question be not put, or (d) that the debate be closed, may be moved and seconded only by members who have not previously spoken at any time during the debate. No speeches shall be allowed on such motions. In the event of motion (b) or (d) being carried, the mover of the Original Motion shall have the right to reply in accordance with Standing Order No 17 before the question is put. Should any of the motions mentioned in this Standing Order be defeated, fifteen minutes shall elapse before that particular motion can be accepted again by the Chairperson, unless he or she is of the opinion that the circumstances have materially altered in the meantime.

20. **Points of Information and of Order**

Points of information may be raised at any time if the speaker holding the floor will accept them. They shall be raised only to question or correct a speaker on a matter of fact.

Points of order may be raised at any time to question the conduct or procedure of the meeting.

If, in the opinion of the Chairperson, points of order or of information are being raised in order to obstruct business, he or she may refuse to hear any further such points until the particular business has been completed.

21. **Motion for Adjournment**

Any member who has not already spoken during the debate may move the adjournment of the item under discussion, or of the meeting, but must confine his or her remarks to that issue and must not discuss any other matter. The mover of the motion upon which the adjournment has been moved, shall be allowed the right to reply on the question of the adjournment, but such reply shall not prejudice his or her right of reply on his or her motion. In the event of such motion being lost, it shall not be moved again except in accordance with Standing Order No 19.

22. **Voting**

Except as provided for elsewhere in these Standing Orders or where a different majority has been previously and specifically stated to be required, all decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of those present and voting. Voting shall be by show of hands, except that: (a) where the Committee wishes to conduct a vote of the total membership, a postal vote may be employed, and (b) where appropriate, voting lobbies may be employed. Numbers of abstentions from voting shall not normally be requested or recorded. The tellers for any vote shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Senate. The voting membership shall be as specified in the list of members at the foot of the agenda for the meeting. The Chairperson shall be entitled to

vote on any question and shall have a second and casting vote in the event of an equal number of votes being cast for and against. After any vote, the Chairperson may order a recount of the votes cast. In the event of equal numbers of votes, the Chairperson may order a fresh vote without further discussion. No point of order or information shall be raised during the voting unless it concerns the actual conduct of the voting.

23. **Rescinding a Resolution**

No resolution shall be rescinded or amended at the same meeting at which it is passed except by a two-thirds majority of the meeting. The Chairperson shall have the right to refuse to accept any separate motion which would, if carried, have the effect of amending or rescinding a motion previously carried at the same meeting.

24. **Definitions**

In these Standing Orders, unless the context implies otherwise, the use of the singular number shall include the plural and *vice-versa*.

“*Quorum*” shall mean the smallest number of members whose continued presence is necessary for business to be validly transacted.

“*Statutory member of the Senate*” shall mean a member of the Senate as defined in the Charter and Statutes of the University.

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