

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

**1. Regulatory status and Quorum**

The functions, powers, composition/membership, quoracy and election rules of Senate are set out in Regulation 4, and these Standing Orders are subordinate to those provisions.

These rules include provision that one-third of the total actual membership of the Senate shall constitute a quorum, and in the absence of a quorum no business shall be transacted other than the adjournment of the meeting.

**2. Calling and Adjourning of Meetings**

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

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.

**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 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 general rule set out in Regulation 4 is that substitutes are not permitted to attend meetings in place of elected members. Specific arrangements for the attendance of substitutes for Heads of Schools, as *ex-officio* members of Senate, are also set out in Regulation 4.

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 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, meetings of Senate are not public meetings and statements made by individuals during them are confidential. This is to protect freedom of expression. Should members of Senate wish to report discussion at Senate to third parties, they should do so in a way that respects these principles. If in doubt, guidance should be sought from the Secretary in this regard.

#### **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 substantive items for decision or agreement of further action. Items will be presented with relevant information and proposals by means of a supporting paper or presentation. Where an item consists of a report in a series, or a return to a previous subject, there should usually be a summary outline of the relevant background information (e.g. terms of reference, composition of the group in question, numbers of previous reports or papers, decisions taken in previous discussion). Presentations may be included in this section; provided that the organization of the agenda allows proper time for discussion of substantive items.

III *Reports*

This section will include report items from subordinate committees, for information and approval. Matters requiring Senate's decision/approval will be clearly flagged.

IV *Matters for Information*

This section will include items for noting.

V *Any Other Business*

**8. Order of Business and discussion of reports and information items**

At the meeting, the agenda will normally be treated in the above order, subject to the Chair's discretion as set out in section 13. The following items will not normally be open for rejection, reference back, or discussion, unless a member requests in writing to the Secretary of Senate:

- Amendments to the minutes;
- Report items in Section III which are solely for information;
- Items placed in Section IV.

Requests to open these items for discussion 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.

**9. The Preparation and Publication of the Agenda**

- (1) The agenda shall be prepared by the Chairperson and Secretary. The Chairperson will decide under which section items should be placed (see section 7 above).
- (2) 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 (e.g. no later than the previous Friday for a Wednesday meeting).

(3) Members should seek to address queries to officers prior to Senate, in order that clarifications may either be provided, either in advance of meetings, or via a prepared response at the meeting.

(4) Requests from members affecting the agenda will be treated as follows:

Type of request	Notice required (to the Secretary)	Other
a) Request for an item to appear on the agenda in sections II – IV.	10 calendar days before the meeting. Requests will not normally be considered beyond this point, other than in cases of grave emergency, in which case the Chairperson's ruling is final.	Items should be in the form of carefully worded written proposals or motions and must be made by a minimum of five members.  If the proposed item involves a motion for discussion, one member should be identified as proposer and four members as seconders.
b) Request for an item to be discussed under section V, Any Other Business.	48 hours before the meeting. Very exceptionally the Chairperson may allow an item arising within 48 hours if s/he considers that important new germane material has arisen.	A paper with the wording of the motion will be tabled at the meeting, with the proposer and seconders identified.
c) Request for a motion to be considered in relation to an item already on the agenda.	48 hours before the meeting.	One member should be identified as proposer of the motion and another member as seconder. A paper with the wording of the motion will be tabled at the meeting, which will also identify the proposer and seconder.

In relation to items of type (a) and (b) above, the Chairperson may:

- Refuse to take a proposed item on the agenda, provided that s/he makes an explanatory report on any such refusal to the meeting of the Senate subsequent to that refusal. Senate may overrule the Chairperson's decision after the explanatory report has been made.
- Ask for the preparation of a brief background paper on the issue or issues which are raised, including where motions are submitted. Where possible, such papers will be issued with the agenda, or as soon as possible thereafter (and rule 9(2) may be set aside in such cases).

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

12. **Chairperson**

The Vice-Chancellor is Chairperson of the Senate ex-officio and cannot be removed from the Chair. He or she may choose to relinquish it to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the whole or part of a meeting..

13. **Chairperson's Ruling**

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. The Chair, having consulted Senate, may amend the order in which agenda items are taken.

The Chairperson will not normally allow time in Senate for questions of a factual character which could clearly have been addressed to officers beforehand.

12. **Conduct of Discussions**

Members shall endeavour to keep their contributions short. The Chairperson may, at any time, ask members to draw their remarks to a close.

If any member interrupts another while the latter is addressing the meeting, or uses abusive or profane language, or causes disturbance, and refuses to obey the Chairperson when called to order, 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.

## **Appendix to Senate Standing Orders: Motions and Voting**

### **1. Motions and Amendments**

In the discussion of formal motions, no member shall be allowed to speak more than once upon any one motion, 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 wishing to raise points of order or information (see item 6 below) 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.

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.

### **2. 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 (i.e. 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.

### **3. 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 item 1 above 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.

### **4. 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.

## **5. 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 item 3 above 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.

## **6. 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.

## **7. 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 item 5 above.

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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.

Revised November 2013