

Senate Elections

May 2023

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OF SUSSEX

Foundations of Sussex's governance

- The University is an exempt charity incorporated by Royal Charter in 1961. The Charter was amended with effect from 1 March 2012.
- Charter outlines the institution's primary charitable purpose and objectives.
- Statutes provide more detailed information on the powers and responsibilities of Council, Senate and staffing procedures.
- Charter and Statutes are approved by Privy Council.
- Regulations are internal documents which provide further information about officers of the University and set out processes and procedures used to govern the University.
- Schedule of delegation sets out how the powers of Council (Supreme Body) are delegated to committees, Boards and individuals within the University.

Governance Effectiveness Review: The three legs of the governance stool



All 3 parts must accept the role of the other so as not to unbalance the stool.

- **Council** is the governing body and exercises all the University's powers.
- **Vice-Chancellor** is the chief academic and administrative officer with dual accountabilities – chairs Senate and is a member of Council. VC is the accountable officer for the OfS and certifies to them that the University complies with the OfS Regulatory Framework.
- **Senate** is subject to the general control and approval of Council and is responsible for academic standards.

Senate's Role and Responsibilities

- Senate's powers and responsibilities are delegated by Council and it is 'responsible for academic standards and the direction and regulation of academic matters' (Statute VI. 1). Senate delegates its oversight of academic governance to its sub-committees, Schools and departments; through these delegations Senate seeks assurance on effectiveness, quality and compliance.
- Senate is accountable to Council and provides it with assurance on all matters within its remit.

Council- Senior Governing Body. Council has overarching responsibility for all University activity and its conduct. Council delegates its powers and responsibilities to individuals and bodies within the institution to ensure the effective operation of the University and delivery of its charitable objectives.

Specific authority delegated to Council sub-committees for governance decision-making, advice and assurance to Council.

Specific authority delegated to Senate for regulation of academic work, governance decision-making, advice and assurance to Council.

The Vice-Chancellor has a general responsibility to the Council and the Senate for maintaining and promoting the effective working and good order of the University.

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Capital Programmes Committee
- Chairs Committee
- Strategic Performance and Resources Committee
- Student Experience Committee
- Remuneration Committee (A) VC Pay
- Remuneration Committee (B)
- BSMS Joint Board

Senate

- Research Ethics and Integrity Committee
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee
- Honorary Degrees Committee
- Student Discipline Committee
- Criminal Convictions Panel
- University Education Committee
- Cross School Ethics Board
- University Research Governance and Quality Assurance Committee
- Research Staff Working Group
- Doctoral School Board
- Student Engagement Sub-Committee
- Examination and Assessment Regulations
- Joint Approval & Review Board
- Student Experience Forum
- University Reasonable Adjustment Panel
- Portfolio Approval Committee
- Academic Misconduct Panel
- Academic Appeals Board
- Collaboration Provision Approval Committee

Vice Chancellor

- University Executive Group
- Executive Liaison Group
- Capital Projects Executive Board

The Vice-Chancellor may delegate certain responsibilities in accordance with the management structure of the University to Senior Officers, Heads of Schools, Heads of Departments, Professional Services Directors, as set out in job descriptions, schedule of delegation, policy and financial regulations.

Where the Vice-Chancellor delegates authority, they still remain accountable to Council.

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- Independent Representation
- Academic Representation
- Professional Services Representation
- Student Representation

Culture of Governance

- **Decision making and accountability:** good governance is making sure that an institution is doing the right thing, in the right way, at the right time, for the right reasons.
- **Accessible:** it is inclusive, transparent and understandable to the community it serves.
- **Focused and enabling:** It should be purposeful and not overly bureaucratic.
- **Active:** Passive governance is bad governance- we need members to read their papers, challenge and engage. Disagree well and deal with conflict appropriately.
- **Equal:** All members are equal but as in life all member have different strengths and weaknesses

Senate's Powers

The powers and functions of Senate, as defined in Statute VI and Regulation 4, include the following:

- Directing and regulating teaching and examination
- Promoting research
- Authorising the award or annulment of degrees
- Regulating admissions and the discipline of students
- Reporting to Council on any academic matter or any matter referred to Senate by Council
- Recommending changes to the academic organisation of the University

Senate also the power to 'discuss and declare an opinion on any matter whatsoever relating to the University'

Organisation of University and Regulation 4.

Statute VI. Point 3

The Role of Senators

- to be aware of institutional objectives and issues
- to speak freely on policies and proposals presented to Senate
- to contribute to making and taking responsibility for Senate's decisions, taking into account of the needs and priorities of the whole University
- to attend all meetings of Senate unless absence is due to illness, urgent personal reasons or teaching commitments.
- In exceptional circumstances, members may seek the Chair's permission to nomination a substitute to have a delegated voice on their behalf.
- to be willing to be appointed as members of Senate committees or sub-groups

Senate access and support

- A well functioning Senate has a diversity of perspective and opinion, differences in perspective are therefore highly encouraged
- Applications from all eligible staff are welcomed
- Serving as a Senator and/or member of Council is an excellent career development tool
- Experiences of other HEIs highly valuable to add Senate discussion and practice
- New senators are mentored and will now benefit from an extended period of tenure which will support greater skills development
- Time is given to Senators will fulfil their role alongside their contractual position
- Job sharing/joint applications welcomed from part time staff

The Role of Academic Elected Senators

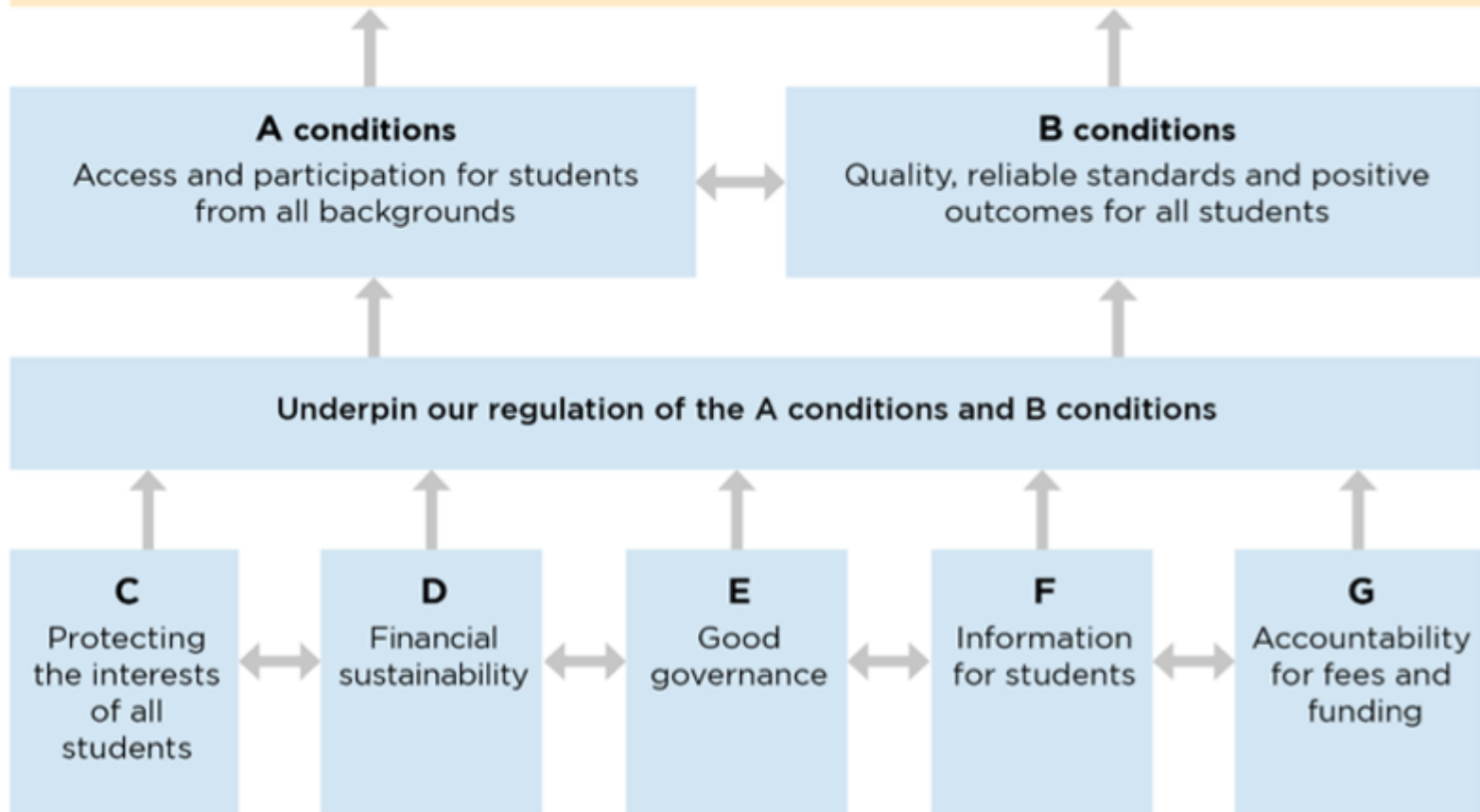
- to attend School meetings – these are scheduled before Senate to allow information to flow up as required
- in advance of Senate meetings, to read the papers and prepare for the business to be transacted, to receive views from their constituents on the scheduled business (this is facilitated by Senate papers being openly accessible to all members of staff and students via Sussex Direct)
- during Senate meetings, to contribute as necessary and to report the views of any constituents
- after Senate meetings, to feedback to their constituents within the provisions of the Standing Orders of Senate as necessary bearing in mind that the only official report of the meeting is the Minutes of the meeting

Conditions of Registration

- A. Access and participation
- B. Quality and standards
- C. Guidance on consumer protection law: student complaints scheme, and student protection plan
- D. Financial viability and sustainability
- E. Management and governance
- F. Transparency of information
- G. Mandatory fee limits

All students, from all backgrounds and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education:

1. Are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from, higher education.
2. Receive a high-quality academic experience, and their interests are protected while they study or in the event of provider, campus or course closure.
3. Are able to progress into employment or further study, and their qualifications hold their value over time.
4. Receive value for money.



Business at meetings

- Business for compliance
 - Items which report on the institutional compliance, are required to be submitted to external bodies as part of accountable returns and any actions to improve compliance
 - For example: OfS returns, auditor reports, health and safety reports and funding returns
- Strategy and risk
 - Items which report on progress against the strategy- delivered by colleagues in their day to day jobs; reports asking for decisions to advance the strategy and reports on risks impacting the strategy's delivery either for decision or escalation
 - For example: Student Experience reports, employment strategies, estate development plans
- Governance
 - Items required to make the governance cogs turns and ensure we comply with our governance instruments
 - For example: elections, sub-committee reports and regulation changes

2. Elections to Senate

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Senate: who is on it?

“The Senate, subject to the provisions of the Charter and the Statutes and to the general control and approval of Council, shall be responsible for the academic standards and the direction and regulation of academic matters of the University.”

55 Members:

- ❖ Heads of School:
- ❖ Students' Union Sabbatical Officers:
- ❖ 2 elected representatives per School:
- ❖ 2 elected representative of Professional Services:
- ❖ Student representatives:
- ❖ Union Observers
- ❖ VC, PVCs and some Heads of Professional Service

Election conduct

- The conduct and timetable of elections is the responsibility of the Secretary.
- Candidates can be nominated, or self nominated, in either case nominees are invited to prepare a statement setting out their background and what skills they can bring to the role. The word limit is set out on the nomination form and if it overruns the statement may be cut short.
- If more than one candidate is nominated for any given vacancy, Electoral Reform Services are commissioned to run an election, using the single transferable vote system.
- To ensure a level playing field during the election process, the method by which the electorate is informed about the nominees' background and skills is through the published statements included on the nomination form.
- Nominees should focus on their background and skills in their statement – particularly for Council roles any elected member must prioritise their responsibilities to the University over and above any other roles they have in regards to decision making.
- Nominees must not use the University's IT system or email addresses to contact the electorate as not only is this in contradiction to the University's IT Regulations but with elections with large number of candidates this could overwhelm the electorate with repeated and unwelcome emails, and provide an unfair advantage to those with the time and capacity to "campaign" extensively outside the formal route.

Election conduct

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