

Standing Orders of the Boards of Studies

1. Chair

1.1 Ordinances 10.1(b) and 10.2(b) specify that the Dean/Head of the Faculty/School is the Chair of the Board of Studies.

1.2 A Board may also nominate a Vice-Chair, to take the chair of the Board of Studies in the absence of the Vice-Chancellor.

1.3 In the absence of the Chair and the Vice-Chair, the Secretary must arrange a vote to elect a member of the Board to take the chair for the duration of the current meeting (see decision-making, below).

1.4 The Chair is obliged to take all decisions in accordance with the [University Charter](#), [Statutes](#) and [Ordinances](#), Board of Studies Standing Orders and the law of the land. Within that context, the Chair's ruling on procedure is final.

1.5 Within the context set out in 1.4 above, the Chair's discretionary ruling on procedure can be reversed if two thirds of the members present and voting support a motion to this effect.

2. Membership, regular attendees and officers

2.1 Membership of the Board of Studies is set out in [Ordinance 10](#). The procedure for the election of members to serve on a Board of Studies will be in accordance with Ordinance 10.

2.2 The candidates with the highest number of votes will be declared elected. In the event of a tie, the person to be declared elected will be determined by lot.

2.3 A candidate nominated in accordance with Ordinance 10 will be elected unopposed if no other nominations are received for the vacancy for which they have been nominated.

2.4 A member filling a casual vacancy will serve only for the unexpired period of office of the original member.

2.5 Board members should abide by the principle of collective responsibility, exercising the functions of the Board of Studies in the best interests of the University as a whole, though they may bring their individual experiences and expertise to bear in doing so.

2.6 Boards of Studies have the power to authorise the regular attendance of other individuals by virtue of their knowledge and experience, or in the capacity of observer.

2.7 Regular attendees receive papers, attend meetings and participate in discussions but do not have the right to vote.

2.8 The regular attendance of individuals at Boards of Studies shall be reviewed on an annual basis at the start of each academic year.

3. Quorum and attendance

3.1 There will be a quorum when one-third of the total membership is present. Officers and those attending do not count towards the quorum. It is the responsibility of the Secretary to ensure that a quorum is present throughout the meeting.

3.2 A meeting may proceed without a quorum, but, in the absence of a quorum, no formal decisions may be taken. Any decisions taken whilst a meeting is inquorate are invalid. In the event that a quorum is absent, the Chair may postpone the meeting to a future date.

3.3 If it appears that a meeting has become inquorate, any member of the Board may challenge the quorum. The quorum may be challenged twice in any meeting; thereafter any such challenge is out of order.

3.4 Boards of Studies members should make every endeavour to attend all meetings of the Board. When they are unable to attend a meeting, their apologies should be submitted in advance to the Secretary together with any comments on the agenda so that these may be shared at the meeting.

3.5 If an ex-officio member of the Board is unable to attend a meeting of the Board, they may nominate an alternate to attend that meeting. If a member appointed by another Faculty/School to serve on the Board is unable to attend a meeting of the Board, the Dean of that Faculty/Head of that School may nominate an alternate to attend that meeting. Alternate membership is not otherwise allowed. The attendance of an alternate at a meeting is at the discretion of the Chair of the Board.

3.6 The failure of a Board of Studies member to attend any meetings of the Board for a period of six months will result in their automatic removal from the Board of Studies, unless mitigating circumstances have been approved by the Chair.

4. Meetings

4.1 Ordinary meetings of the Boards of Studies will be in accordance with the Calendar of the University as approved annually by Senate. There will normally be six ordinary meetings of the Board in each academic year.

4.2 Special meetings of a Board of Studies to dispose of any urgent and unforeseen business that cannot wait until the next ordinary meeting can be convened at the discretion of the Chair, or on the formal signed request of a minimum of a third of Senate members, addressed to the Secretary.

4.3 Special meetings must take place no sooner than 48 hours and no later than 14 days after notice of the meeting has been issued to the Board of Studies by the Secretary.

4.4 The Chair has the power to adjourn a meeting temporarily, or to another date. Their reasons for doing so must be notified to Council and recorded in the minutes.

5. Virtual meetings and remote attendance

5.1 Where circumstances do not permit a Board of Studies to meet in person, a virtual meeting may be convened. Such meetings are subject to all the provisions set out in these Standing Orders.

5.2 For all meetings convened in person, a Board of Studies member may attend virtually at the discretion of the Chair, providing that sufficient notice has been given to allow appropriate arrangements to be put in place. A member attending in a virtual capacity will be deemed to have attended the meeting, will be counted in the quorum, and can vote. However, the minutes will record the nature of their attendance.

6. Agenda and supporting papers

6.1 The Secretary of the Board will compile the agenda in consultation with the Chair.

6.2 The Secretary must issue a formal notice of an ordinary Board of Studies meeting, along with agenda and papers, no later than seven days before the date of the meeting.

6.3 Boards of Studies are “digital by default”. All circulations will therefore be in electronic format.

6.4 Requests for inclusion of items on the agenda must reach the Secretary in writing, with a copy of the paper for circulation, fourteen days before the date of the meeting at which the item is to be considered. The Chair has discretion over the inclusion of proposed items of business on the agenda, though must advise the Board of the basis for any decision for inclusion or rejection.

7. Confidentiality

7.1 Boards of Studies operates on the principle of transparency, unless there is a good reason to impose confidentiality. These reasons include those set out in Statute 28.2(iii) but may also include reasons of commercial confidentiality.

7.2 The majority of confidential business shall be considered within the reserved business section of the Boards of Studies agenda. It is the responsibility of the Secretary to ensure that any confidential business considered elsewhere on the agenda is clearly marked as "confidential".

7.3 Boards of Studies members must not disclose any confidential business to anyone. They are personally responsible for ensuring the secure storage and disposal of all confidential documents, including all those within the reserved business section of the agenda, whether in electronic or paper form.

8. Declarations of Interest

8.1 A Boards of Studies member with any direct or indirect personal or financial interest, whether actual or perceived, in any matter under discussion by the Board must declare that interest to the Chair at the earliest opportunity, either before or during the meeting. All declarations of interest must be recorded in the minutes by the Secretary.

8.2 By default, Boards of Studies members with an interest in a particular item of business should withdraw whilst that item is under consideration. Exceptionally, at the discretion of the Chair, they may remain to participate in the discussion but not to vote. A member who has temporarily withdrawn from a meeting continues to count towards the quorum.

8.3 In the event of a decision taken by correspondence (see decision-making), Boards of Studies members with an interest in a particular item of business must declare their interest and must not be counted amongst the responses.

9. Conduct of meetings

9.1 The order of business can be varied, and items of business deferred to a future meeting, with the approval of the Board and consent of the Chair.

9.2 Items can be taken without notice under "Any Other Business" at the discretion of the Chair.

9.3 Boards of Studies should proceed by consensus wherever possible, resorting to formal procedural mechanisms only when all other solutions have been exhausted.

9.5 The Chair has discretion to accept or reject for debate a formal motion, or an amendment to a formal motion, moved by a Board of Studies member and seconded by another member, and to determine the order in which amendments and motions are taken. Proceedings on any amendments must be completed before any decision is taken on the substantive motion [as amended]. Where there is more than one motion, the motion under consideration must be disposed of before proceedings on any subsequent motions are embarked upon. Motions and amendments may be withdrawn by the proposer with the approval of the seconder.

9.6 Formal motions may include motions to adjourn or postpone the meeting; to defer the item under consideration until a future time or date; to close the debate; or to refer an item of business back to the committee which submitted it to the Board of Studies for consideration.

9.7 Members may raise a point of order on a perceived breach of Standing Orders; University Charter; Statutes and Ordinances, or statute or common law, and are entitled to be heard immediately on that point. The ruling of the Chair on points of order is final. Matters raised on a point of order take precedence over all other matters under discussion.

10. Decision-making

10.1 Decisions should normally be made on the basis of consensus. A formal vote can be held where the Chair deems it appropriate, or if formally requested by a Board of Studies member and seconded by another member.

10.2 Formal voting normally takes place by show of hands, with the Secretary acting as teller. In exceptional circumstances, voting shall be by secret ballot if one third of the members present and voting request it.

10.3 The Chair, ex officio members, elected members and appointed members have the right to vote. Co-opted members have the right to vote if they are members of the University but not otherwise.

10.4 Voting is normally by simple majority of those present and voting with the Chair making a casting vote in the event of a tie.

10.5 The number of votes cast for or against a motion will not be recorded in the minutes unless such a record is demanded by three members.

10.6 In exceptional cases, if an urgent decision of the Board of Studies is required between meetings, a decision can be taken electronically providing that all members have been consulted, and a minimum of 75% of the membership have voted. The Secretary is responsible for the conduct of any decisions taken by correspondence, including keeping accurate records, ensuring anyone with a declarable interest does not vote, and reporting the decision to the subsequent meeting.

10.7 Under exceptional circumstances, and where there is insufficient time for a decision to be taken by electronic correspondence, an urgent decision can be taken between meetings by the Chair. The Secretary is responsible for the conduct of any decisions taken in this way,

including keeping accurate records of both the decision and the reason why this procedure was used, and for reporting the decision to the subsequent meeting.

10.8 In the case of the Faculty and School Research Students Committee, the urgent business procedure can be used during the vacation and at other times where an urgent decision is required in the interests of the student without detriment to the quality and standards of provision.

11. Minutes

11.1 Minutes of meetings will be recorded by the Secretary and approved by the Chair before circulation. The minutes of a previous meeting must be approved by the Board and signed by the Chair.

11.2 Unconfirmed minutes of non-reserved business are published on the University's website as soon as practicable after they have been approved by the Chair.

11.3 Minutes of reserved business are not published on the website, but any resolutions made under reserved business, and the papers which accompanied them, may be disclosed in strict confidence by the Secretary to anyone who requires the information.

11.4 The Secretary will advise the Secretary of Senate of any items from the minutes of the Board which need to be placed on the agenda of Senate at least fourteen days before the meeting at which they are to be considered.

12. Standing orders

12.1 Any proposal for an amendment to Standing Orders will be referred to Senate who will receive the views of all Boards of Studies before reaching any decision. An amendment may be made by a simple majority of Senate and will take effect after the meeting of Senate at which the amendment is approved.

12.2 Any one or more of these Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting in relation to specific, named business of that meeting, on the agreement of a simple majority of members present and voting.

