

THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL STANDING ORDERS OF THE SENATE

In accordance with Statute 11, there is a Senate of the University which, subject to the oversight of the Council, is responsible for: promoting research; promoting and regulating learning and teaching; and maintaining the quality and standards of the University's academic provision. The composition, powers and duties of the Senate are set out in [Ordinances 19 and 21](#).

Powers delegated by the Senate are set out in the [Scheme of Delegation](#).

Meetings of the Senate will be conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders set out below.

SEN1 – Review and Amendment

The Standing Orders will be reviewed on an annual basis and presented for approval at the first meeting of Senate in each academic year.

SEN2 – Membership and Composition

The Vice-Chancellor shall be ex officio Chair of the Senate. The senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor, being the Pro-Vice-Chancellor who has currently served the longest period in that office, shall be Deputy Chair of the Senate.

The Chair, in consultation with the Secretary, will decide all points of order and procedure not expressly provided for in these Standing Orders.

A member of the Governance Team will act as Committee Secretary to Senate.

The constitution of Senate is set out in [Ordinance 19](#).

SEN3 – Attendance

Attendance at Senate by its membership is expected under normal circumstances and will be recorded and monitored. If a member of Senate is unable to attend, they should offer their apologies in writing to the Secretary to Senate in advance of the meeting. The number of apologies received will be recorded in the minutes.

Any member who is absent from meetings of the Senate for 12 consecutive calendar months shall cease to be a member unless the Senate decides otherwise.

Only members named on the register of members for the given academic year are entitled to attend meetings. Substitutes will not be permitted.

Other members of the University will be invited to attend meetings of the Senate as appropriate to present business or provide advice and guidance.

SEN4 – Meetings

There shall normally be four ordinary meetings of the Senate per academic year. The dates of meetings for the following academic session for Senate and other central governance committees are published in the spring. Meetings will be scheduled so as to permit the annual cycle of business to be conducted expeditiously and effectively.

Meetings, if it is deemed necessary, may be held virtually provided usual notice and quorum provisions are met, all participants are able to raise comments and minutes are kept in the usual way. If a meeting is held virtually, members must display their name in the format (first name and last name). The chat function should only be used for requesting to speak, for expressing support or disagreement for a point made, for indicating a point of order or for providing links to further information. It should not be used to raise new points for discussion.

Proceedings are not invalidated as a result of a vacancy in the membership of the Senate.

Exceptionally, a scheduled meeting may be cancelled if the Vice-Chancellor is satisfied that there is insufficient business to warrant a meeting.

A special meeting of the Senate may be convened either by the Chair, or by the Secretary on receipt of a written request signed by no fewer than one third of the members of the Senate. The Secretary shall notify all members of the date, time and venue of any special meeting. No business shall be transacted at a special meeting of the Senate except that for which it has been convened.

SEN5 – Agenda, Report and Minutes

The Vice-Chancellor previews all business proposed for Senate's consideration and agrees Senate's agenda. The Vice-Chancellor will agree which Senate agenda items should be 'starred' and not discussed at Senate meetings.

Members may contact the Secretary with suggestions/requests for future agenda items up to two weeks before the [published paper deadline](#). Any papers subsequently submitted must be presented on the [standard report template \(internal access only\)](#).

The order of business at each ordinary meeting of the Senate shall be as follows:

- a. Committee and Membership Matters, including Disclosures of Interests
- b. The Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Senate/Matters Arising
- c. Vice-Chancellor's Report (providing an update on any recent sector or University-specific matters)
- d. Strategic Matters for Discussion/Decision
- e. Business from Faculties
- f. Reports from Sub-Committees
- g. Other items for Approval/Endorsement/Noting.

Items marked with an asterisk are not discussed unless a request to unstar the item is made by a member of the Senate. Starred items are straightforward and non-controversial and are for approval or noting without discussion. Members should provide at least 24 hours' notice of their intention to unstar an item to the Secretary and provide an indication of the reason for their request. If no request to unstar an item is received it is taken that the report has been accepted and all recommendations contained therein are approved.

A meeting of the Senate shall be suspended after three hours, unless by a majority consisting of two thirds of those present deciding that the meeting should continue.

Notification of the date, time and venue and the agenda and papers for each meeting of the Senate shall usually be sent by the Secretary to every member not less than seven days before each meeting (or not less than 24 hours before a special meeting). Only in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Chair, will late papers be

accepted. A late paper is defined as one which requires circulation after the main paper pack has been issued.

Minutes of the Senate will be recorded by the Secretary. The Secretary is responsible for maintaining a master file of the minutes and for ensuring that agendas and papers are archived appropriately.

Only in the exceptional circumstances that a member of the Senate explicitly requests that their dissent is recorded with attribution to them as a named individual, shall the minute record the name of the Senate member making the point.

The minutes will be submitted for approval at the next ordinary meeting of the Senate. Any amendments agreed at the meeting will be incorporated into a final version which becomes the confirmed minutes and the formal record of the discussions and decisions.

If a decision is approved subject to a particular matter being addressed, confirmation will be provided that the action has been taken within a reasonable timeframe.

Once approved by Senate, the minutes will be made available within ten working days on the University's public facing website, with redactions made where necessary (e.g. where the minutes are commercially sensitive).

The names of members and other individuals present at a meeting will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

SEN6 – Confidentiality and Sharing of Papers

Senate operates on the principle of transparency, unless there is good reason to impose confidentiality.

The author of any paper containing confidential information should mark it 'confidential' and it should not be shared with any person outside of the Senate without the approval of the Chair. In the event a member discloses confidential information the matter will be drawn to the attention of the Chair by the Secretary and further action will be determined based on the seriousness of the disclosure.

Senate papers are shared via the online platform SharePoint. The following [SharePoint principles of use \(internal access only\)](#) apply to all Senate members.

Papers and other information will be disclosed to all Senate members unless there is a good reason to withhold the information (for example due to a serious conflict of interest).

SEN7 – Conflict of Interest

In accordance with the [Disclosure of Interests Policy](#), the agenda for each meeting will include a standing item, 'Declarations of Conflict of Interests'. Any member who believes that they may have a direct or indirect personal or financial interest in any matter to be discussed shall state that interest in advance to the Secretary or in the meeting (which shall be minuted). There may be certain circumstances where the Senate member will need to withdraw from certain decisions, in order to protect themselves and the University from accusations of unfair bias or impropriety.

Actions could include:

- Requiring the member to not attend the meeting
- Excluding the member from receiving meeting papers relating to their interest
- Excluding the member from all or part of the relevant discussion and/or the decision-making part
- Noting the nature and extent of the interest, but judging it appropriate to allow the member to remain and participate
- Removing the member from the group or process altogether.
As directed by the Chair the conflicted member may be required not to speak or vote on that matter, or not be counted in the quorum at the meeting.

A member is not considered to have a pecuniary or personal interest in matters under discussion merely by being a member of staff or student of the University.

SEN8 – Chair’s Actions/Decisions Between Meetings

The Chair has delegated authority to act on behalf of the Senate between meetings. Chair’s action may only be taken where decisions are routine/immaterial/non-contentious and/or there is a need to expedite business and it is reasonable not to call a special meeting. Chair’s actions will be reported to the Senate at the next ordinary meeting.

In exceptional circumstances, where no physical or virtual meeting is able to take place, and where Chair’s action is not deemed appropriate, Senate members may be asked to approve specific items by email. A decision made in this form shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Senate, in line with the agreed quoracy requirements for a physical meeting. Where the Chair of Senate seeks a decision without a meeting of the Senate, the Secretary will be responsible for the conduct of any decisions taken, including keeping accurate records and reporting the decisions to the subsequent meeting of the Senate.

SEN9 – Conduct During Meetings

The University is committed to maintaining the highest standards in the conduct of its activities. This commitment includes not merely the maintenance of academic freedom, but adherence to the University's own Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations.

A healthy Senate is vital to the effective functioning of the University. Senate should act as a key forum for the debate, development and testing of institutional academic strategy and policy. Members of Senate are expected to participate in discussion, thereby allowing their experience to inform strategy and policy.

Members of the Senate are required to observe the standards of behaviour expected as set out in the Standing Orders and to follow University Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations and written policy statements.

Members are responsible for ensuring that the responsibilities of the Senate are exercised in the best interest of the University, rather than representative of any constituency.

It will be assumed that members of the Senate have read all of the papers circulated.

Members should indicate a wish to speak by raising their hand (where in person) or using

the digital equivalent (if the meeting is held virtually). Members shall not speak until called upon by the Chair.

In performing their duties as a Senate member, members must not be constrained by the normal line management structures from expressing an opinion or supporting or opposing a proposal.

Members shall conduct themselves in a way that is respectful towards others. The conduct of a debate will be determined by the Chair, who will not unreasonably refuse any member the right to speak. The Chair may require a member to leave a meeting in the event of their disruptive behaviour.

SEN10 – Quorum

The quorum for transaction of business, as set out in Ordinance 19, is 20 members. If a meeting of Senate is inquorate the Chair shall decide whether a) the meeting should be postponed and rearranged or b) whether the meeting should proceed, subject to the decisions taken being ratified via circulation, in line with the agreed quoracy requirements for a physical meeting. If the meeting proceeds, the minutes should clearly show that the meeting was not quorate.

SEN11 – Voting

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

Only Senate members have the right to vote at Senate meetings unless they are precluded from doing so by a conflict of interest. Attendees who are not members of Senate may speak at Senate meetings to provide guidance, advice and opinion, but shall not be entitled to vote. A formal vote can be held where the Chair deems it appropriate, or if requested by a Senate member.

Voting on a clear recommendation at a meeting of the Senate shall be carried out by one of two methods:

- A show of hands with counting, in which case a count of the numbers of votes for and against a recommendation and the number of abstentions will be made by the Secretary and recorded in the minutes. In the case of equal numbers of votes being cast for and against a recommendation, the Chair shall have a casting vote, whether or not they have voted before
- An electronic ballot of all those members in attendance.

SEN12 – Motions

A member of Senate may request that a motion be considered and voted upon. Voting on a motion at a meeting of the Senate shall be carried out by one of two methods:

- A show of hands with counting, in which case a count of the numbers of votes for and against a recommendation and the number of abstentions will be made by the Secretary and recorded in the minutes. In the case of equal numbers of votes being cast for and against a recommendation, the Chair shall have a casting vote, whether or not they have voted before
- An electronic ballot of all those members in attendance.

For consideration of a motion:

- The Chair will ask the proposer to state the topic of the motion, so members present can vote on whether the motion should be considered and carried forward to vote
- If the motion is to be considered further, the proposer is invited to summarise the motion
- The Chair responds to the motion. If it concerns the Vice-Chancellor, the senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor, being the Pro-Vice-Chancellor who has currently served the longest period in that office, shall take over as Chair of the Senate
- Other members of Senate are then given the opportunity to speak for and against the motion
- The Chair then requests a vote, using the same process as above.

Motions will only be considered at the end of the meeting under 'Any Other Business'. If the motion is passed, it will be referred to Council for decision (it would be referred to in Senate's report to Council if defeated).

No motion that has been rejected by Senate can be brought back to Senate within a period of six months.

SEN13 – Committees of the Senate

Senate can establish committees and define their powers and determine their membership and quorum. The Vice-Chancellor shall be an ex officio member of all Committees of the Senate.

The Committees of the Senate shall report to Senate on a regular basis.

SEN14 – Reporting to Council

The Senate will regularly report on its work to the Council as well as making recommendations and seeking approvals where relevant.

The Chair of Senate will be the principal conduit for reporting to Council.