Academic Senate Membership Procedure

Version 5 – Approved 11 September 2023

Contents

Purpose 1

Applicable governance instruments 1

Procedure 1

1. Objective 1
2. Membership of Academic Senate 2
3. Chair 2
4. Deputy Chair 3
5. Associate Chair 3
6. Acting Chair 3
7. Elected Academic Staff Members 3
8. Additional Members Appointed by the Chair of Academic Senate 6
9. Academic Senate Committee Membership 6

Related procedures 7

Versions 7

Appendix A: Responsibilities of Academic Senate Members 8

Purpose

This Procedure describes how Academic Senate membership and the membership of Senate committees is established and managed in accordance with the provisions of the *Academic Senate Ordinance*.

Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
Academic Senate Ordinance	6 – Membership	

Procedure

1. Objective

The University will elect or appoint members of Academic Senate and Senate committees consistent with the requirements set out in the *Academic Senate Ordinance* (the Ordinance) and other governing documents and will ensure that Senate and its committees possess the expertise and experience necessary to provide proper academic stewardship and governance for the University.

2. Membership of Academic Senate

2.1. The Ordinance provides that Senate consist of the following:

a. Chair and Deputy Chair of Senate (elected under Section 7 of the Ordinance).

b. Academic and non-academic Ex-Officio members by virtue of their position, including the Vice-Chancellor, the President of the Tasmanian University Student Association (TUSA) and three additional student representatives as nominated by the President, TUSA.

c. Chairs of Senate committees who are not already members of Academic Senate

d. 20 elected members of academic staff elected by academic staff of the University.

e. Four additional members appointed by the Chair of Senate (if required).

f. Members of the Monitoring and Assurance Committee (MAC), if they are not already members of Academic Senate. If they are already a member of Academic Senate, their original membership becomes a vacancy because each member can only occupy one category of membership (Section 6.1A of the Ordinance), and their new Senate term becomes the term of their membership on the MAC.

2.2 Additionally, the Ordinance provides that the Chair may appoint a member or members of Senate to support the Chair and/or the Deputy Chair (see Section 5 of this Procedure).

2.3 Current membership of Senate is published on the University's website.

2.4 The standard term of office for elected and appointed members of Senate and its committees (including the Deputy Chair, but excluding the Chair) is two years. The Chair, however, may determine that a term of office is to be one or three years as required, in order to provide continuity in representation.

2.5 A member of Senate is taken to have vacated office if the member is absent from three consecutive meetings of Senate, except on leave of absence granted by Senate. Where that member is an Ex-Officio member, membership is suspended for three meetings. Where that member is an elected or appointed member, membership is terminated.

2.5 As part of the induction process, all members of Senate will be informed of their responsibilities as outlined in Appendix A.

3. Chair

3.1. The Chair of Academic Senate must be an exemplary leader with a strong commitment to the academic mission of the University. The Chair works to enable Academic Senate to assume a strong academic oversight and quality assurance role. The Chair must have a clear understanding of the role of governance versus management and be willing to represent and consider the interests of the University as a whole when undertaking their role.

3.2. A candidate for Chair is not necessarily a member of Senate.

3.3. The Ordinance provides that Senate elects the Chair, for a term of up to three years, and fixes the terms and conditions of that office.

3.4 A person may be re-elected to the office of Chair, but for no more two consecutive terms.

3.5 The Chair of Academic Senate chairs Senate, Standing Academic Committee and the Nominations Committee, and has other functions as set out in the Ordinance.

3.5 The procedure for electing the Chair of Senate will follow the process for electing staff members to Senate as set out in Section 7 of this Procedure.

4. Deputy Chair

4.1 The Ordinance provides that Senate elects one of its members as Deputy Chair from the elected or appointed members of Senate, for a term of up to two years, and fixes the terms and conditions of that office.

4.2 A person may be nominated for Deputy Chair provided that they have at least one year remaining on their membership of Academic Senate.

4.3 The procedure for electing the Deputy Chair of Senate will follow the process for electing staff members to Senate as set out in Section 7 of this Procedure.

4.4 The Deputy Chair ceases to be Deputy Chair if their membership of Academic Senate expires and they are not re-elected to the membership.

5. Associate Chair

5.1 In addition to the Deputy Chair, there may be an Associate Chair selected by invitation of the Chair.

5.2 The Associate Chair will:

a. be selected from the elected or appointed membership of Senate;

b. usually be a Level A, B or C academic;

c. have a keen interest in governance;

d. assist the Chair and Deputy Chair to fulfill their duties;

e. on the authority of the Chair, perform functions of the Deputy Chair (or Chair) as required; and

f. serve a term of office in line with their term of office as an elected or appointed member of Senate.

5.3 The position of Associate Chair becomes vacant if the holder of the office resigns in writing to the Secretary.

5.4 A person is not eligible to hold the office of Associate Chair at the same time as they hold any of the ex-officio offices listed in section 6.1 (b) of the Academic Senate Ordinance.

6. Acting Chair

6.1 The Chair may authorise the Deputy Chair or the Associate Chair to perform the functions of the Chair if required.

7. Elected Academic Staff Members

7.1. Membership of Academic Senate includes 20 members of academic staff elected by academic staff.

7.2 The Academic Senate Secretary is to maintain an academic staff electoral roll containing the name and position of each person eligible to vote in Senate Elections.

7.3 The Returning Officer for Senate staff elections is the Academic Senate Secretary unless this responsibility is delegated in writing by the Academic Senate Secretary.

7.4 Call for Nominations

a. The membership of Senate will be reviewed by Senate at its second last ordinary meeting of the year to identify those vacancies for which nominations are required.

b. The membership of Senate committees will be reviewed by Senate at its last ordinary meeting of the year to identify those committees for which nominations are required.

c. A call for nominations will be provided in the agenda for these meetings.

d. The Returning Officer is responsible for inviting nominations of candidates by any means of communication that the Returning Officer considers appropriate.

e. Each call for nominations will include:

   i. a closing date.

   ii. the specifics of the vacancies, such as the category of membership (including Chair and Deputy Chair if required), the number of vacancies by College and the term of office of the vacancies.

   iii. reference to the diversity of perspectives that are supported through Senate membership.

7.5 The closing date for nominations is to be set by the Returning Officer and should be 14 days after the meeting of Senate at which the call for nominations was made.

7.6 Nominations

a. A nomination is to be in writing using the Nomination Form. All fields in the Nomination Form must be completed, including identification of the category of membership to which the nomination relates, the diversity of perspectives to which the candidate identifies, and the requested biographical information.

b. The nomination must be signed by a proposer and a seconder and include the written consent of the candidate. The proposer and seconder must be academic staff from the same College/Division as the nominee. A nomination must be submitted electronically to the Returning Officer.

c. Nominees should advise their School or Institute head (or equivalent) of their nomination so that the impact of their proposed participation may be accommodated within work plans.

d. All nominations must be received by 5pm on the closing date.

e. A person nominated as a candidate may withdraw at any time before the close of nominations.

f. At the close of nominations, if no more than the required number of people have been nominated for any category of membership of Senate, the Returning Officer is to declare those people elected.

g. At the close of nominations, if the number of people nominated for one or more of the relevant categories of membership of Senate exceeds the number required to be elected, the Returning Officer is to set a day for an election for that category (or those categories).

h. The date set for the elections must be no earlier than seven days after the close of nominations.

i. If by the close of nominations there are fewer nominations than vacancies for Senate, a second call for nominations will be undertaken, with an election to be conducted if necessary.

j. In the event that insufficient nominations are received for elected members of Senate following two calls for nominations, the vacancies may be filled by appointment by the Chair of Senate.

k. If by the close of nominations there are fewer nominations than vacancies for Senate committees, each Committee Chair with unfilled vacancies will submit nominations to the Chair

of Senate for approval by the Nominations Committee and then for reporting to Senate at its first meeting the following year.

7.7 Ballot Papers

a. The Returning Officer will use an electronic voting system to distribute ballot papers to all eligible voters.

b. Votes are submitted via electronic ballot papers.

c. Every ballot paper is to contain:

i. the heading "University of Tasmania – Election of Academic Staff members to Senate".

ii. a list of the full names of the candidates for election in the order determined by the Returning Officer by drawing lots in the presence of the Chair of Senate or nominee.

d. No later than 14 days before the date set for the relevant election, the Returning Officer is to forward the documents relating to the relevant election, via the electronic voting system, to each person whose name appears on the academic staff electoral roll.

e. The documents forwarded to eligible voters must include the following information about each candidate:

i. name, occupation, formal qualifications, particulars of prior service to the University.

ii. other brief biographical material provided by the candidate.

7.8 Voting

a. No more than one ballot paper is to be issued to any person in respect of any election.

b. A vote will not be valid if:

i. the voter has chosen more than one candidate;

ii. the ballot paper was received after 5pm on the closing date set for the poll.

c. All invalid votes will be rejected and all valid votes will be counted.

7.9 Casual Vacancies

a. Where there is a casual vacancy of more than four months in the academic staff members of Senate, or a casual vacancy arises as the result of appointment of an elected member to the MAC (see Section 2.1(f)) the Returning Officer is to invite nominations of candidates for the election to fill the vacancy by any means of communication that the Returning Officer considers appropriate.

b. The Returning Officer is to invite nominations within a reasonable time after becoming aware of the casual vacancy.

c. Each call for nominations will specify a closing date and the details to be included in the nomination.

d. When two or more casual vacancies for staff members occur in circumstances where it is convenient to conduct one election to fill those vacancies, the Returning Officer may conduct one election.

e. Where a casual vacancy occurs in the academic staff members of Senate, and the unexpired portion of the term of the former member is less than four months, Senate may either:

i. leave the position vacant for the unexpired portion of the term, or

ii. replace the casual vacancy in accordance with section 7.9 a.

7.10 Where a person has been declared elected, the Returning Officer is to give notice by any means of communication that the Returning Officer considers appropriate and report the outcome of the election to the next meeting of Senate.

7.11 The Chair of Senate may extend or abridge any prescribed time limit that applies to elections, as outlined in this Procedure.

8. Additional Members Appointed by the Chair of Academic Senate

8.1 The Ordinance provides that, with the agreement of Senate, the Chair may appoint up to four additional members to provide a diversity of views if the Chair believes the current membership of Senate does not reflect the academic and cultural diversity of the University.

8.2 If agreed by Senate that additional members should be sought, the Academic Senate Secretary will call for expressions of interest.

8.3 The call for expressions of interest will include:

a. a closing date.

b. the specifics of the vacancies, such as number of vacancies and the term of office of the vacancies.

c. reference to the diversity of perspectives that are supported through Senate membership.

8.4 Expressions of interest are to be in writing using the Nomination Form. All fields in the Nomination Form must be completed, including identification of the category of membership to which the nomination relates, the diversity of perspectives to which the candidate identifies, and the requested biographical information.

8.5 Expressions of interest must be received by 5 pm on the closing date.

8.6 The Chair will convene a meeting of the Nominations Committee to review the expressions of Interest. On the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, the Chair will appoint up to four additional members.

8.7 The Chair will report the outcome of the Nominations Committee to the next meeting of Senate.

9. Academic Senate Committee Membership

9.1 Senate is advised by its committees:

a. University Admissions Committee

b. University Learning and Teaching Committee

c. University Research Committee

d. University Course and Units Proposals Committee

e. Student Experience Committee

f. Monitoring and Assurance Committee

g. Nominations Committee

h. Standing Academic Committee

9.2 Academic Senate Committee Chair and membership arrangements are specified in each committee's Terms of Reference established under Sections 10.1 and 10.3 of the Ordinance.

9.3 Members of Senate committees are either Senate members, University employees or University students.

9.4 The current membership structure and terms of reference of the Senate committees are published on the University staff intranet.

9.5 Senate may, by resolution establish or discontinue any of its committees and may by resolution amend the membership structure and terms of reference of those committees.

9.6 Senate will ordinarily consider committee membership and confirm any appropriate appointments of Chairs and members at the first scheduled Senate meeting each year.

Related procedures

Nil.

Versions

Version	Action	Approved by	Business Owner/s	Approval Date
Version 1	Approved	Provost	Academic Senate Secretary	7 September 2021
Version 2	Minor amendment approved (position title changes)	Director Governance and Compliance	Academic Senate Secretary	16 May 2022
Version 3	Approved	Vice-Chancellor	Academic Senate Secretary	6 February 2023
Version 4	Approved	Vice-Chancellor	Academic Senate Secretary	28 June 2023
Version 5	Approved	Vice-Chancellor	Academic Senate Secretary	11 Sept 2023

Appendix A: Responsibilities of Academic Senate Members

- The roles and responsibilities common to both elected and Ex-Officio members of Senate are to:
    - contribute to decisions and recommendations in the best interests of the University considering the University's Strategic Plan and other relevant Plans.
    - consider the implications of Senate's decisions and recommendations on the University as a whole. While members will bring their expertise, insights and particular interests to Senate meetings, it is expected that members will act for the benefit of the University, not necessarily the interests of their Academic Unit, discipline or area.
    - maintain an understanding of the role and scope of Senate within governance and the University more generally.
    - regularly attend Senate meetings having prepared by reading and considering the relevant documents prior to each meeting.
    - maintain familiarity with, and an understanding of the Academic Senate Ordinance and Academic Senate Standing Orders.
    - serve on Senate Committees, Working Parties and Panels which may be of interest or as required.
- Members also have roles and responsibilities specific to their membership category.

- The roles and responsibilities of **Heads of Academic Units** as members of Senate are to:
    - promote the role and activities of Academic Senate within their Academic Unit (in general).
    - specifically include discussion of Academic Senate meetings (past and future) on the Agenda of Academic Unit Staff Meetings.
    - disseminate the discussions, decisions and recommendations from Academic Senate meetings to their Academic Unit.
    - gather/collate the views of members of their Academic Unit in relation to decisions to be made at upcoming Academic Senate meetings, including in relation to proposed policies, procedures and guidelines.
    - follow trends and important developments affecting the University.
    - develop/encourage/foster an understanding of academic governance within their Academic Unit.
    - seek/provide advice, as required, regarding the University's governance framework and approval protocols.
    - encourage staff to nominate for membership of Academic Senate and its Committees.
- The roles and responsibilities of **Elected and Appointed members** of Senate are to:
    - promote the role and activities of Academic Senate within their College.
    - disseminate the discussions, decisions and recommendations from Academic Senate meetings to members of their College, Division or cohort in the case of Research Fellows.
    - gather/collate the views of members of their College/cohort in relation to decisions to be made at upcoming Academic Senate meetings, including in relation to proposed policies, procedures and guidelines.

- follow trends and important developments affecting the University.
- develop/encourage/foster an understanding of academic governance with their peers.
- seek and/or provide advice, as required, regarding past decisions of Academic Senate and/or the background for upcoming decisions.
- seek/provide advice, as required, regarding academic governance frameworks and approval protocols.
- encourage their peers to nominate for membership of Academic Senate and its Committees.

- The roles and responsibilities of **Student members of Senate are to:**
  - promote the role and activities of Academic Senate within the Tasmania University Union and with students generally.
  - disseminate the discussions, decisions and recommendations from Academic Senate meetings to students.
  - gather/collate the views of students in relation to decisions to be made at upcoming Academic Senate meetings, including in relation to proposed policies, procedures and guidelines.
  - follow trends and important developments affecting the University.
  - develop/encourage/foster an understanding of academic governance with their peers.
  - seek/provide advice, as required, regarding the University's academic governance framework and approval protocols.