



University Committee for Learning and Teaching

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2023-24

1. Establishment

- a) The University Committee for Learning and Teaching is established as a Committee of the Senate¹ and reports jointly to the University Executive on specific matter (UE).
- b) The Court has delegated to the Senate all of its powers in relation to academic work and standards so that, subject to the terms of the [Charter and the Statutes](#) and to the powers reserved to the Court, the Senate is the principal body responsible for the academic work and standards of the University and in relation to:
 - programmes of study;
 - teaching and research;
 - the granting of awards; and
 - the regulation and stewardship of the education and discipline of the students.
- c) The Senate reports to the Court on the discharging of these responsibilities.
- d) Statute 5.4(b) permits the Senate to delegate any of its powers to any Committee which contains at least three of its members (at least one of whom should be an ex officio member of the Senate).
- e) Ordinance C4 permits the Senate to establish standing committees and to prescribe the terms of reference, including the remit and composition.
- f) An operating principle of this Committee is that when a decision is required in relation to the exercising of delegated powers of the Senate, those persons present who are not Senators shall be invited to abstain from voting.
- g) The University Executive (UE) is established by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, with the endorsement of the Court, as the primary management body of the University. The UE reports to the Court on the discharging of its responsibilities.
- h) The work of the UE is supported by contributions from groups, boards and committees, and it may delegate elements of review and decision-making authority to groups, boards and committees.

2. Reporting

To reflect the joint reporting arrangement, the Committee reports:

- a) **to both the UE and the Senate** on matters of strategy and policy as defined in its remit.
- b) **to the Senate** on specifically **academic governance** matters, such as Regulations (as the Senate is the primary academic body of the University).
- c) **to the UE** on specifically **executive** matters, such as those relating to staffing or material and other resources (as the UE is the primary management body of the University).

3. Purpose

¹ from 1 August 2017 (Senate Minute M17/046)

The purpose of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching is to provide institutional-level leadership in the development and implementation of **the academic vision and mission for Learning and Teaching** in support of the University's Strategic Plan.

4. Remit

The Senate and UE delegate authority to the University Committee for Learning and Teaching to:

1. provide strategic stewardship of the taught student learning experience;
2. develop, recommend, monitor the implementation of, and report on the Learning and Teaching Strategy, and supporting Operational Plan and performance indicators;
3. develop the strategic process for producing the Learning and Teaching Strategy to ensure that the Learning and Teaching Strategies/ Enhancement Plans of Schools and the Strategic Summaries/Enhancement Plans of the relevant Professional Services, are aligned with the overall Learning and Teaching Strategy;
4. develop, recommend, monitor, and report on Ordinances and Regulations; and to make, monitor, modify, and revoke codes of practice, policies and procedures related to:
 - learning and teaching;
 - academic quality enhancement frameworks for taught programmes of study;
 - the development of the academic attributes of Students, and the academic practice and learner support skills of Staff and Students.
 - the development of approaches for effective sharing of best practice in learning and teaching.
5. jointly, with the **University Committee for Quality and Standards**, consider (and where required, make recommendations on) internal and external quality assurance and enhancement reviews, including findings and action plans arising from them.
6. consider and make recommendations with respect to:
 - findings of surveys and other reviews of Student experience and the destinations of graduates with respect to taught programme students and graduates;
 - the development of support in relation to the development of the academic attributes of Students and the academic practice and learner support skills of Staff and Students;
 - the development of the physical and virtual academic environment pertaining to learning and teaching;
 - the University's portfolio of taught programmes;
 - national initiatives in learning and teaching.
7. monitor the academic outcomes for taught programmes of study;
8. receive regular reports from all Schools, including the minutes of the Schools' Learning and Teaching Committees;
9. create and receive reports from such sub-committees and short-life working groups as are necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the Committee.

[Note 1: the Committee shall inform the Senate and UE of the creation, on-going work, and disbanding of any sub-committees and short-life working groups.]

[Note 2: The Senate must approve the Terms of Reference of any standing sub-committee that is to exercise delegated powers of the Senate.]

² Through the [Senate Statement of Primary Responsibilities and Delegations](#)

5. Composition

1. The membership of the Committee shall be composed as follows:
 - 1) The Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life) ex officio, who shall be the Chair;
 - 2) The Associate Principal (Student Learning Experience) ex officio, who shall be the Vice-Chair;
 - 3) A Dean of the University, who shall be appointed by the SCIBE on behalf of the Senate;
 - 4) Three Senators, who shall be appointed by the SCIBE on behalf of the Senate;
 - 5) The Directors of Learning & Teaching of each of the Primary Academic Units, ex officio;
 - 6) The Presidents of the three Student Representative Bodies in Scotland, Dubai and Malaysia;
 - 7) The Deputy Vice-Principal Dubai, the Deputy Vice-Principal Malaysia, and the Associate Principal (Access & Inclusion) ex officio.
2. The University Secretary and Deans of the University who are not members of the Committee shall be eligible to attend meetings.
3. The following may also be in attendance at meetings: the Director of Global Student Experience & Academic Registrar, the Deputy Academic Registrar and Head of Student Life, the Quality Enhancement Officers, the Global Director of Information Services, the Student Engagement Manager (Scottish Campuses), the Student Engagement Manager (Dubai Campus), the Head of Academic Quality, the Deputy Director of Strategic Planning, the Director of the Learning & Teaching Academy and the Academic Representation Coordinator (Scottish Campuses).
4. The members appointed by the SCIBE shall serve for renewable two-year terms commencing on 01 August. The SCIBE shall direct the term of office to be served in the event of a casual vacancy and may vary the period of any appointment in the interests of good governance. The SCIBE shall monitor the membership of the Committee to ensure it reflects the diversity of the University's academic community and may offer comment in that regard as vacancies arise.
5. Nominations shall not take effect until they are advised to the Clerk in writing; the Clerk shall maintain and publish a list of members and standing attendees, including any directed by the Chair or the SCIBE, together with these Terms of Reference.

6. Chair and Vice-Chair

- a) The Chair of the Committee, as nominated by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, and agreed by the Senate, is the Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life).
- b) The Vice-Chair of the Committee, as nominated by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, and agreed by the Senate, is the Associate Principal (Student Learning Experience) and shall act as Chair in the absence of the Chair.
- c) In the absence of both the Chair and the Vice-Chair from any given meeting, those members present shall appoint one of their number as Chair for that particular meeting.

7. Equality and Diversity in Membership

The Committee exercises its responsibility, as far as possible, to promote diversity of representation within its membership and the membership of any working group or committee established by the Committee. The Committee will also act, in carrying out the business of the Committee, to promote equality of opportunity for all.

8. Quorum and Voting

- a) The quorum necessary to transact business is **five** members, at least two of whom shall be Directors of Learning and Teaching, and at least two of whom must be members of the Senate. In accordance with Statute Five, paragraph 4(b), the quorum of any Committee of the Senate exercising delegated powers shall include at least two members of the Senate.
- b) Members who are participating in a meeting by means of audio-visual conferencing or other means enabling them to speak with and be heard by all members present at the meeting simultaneously shall be deemed to be present at the meeting and to count towards the quorum.
- c) Normal practice is that wherever possible decisions shall be reached through consensus.
- d) All members of the Committee are entitled to vote in any vote of the Committee except:
 - c1) when the Committee is required to vote on the exercising of delegated powers of the Senate, those persons present who are not Senators shall be invited to abstain from voting³.
 - c2) when the committee is required to vote on a matter that is solely under the purview of the University Executive, then only those persons who are members because of their executive positions shall be eligible to vote.
- e) The Chair shall rule on instances where a vote is required, and whether any matter under consideration pertains to the exercising of delegated powers of the Senate, or whether a matter is solely under the purview of the University Executive.
- f) A person invited to be 'in attendance' at one or more meetings of the Committee is not entitled to vote.
- g) The Chair has a deliberative vote and a casting vote.

³ A change to the Statute shall be proposed in due course to govern this situation

9. Attendance at meetings

- a) The Committee may co-opt members as appropriate for a specified period of time and report such co-options to the Senate and the UE at the earliest opportunity.
- b) In addition to the members, and those normally 'in attendance', other colleagues may at the discretion of the Chair be invited to attend meetings on an ad-hoc basis for particular agenda items, and to contribute to discussions at the discretion of the Chair.
- c) The Committee maintains a record of attendance at each of its meetings and reports this information in accordance with the Attendance Policy.

10. Forward Planning

- a) The Committee maintains a list of Standing Agenda Items and an annual schedule of activities.
- b) The Committee sets dates for its ordinary meetings two years in advance.
- c) As part of its annual year-end self-assessment, the Committee reviews its performance in fulfilling its Remit, and considers possible modifications to its Terms of Reference. This also gives opportunity to review the Composition (including the gender balance of its membership, and the opportunity to receive contributions from the University's different campuses), and to submit recommendations as appropriate to the Senate and to the UE.

11. Principles of Operation

In fulfilling its terms of reference, the Committee shall follow the principles as agreed by the Senate to enhance academic governance seeking:

- a) closer alignment between the decision-making structure and the University's strategic objectives, to ensure that the decision making structures are fit for the delivery of the strategy;
- b) a more efficient approach to the decision making process, leading to clearer lines of reporting and accountability, a reduction in time taken to reach business-critical decisions, and high quality outcomes;
- c) main committees should focus on matters of strategy and policy, with operational matters being dealt with by the relevant colleagues in consultation with ad hoc working groups as required;
- d) minimisation of business considered by numerous different groups and with appropriate accountability for decisions taken;
- e) an assumption that decisions will be reached by consensus wherever possible;
- f) an assumption that each Committee will address business internationally;
- g) appropriate delineation between governance and management;
- h) the papers coming forward to committees should contain clear, evidence-based proposals for consideration;
- i) greater use should be made of IT facilities to reduce the amount of paper being circulated, with members of committees and others being able to access committee papers on a local intranet with appropriate access authorisation; and
- j) effective communication of decisions to all relevant parties throughout the University.

12. Sub-committees and Short-life working groups of the Committee

The Committee is empowered to create such sub-committees and short-life working groups as are necessary to fulfil its responsibilities. The Committee shall inform the Senate and UE of the creation, on-going work, and disbanding of any sub-committees and short-life working groups.

The Senate must approve the Terms of Reference of any standing sub-committee that is to exercise delegated powers of the Senate.

From academic session 2023-24, this Committee is noted to have one sub-committee:

- The **Learning and Teaching Academic Operations Committee (LTAOC)**

(Note: LTAOC has several groups reporting to it, including Digital Learning Groups, the Academic Integrity Group, the Global Student Experience and Satisfaction Group and the two Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fora in Dubai and Malaysia). The University Committee for Learning and Teaching shall keep that position under review.

13. Frequency of meetings

- The Committee normally meets five times each Academic Year in advance of meetings of the Senate.
- The Chair of the Committee may choose to hold periodic strategy days consistent with the strategic function of the Committee.
- Additional meetings (including meetings held in conjunction with other bodies) may be required – with the approval by the Chair – for more detailed consideration of particular items.
- Changes to arrangements, such as cancellation, rescheduling or additional meetings will be notified to members by the Clerk as soon as possible, and normally within not less than five working days of the scheduled meeting date.

14. Lifespan and Effectiveness of the Committee

This is an established Committee of the Senate and its lifespan is ongoing.

An annual year-end self-assessment is conducted, with a formal review of effectiveness every five years.

15. Actions that may be taken by the Committee

The Committee may:

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| • Approve | • Endorse |
| • Note | • Recommend |
| • Receive | • Reject |
| • Consider | • Ratify |

16. Minutes

- Minutes of each meeting are distributed to members within two weeks of the meeting. The Chair approves the content of minutes before release.
- The minutes are presented to the next ordinary meeting of the Senate and to the next business meeting of the UE, with any matters for consideration and/or approval highlighted in a cover paper.
- The Committee's agenda and minutes are published on the University Intranet
- Agendas, minutes and papers are held electronically by the Clerk to the Committee.
- The Committee has traditional/formal minutes in accordance with internal University guidance on style and requirements regarding Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation.
- The agendas, papers and minutes for all meetings should be copied to the Head of Heritage and Information Governance for archiving purposes.

17. Resources

Clerk – To be confirmed, Governance Officer, Governance and Legal Services

Admin support - Allocated from within the Policy and Governance divisions of the Governance and Legal Services Directorate

Meetings - Normally six meetings per session