



STANDING ORDERS OF THE SENATE

Approved by Senate on 4 December 2023

Contents

1	The application of these Standing Orders.....	3
2	Definitions.....	3
3	Executive Officer of the Senate and Senate Committees	4
4	Agenda items.....	4
5	Items for Senate from Senate Committees	4
6	Order of Senate Business.....	4
7	Attendance at meetings.....	5
8	Electronic attendance.....	5
9	Conduct of business.....	6
10	Decision making.....	6
11	Operation of electronic equipment during meetings	7
12	Decisions by circular	7
13	Relationship between Senate Committees	8
14	Issues not dealt with by these Standing Orders	8
15	Application of Formal Rules of Debate	8
16	Suspension of Standing Orders	8
17	Amendments to Standing Orders	8
Schedule 1 – Formal rules of debate.....		9
18	Formal rules of debate.....	9

- Note: The [Senate Regulations](#) includes information regarding the following matters relevant to these Standing Orders:
- (a) Senate committees
 - (b) Calling of special meetings
 - (c) Notice of meetings
 - (d) Adjourning and cancelling meetings
 - (e) Quorum
 - (f) Minutes
 - (g) End of year arrangements

1 The application of these Standing Orders

- (1) These Standing Orders govern the procedures of the Senate.
- (2) Unless otherwise provided, these Standing Orders apply to the Senate and all Senate Committees, and shall be construed subject to the [University of Western Australia Act 1911](#) (WA), the [University of Western Australia Statute](#) and the [Senate Regulations](#).
- (3) In applying these Standing Orders to a Senate Committee, references in these Standing Orders to —
 - (a) the 'Senate' are instead to be construed as references to the relevant committee;
 - (b) a "Member" is instead to be construed as a reference to a member of the relevant committee; and
 - (c) to the 'University Secretary' are instead to be construed as references to the relevant Executive Officer or Secretary to the relevant committee.

2 Definitions

In these Standing Orders, unless the contrary intention appears —

Absolute Majority has the meaning given in regulation 4(2) of the [Senate Regulations](#).

Academic Board Regulations means the Academic Board Regulations agreed by Senate on 9 December 2019, as amended, or replaced, from time to time.

Act means the [University of Western Australia Act 1911](#) (WA).

Closed Session has the meaning given in standing order 9(1)(b).

Deadline means the date and time of the deadline for consideration and determination of a matter the subject of a decision by circular, which is to be between two (2) and five (5) University Working Days.

Electronic Attendees means people who attend a Senate meeting by electronic means.

An **Invitee** is a person who is not a Member and who attends a Senate meeting in accordance with standing order 7(3). **Invitees** means more than one Invitee.

Formal Rules of Debate are the rules set out in Schedule 1.

Member means a member of the Senate.

Members present includes, subject to standing order 10(2), Members attending the meeting by electronic means.

An **Observer** is an interested member of the University Community who is not a Member and who attends a Senate meeting in accordance with standing order 7(c). **Observers** means more than one Observer.

Open Session has the meaning given in standing order 9(1)(a).

Senate Committee means a committee or sub-committee of the Senate.

Senate Regulations means the Senate Regulations agreed by Senate on 9 December 2019, as amended, or replaced, from time to time.

Statute means the [University of Western Australia Statute](#).

Capitalised words and phrases which are used in these Standing Orders and which are not defined above will have the meaning which is given to them in the Act and in the Statute, unless the context in which those words and phrases have been used in these Standing Orders indicates otherwise.

If there is an inconsistency between the meaning given to a capitalised word or phrase in the Act and the meaning given to it in the Statute, then the meaning given to it in the Act will prevail over the meaning given to it in the Statute to the extent of that inconsistency.

If the context in which a capitalised word or phrase is used in these Standing Orders indicates that it should be given a meaning which is inconsistent with its meaning in the Act or in the Statute (subject to the rules above), then it must be given its natural meaning in these Standing Orders.

3 Executive Officer of the Senate and Senate Committees

- (1) The University Secretary is the Executive Officer of the Senate.
- (2) Unless otherwise resolved by Senate, the University Secretary, or nominee as approved by the Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor, is Executive Officer to each Senate Committee.

4 Agenda items

- (1) Subject to (2), an item for decision or discussion by the Senate, report or other business to be considered at a Senate meeting must be submitted in writing to the Executive Officer ten (10) University Working Days before the meeting (published Agenda Cut-off Date).
- (2) Matters submitted after the time period specified in (1) may only be considered if the Chair considers it to be urgent.

5 Items for Senate from Senate Committees

- (1) Standing Order 5 does not apply to committees or sub-committees of the Academic Board.
- (2) Following each meeting of a Senate Committee the following shall be prepared by the relevant Chair and tabled at the next Senate meeting for noting –
 - (a) a summary of the major issues discussed and any concerns held by the Senate Committee; and
 - (b) the minutes of the Senate Committee.
- (3) Any items from Senate Committees which are for the information of Senate, or which contain recommendations to the Senate, or which require discussion or approval by the Senate, must be forwarded to the University Secretary as soon as possible.

6 Order of Senate Business

- (1) The order of business for an ordinary meeting of the Senate must be set out in the agenda in the following three parts –
 - (a) Part 1: Items for discussion/decision to be considered in Closed Session;
 - (b) Part 2: Items for discussion/decision in Open Session;
 - (c) Part 3: Items for decision to be taken '*en bloc*'; and
 - (d) Part 4: Items for communication to be taken '*en bloc*'.
- (2) Any Member may ask, either before or at the beginning of the meeting, that an item in Parts 3 or 4 be taken for discussion after completion of Part 2. The Chair, in consultation with the University Secretary, will determine the order in which the transferred item(s) will be considered and whether it will be taken in Closed or Open Session.
- (3) The agendas for ordinary meetings include any or all of the following, allocated appropriately to

Part 1, 2, 3 and 4, in an order to be determined by the Chair —

- (a) amendment and confirmation and signature by the Chair of the minutes of the previous meeting;
- (b) matters arising out of the minutes of the previous meeting;
- (c) reports of the Vice-Chancellor;
- (d) reports of Senate Committees;
- (e) business brought forward by officers of the University;
- (f) reporting of appointments and promotions;
- (g) conferring of degrees, diplomas and certificates; and
- (h) notices of motion, adjourned business and other business raised by Members.

7 Attendance at meetings

- (1) Members are expected to attend as many meetings of the Senate as possible, and —
 - (a) must submit a formal apology to the Executive Officer if they will be unable to attend a meeting; and
 - (b) must seek leave of absence from the Senate if they will be absent for more than three consecutive meetings.
- (2) The Executive Officer must report formally to Senate if a Member is absent for more than —
 - (a) three (3) consecutive meetings without Senate's approval of the leave of absence; or
 - (b) fifty per cent (50%) of the meetings held in any year.
- (3) Invitees —
 - (a) may attend a Senate meeting if invited by the Chair to report on, discuss or answer questions with respect to particular items on the agenda;
 - (b) may be a regular ("standing") Invitee or simply an Invitee for a particular item or items; and
 - (c) may participate in discussions when invited by the Chair, but is not eligible to vote.
- (4) An Observer —
 - (a) may attend Senate meetings for items of business taken in Open Session, provided that they have notified the Executive Officer at least two (2) University Working Days before the meeting and provided that there is seating capacity for them to do so; and
 - (b) may not participate in discussions or vote.

8 Electronic attendance

- (1) Members and those invited to attend a Senate meeting are normally expected to be in physical attendance at meetings.
- (2) In exceptional circumstances —
 - a. a Member; or
 - b. an Invitee,

who is not able to physically attend a Senate meeting may participate in that meeting by electronic means where —

- (a) that Member or Invitee submits a written request to attend the meeting by electronic means, to the Executive Officer at least two (2) University Working Days before the meeting and their request is approved by the Chair; or
- (b) in circumstances where the Chair considers it is not possible to give at least two (2) University Working Days' notice, it is approved at the discretion of the Chair.

- (3) Where a Member is permitted to participate in the meeting for specific items by electronic means, it is subject to the following conditions —
 - (a) the means of electronic communication to be used is at the discretion of the Chair;
 - (b) Electronic Attendees are expected to have read the agenda papers and to have access to suitable electronic means for receiving tabled documents;
 - (c) the Chair must acknowledge the arrival and departure of Electronic Attendees; and
 - (d) attendance at the meeting by electronic means must be recorded as such in the minutes.
- (4) Observers are not permitted to attend by electronic means.

9 Conduct of business

- (1) Senate business is conducted in the following modes —
 - (a) **‘Open Session’** during which the following may attend —
 - (i) Members;
 - (ii) the University Secretary;
 - (iii) Invitees; and
 - (iv) Observers; and
 - (b) **‘Closed Session’** during which —
 - (i) Observers are not permitted to attend;
 - (ii) unless otherwise determined by the Chair, Invitees are only permitted to attend if they were invited to attend the Senate meeting in respect of particular item(s) that are being discussed in Closed Session, and they may only attend Closed Session while those particular item(s) are discussed; and
 - (iii) the Chair otherwise determines which Members should remain in attendance.
- (2) The Senate may move into or out of ‘Closed Session’ at any stage of a meeting at the discretion of the Chair.
- (3) The Senate will consider matters in the order as specified in the agenda unless the Chair determines otherwise.
- (4) A Member or Invitee may take any incidental question that is directed to them at a Senate meeting on notice if they believe they are unable to reply adequately at short notice.
- (5) Subject to (6), a Member is not permitted to introduce a subject for discussion at a Senate meeting which is not on the agenda for that meeting, unless two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the Members present at that meeting agree to permit this.
- (6) At a special meeting, only the business specified in the agenda may be considered.

10 Decision making

- (1) At a meeting of Senate, all questions are to be decided by the majority of the Members present and voting on the voices or by a show of hands, unless —
 - (a) the matter is otherwise required to be conducted by ballot;
 - (b) a ballot is requested at the meeting by at least five Members;
 - (c) an Absolute Majority is required; or
 - (d) the Act, Statute, Senate Regulations, Academic Board Regulations or these Standing Orders require otherwise.
- (2) If a question is to be decided by a ballot, any Member permitted to attend by electronic means in accordance with standing order 8 may only vote if they have available a suitable mechanism for casting their vote which is approved by the Chair.

- (3) Subject to standing order 12(7), the Chair has a vote, and in the case of an equality of votes, a casting vote.
- (4) Unless the question is decided by ballot, Members may require the votes on a question be recorded in the minutes and/or require that their opposition to a motion which is carried be recorded by name in the minutes.
- (5) Decisions by circular are governed by standing order 12.

11 Operation of electronic equipment during meetings

- (1) Members and Invitees may use a laptop/notebook computer or tablet to access and view the agenda for a Senate meeting and/or to take notes during a Senate meeting, but such equipment must not be used during the meeting for any other purpose.
- (2) Members and Invitees must not operate any other electronic equipment (including mobile phones) during a meeting of the Senate unless they have obtained the prior permission of the Chair.
- (3) The Chair must advise the Senate of any approvals which have been given under (2).

12 Decisions by circular

- (1) In urgent or exceptional circumstances, the Chair may authorise for matters to be considered and decided by the Senate between meetings by way of circular, provided that —
 - (a) the Chair is satisfied that there is a clear reason for dealing with the matter before the next meeting;
 - (b) the materials contain a clear recommendation from the Chair on what decision should be taken; and
 - (c) Members are given the option of requesting that the matter(s) concerned be deferred for discussion and decision at the next meeting. The Member must submit their request in writing to the Executive Officer by the Deadline,
- (2) Responses to a circular
 - (a) must be made by the Deadline and by the mechanism requested by the Executive Officer; and
 - (b) should contain both the text of the motion in question and the Member's vote on that motion.
- (3) No amendments can be proposed to a circular resolution.
- (4) A Member who has a material personal interest in a matter, as defined in Schedule 1 Division 2 to the Act, is to disclose the nature of the interest. The Member must make the disclosure in writing to the Executive Officer before the Deadline.
- (5) If, before the Deadline —
 - (a) in the case of a proposed resolution before the Senate – four Members give written notice to the Executive Officer that the matter should be held over to the next meeting; or
 - (b) in the case of a Senate Committee – not less than 20% of the total number of Members (excluding any unfilled vacancies) of the committee give written notice to the Executive Officer that the matter should be held over to the next meeting,the matter is to be held over to the next meeting.
- (6) Subject to (5), if before the Deadline an Absolute Majority of Members vote in favour of the proposed resolution, the proposed resolution —
 - (a) is taken to be carried; and
 - (b) is taken, for all purposes, to be a decision of the Senate or Senate Committee, as the case may be.
- (7) The Chair does not have a casting vote.

- (8) Once the Executive Officer has been advised of the outcome of the circular resolution, it should be communicated to all Members.
- (9) The following must be minuted and confirmed as part of the next meeting —
 - (a) the details and outcome of the circular resolution; and
 - (b) any disclosure made under (4).

13 Relationship between Senate Committees

Where there is a perceived overlap of responsibilities between Senate Committees the respective Chairs may, after consulting with the University Secretary, determine the most appropriate Senate Committee to consider the item. The Chairs will report the result of such discussions to Senate.

14 Issues not dealt with by these Standing Orders

Matters regarding the proceedings of the Senate which are not dealt with in these Standing Orders, are to be resolved by the Chair in their absolute discretion and the Chair's decisions on such matters is final.

15 Application of Formal Rules of Debate

- (1) The business of Senate is normally conducted through informal discussion based on the principles set out in the [Senate Code](#) and at the discretion of the Chair.
- (2) The Senate may resolve to apply the Formal Rules of Debate to an item of business.
- (3) Unless the Senate resolves that the Formal Rules of Debate apply, they have no application.

16 Suspension of Standing Orders

Any of the Formal Rules of Debate and standing order 6 may be temporarily suspended during a meeting by motion by a Member with or without notice, if agreed to by the majority of Members present at the time.

17 Amendments to Standing Orders

Amendments to these Standing Orders must be approved by an Absolute Majority of Senate.

Schedule 1 – Formal rules of debate

18 Formal rules of debate

Priority of motions from committees

- (1) A motion which has been brought forward as part of a committee report has precedence over any other motion on the issue under consideration and must be dealt with first.

Speaking during debates

- (2) If the Chair wishes to take part in a debate, then they may temporarily vacate the role of Chair and ask another Member to act as Chair.
- (3) A Member wishing to speak must address the Chair and may speak when called upon by the Chair.
- (4) When two or more Members indicate that they wish to speak, then the Chair must invite them to do so in the order in which, in the Chair's opinion, they first indicated their wish to speak.
- (5) A Member may generally only speak once during a debate, and is only permitted to speak more than once during a debate where the Member —
 - (a) is exercising their right of reply;
 - (b) asserts they have been misrepresented or misunderstood;
 - (c) proposes a further amendment following the defeat of an amendment; or
 - (d) is permitted by the Chair.
- (6) No Member may speak to any question after it has been voted on.

Absence of Member moving motion

- (7) A Member may move a motion on behalf of an absent Member where the absent Member —
 - (a) has given prior notice of the motion in accordance with standing order 4 ; or
 - (b) has authorised the Member in writing to move the motion on their behalf.

Amending and withdrawing motions

- (8) A motion may be amended or withdrawn by the Member who moves that motion with the leave of the Senate.
- (9) When an amendment of a motion is proposed, then that motion to amend must be treated as though it were an original motion.
- (10) When amendments have been proposed and defeated or withdrawn, then the motion must be put as originally proposed.

Right of reply

- (11) A Member who has made a substantive motion has a right of reply. A Member who has moved an amendment does not have a right of reply.
- (12) A Member who asserts that they have been misrepresented or misunderstood must be immediately allowed to explain.

Motions

- (13) A motion or amendment must not be discussed other than by the Member who proposed that motion or amendment, nor put to the vote, unless it has been seconded by another Member.

- (14) A motion may be superseded by either —
- (a) a motion 'that the Senate proceed to the next business' and such motion is seconded; or
 - (b) a motion 'that the Senate now adjourn' and such motion is seconded.

Close of debate

- (15) A debate may be closed by the motion 'that the question be now put', being proposed, seconded, and carried, in which case the question must be put immediately to a vote without amendment or debate.

Approval and Implementation:

Approval Authority: Senate
Responsible Officer(s): University Secretary

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