



***Frequently Asked Questions:
Committee on Academic Policy and Programs***

What is the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs?

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) is a standing committee of the Academic Board.

What are the responsibilities of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs?

The Committee's responsibilities are stated in its terms of reference. The Committee "has general responsibility for policy on, and for monitoring, the quality of education and the research activities of the University.

"In fulfilling this responsibility, the Committee oversees policy matters such as admissions, awards, academic regulations, grading practices, research and the products of research, and academic services. Some policy issues concern only one academic division. Others are matters of University-wide concern.

"The Committee is responsible for reviewing and, at times, approving, changes to admission and program regulations, curriculum, degree requirements and academic regulations."

In particular, AP&P either approves or recommends approval of the following:

- Amendments to University-wide policy on academic matters and amendments to divisional academic policies and practices;
- New academic programs, including joint programs with external institutions, and their academic content and requirements, and the closure of academic programs;
- Major changes in academic regulations;
- The establishment and closure of diploma and post-secondary certificate programs, as required by the Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs;
- Establishment, amendment or rescission of University-wide policy with respect to grading practices and examinations;
- Policy on academic services (which include the Library and information and computing services);
- Policy on research;
- Policy on earned degrees, diplomas and certificates;
- Policy on admissions and awards.

What are the responsibilities of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs? (Cont'd)

In addition to its responsibilities for consideration of policies and programs, the Committee plays a key role in the achievement of the Governing Council's responsibility for quality assessment to ensure the excellence of all of the University's academic programs. The revised *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units*, approved in 2010, states that the Governing Council is responsible for "ensuring that University administration is monitoring the quality of academic programs and units and is taking the necessary steps to address problems and achieving improvements." The achievement of that Governing Council responsibility begins with the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, which is responsible for "undertaking a comprehensive overview of review results and administrative responses."

MEMBERSHIP***Who are the members of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs?***

The Committee has 31 members:

- 1 administrative staff member;
- 2 alumni or government appointees to the Governing Council;
- 6 students;
- 16 teaching staff;
- 2 voting assessors selected by the President;
- *ex officio*: the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Council, Chancellor, President ¹

Of the 31 members, usually about four are members of the Governing Council, in addition to the four *ex officio* members. The other members of the Committee must be members of the Academic Board.

How are members appointed?

In May, members of the Governing Council and members of the Academic Board for the coming governance year are invited to submit their Committee preferences.

Members of the Governing Council are appointed to Boards and Committees by the Governing Council on the recommendation of its Executive Committee.

Members of the Academic Board who are not members of the Governing Council are appointed to the Committee by the Academic Board on the recommendation of the Academic Board Striking Committee (or nominating committee).

¹ The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Council, the Chancellor, and the President are *ex officio* members of all Governing Council Boards and Committees.

How long do members serve on the Committee?

Membership on the Committee is for a one-year term, normally July 1 to June 30. Members are eligible for reappointment. There is no maximum term, so long as members continue to serve as members of either the Academic Board or the Governing Council.

How are the Chair and Vice-Chair appointed?

The Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed by the Academic Board on the recommendation of its Striking Committee (or nominating committee).

ROLE OF MEMBERS

What is the role of members of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs?

The *University of Toronto Act, 1971*, requires that members of the Governing Council, and, by extension members of its Boards and Committees, “act with diligence, honestly and with good faith in the best interests of the University and University College.” Although members come from various constituencies, they are required to put the interests of the University first, before the interests of the constituency to which they belong.

Members are expected to assess with great care the proposals that come to the Committee. An effective member:

- asks searching questions and contributes thoughtfully to the debate,
- listens to other members and, always,
- considers, when voting, what is in the best interest of the entire University.

What is the role of the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair?

The Chair of the Committee is the Presiding Officer and is responsible for maintaining order and decorum at the meeting. The Chair, on the advice of the Agenda Planning group (see below), sets the agenda and reviews material to come to the Committee to ensure that it will meet members’ needs. During the Committee’s meetings, the Chair rules on all points of order.

The Vice-Chair of the Committee acts for the Chair in her/his absence, participates in the work of the agenda planning group, and carries out such duties as the Chair requests.

What is the role of the Committee’s Assessors?

Assessors are members of the University’s administration who bring items for the Committee’s consideration and provide recommendations for action on those items. The Committee has **two voting assessors**,

- the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, who is the senior assessor, and
- the Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education

There are **two non-voting assessors**:

- the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, and
- the Executive Director, Enrolment Services, and University Registrar.

The non-voting assessors may choose to attend or not attend each meeting, depending on the business on the agenda.

MEETINGS

How often does the Committee meet?

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs is scheduled to meet six times per year – once in every six- to seven-week governance cycle.

When does the Committee meet?

Meetings are usually scheduled on Tuesday at 4:10 p.m.

Where does the Committee meet?

Meetings are usually held in the Council Chamber on the second floor of Simcoe Hall, 27 King’s College Circle, St. George Campus.

How long are AP&P meetings?

The meetings are usually completed within 2 hours of the starting time. (Indeed, the Committee has a tradition of adopting a motion at the beginning of each meeting to require adjournment after no more than two hours – or a Committee resolution to continue longer.)

Can anyone attend meetings?

Yes (subject only to room capacity, which has not been a problem). Meetings are normally held in open session.

MEETING AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION

Who sets the agenda of the Committee?

Items are brought to the Committee by its assessors. Items from Faculty Councils are conveyed to the Committee by the assessors.

An agenda planning group reviews the draft agenda and documentation before they are sent to the Committee. Members of the group include the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the Assessors and the Committee Secretary. This group looks at the business that is to come forward, and it advises the Chair: (a) whether each item is ready to proceed to the Committee, and (b) about the order of the agenda. The group may also provide advice about the documentation for the various items and their presentation. It also advises the Chair about the appropriate level of approval for each proposal, pursuant to the terms of reference: approval by the administration with a report to the Committee for information, approval by the Committee, approval by the Academic Board on the recommendation of the Committee, approval by the Academic Board with confirmation by the Executive Committee of Governing Council, or recommendation by the Academic Board to the Governing Council. Where a higher level of approval is required, the decision on the appropriate level may be made by the Agenda Committee of the Academic Board or the Executive Committee of the Governing Council.

When and how is meeting documentation made available to members?

Every effort is made to ensure that documentation is ready for members one full week before the Committee meeting. Documents are posted on the Board Books web portal.

Is meeting documentation available to those who are not members of the Committee?

The agenda and documentation are available on the Governing Council website.

What should members do if they have major questions or concerns about the documentation or items on the agenda?

Members with substantial questions and concerns are urged to be in touch with the appropriate assessor well in advance of the meeting. The assessor's name and contact information is shown on the cover page for the item. Please remember, that all members are charged by the *University of Toronto Act* to “act with diligence, honestly and with good faith in the best interests of the University.” The objective is to obtain information and understanding before the item is considered to facilitate the best, most efficient and most effective debate. The objective is not to score debating points. There will frequently be disagreements at meetings, but they are best resolved in a well-informed debate in a “no surprises” environment.

Where members wish to have historical or other background information, the Secretary can assist by providing copies of, or web references to, relevant policies, reports of previous Committee meetings, or other public documents that are on file in the Governing Council Office or on the Governing Council web-site.

MEETING PROCEDURES

What are the Rules of Order for meetings of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs?

Committee meetings are conducted ‘by such rules of order as are considered just and expedient’ by the Chair and the Committee. When deemed appropriate, the Chair may invoke the formal rules of the Governing Council as contained in Sections 47 – 75 of *By-Law Number 2* of the Governing Council

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/bylaw2.pdf>

Who may speak at meetings of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs?

Usually, only members of the Committee speak during meetings, once they have been recognized by the Chair. The discussion should be through the Chair. Cross-talk is not useful in carrying out the business of the Committee.

A substantial proportion of the Committee’s work arises from proposals from the academic divisions. When such proposals are on the agenda, the Dean or another appropriate representative is invited to attend the Committee’s meeting. While the proposal will be presented to the Committee by an assessor, the Chair will often invite the representative to speak to the proposal or to answer questions about it.

The assessors may also invite other non-member experts to attend meetings to assist the Committee in dealing with other matters. They too may be invited to speak to proposals or to answer questions.

In addition, the Chair may, at her discretion, recognize members of the Academic Board or the Governing Council who are in attendance, and invite them to ask questions or to speak. Such members are guests and are asked to sit with the guests and not at the table.

Is there an opportunity for other non-members to address the Committee?

“The most effective way [for non-members] to communicate with members is in writing. Written communications on matters before Boards and committees will be distributed by the Governing Council Secretariat with regular agenda material if received at least 8 days prior to the meeting date. Written communications received after this time will be placed on the table and subsequently distributed to members not in attendance.”²

² *Procedures for Non-Members to Address Governing Council, Its Boards and Committees*, revised version approved March 9, 1995.

Is there an opportunity for other non-members to address the Committee? (Cont'd)

Non-members may, however, submit a request to speak to the Committee in accordance with *Procedures for Non-members to Address Governing Council, its Boards and Committees*: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/procedureaddgcmar91995.pdf>

A non-member may make a request to the Chair by contacting the Committee Secretary well in advance of the meeting.

Alternatively, a member may make a motion to permit a non-member to address the Committee. To carry, such a motion must be supported by two thirds of the members present and voting. Speaking time for non-members, like members, is limited to no more than five minutes.

Who is entitled to vote on a proposal at the Committee meeting?

Only members of the Committee may vote.

Are the number of votes in favour and opposed to the motion recorded in the minutes?

Votes are not usually recorded. The number of votes for and against a proposal will be recorded if three members so request before the vote is called. All decisions are the decisions of the Committee as a whole, and names of members voting for and against are not recorded. (For the same reason, the names of speakers – apart from the assessors or non-members – are not recorded in the reports of the Committee's discussions.)

How are items for approval brought forward to the Committee?

Items for approval may concern University-wide policies and practices. Such items are brought to the Committee by one of the assessors. Items may also concern only one academic division, and come to the Committee following their favourable consideration by a Faculty or other divisional council.

In all cases, items are reviewed by the appropriate assessor, who prepares a cover memo that includes jurisdictional information, highlights of the proposal, and the recommended action.

What choices of action does the Committee have when considering a proposal?

The Committee will normally exercise one of three options when considering a proposal for approval:

- approve the proposal or recommend it to the Academic Board for approval;
- refer the proposal back for further consideration of some particular aspect(s), or
- reject the proposal. This is done very rarely.

That limitation is firm with respect to matters from divisional councils. Section 3 of the Terms of Reference state that “the Committee will not normally amend proposals forwarded by a divisional council unless the amendment(s) is/are deemed by the Chair or the senior Presidential assessor to be minor. Such proposals may be accepted, rejected, or referred back to the divisional council.”

Following the Governing Council’s approval of the “Report of the Chairman’s Advisory Committee on Governance” (the Balfour Report) in 1988, the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs does have the right to amend proposals from an assessor concerning University-wide policy and practices. Given the responsibility of the Committee’s assessors for developing proposals, that right to amend a proposal has not to date been exercised. Doing so would be a very serious step, after only a brief discussion by the Committee, when the original proposal has been the outcome of very careful work by experts in the senior administration of the University. A more usual step by a member with serious concerns about a proposal would be a motion to refer it back to the assessor with a view to considering the concern.

Does the Committee approve proposals or only recommend them to a higher level?

Some matters may be approved by the Committee. Some require the approval of the Academic Board, on the recommendation of the Committee. In some cases, those proposals must be confirmed by the Executive Committee of the Governing Council. Still other matters require the approval of the full Governing Council on the recommendation of the Committee and then the Academic Board.

The background is as follows. For many matters, the *University of Toronto Act, 1971*, allows delegation of the Governing Council’s authority to Boards and Committees only if a majority of members of the Board or Committee are members of the Governing Council. Neither the Academic Board nor the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs meets that condition. For those matters, the Committee makes a recommendation to the Academic Board. In some cases, the Academic Board may approve a recommendation, with the confirmation of the Executive Committee of Governing Council, which consists solely of members of the Council. In other cases, the Academic Board makes a recommendation to the full Governing Council.

Does the Committee approve proposals or only recommend them to a higher level? (Cont'd)

For many important academic matters, however, the *Act* does permit the delegation of authority. They include:

- examinations;
- fellowships, scholarships, and other student awards;
- admission standards;
- curricula;
- academic requirements.

Proposals that deal exclusively with those matters may be approved by the Committee or recommended for final approval by the Academic Board, as set out in the terms of reference.

How are items for information dealt with by the Committee?

Some items come before the Committee for information rather than approval. Such reports are, nonetheless, important. They are the key means for the Committee to monitor the quality of the University's academic programs, its research efforts, and the work of the administration. Some reports are intended to keep the Committee informed of current issues and developments.

Members are invited to ask questions about the report or to ask for discussion of an aspect(s) of the report, and the Committee may tender advice to the appropriate assessor. If there are concerns, the Committee may request a follow-up report. Other than that, no formal action is required from the Committee.

Some of the more routine "for information" reports may simply be distributed with the agenda package and, at the meeting, no review or introduction will be given by the assessor. That would not, however, preclude questions or discussion.

Can an individual member propose a matter for consideration by the Committee?

Proposals concerning University-wide policies and procedures are normally brought to the Committee by one of its assessors.

Therefore, a member who wishes to have such a matter considered by the Committee most often proceeds with one or two informal steps. First, a member could ask the Secretary whether the matter has been before the Committee recently, and obtain information on any previous discussions and decisions. Then, the member should get in touch with the appropriate assessor to discuss the matter. The assessor may well wish to consider action based on the member's suggestion or alternatively explain the reasons for continuing the current practice.

Can an individual member propose a matter for consideration by the Committee? (Cont'd)

If, then, a member still wishes to proceed formally to have a matter placed on the agenda, there are a number of ways to do so, provided that the matter is properly within the Committee's terms of reference.

- (a) First, when the annual Calendar of Business is tabled in September, a member may make a motion to add a matter to the Calendar of Business. This would, of course, require a seconder and approval by a majority of the Committee.
- (b) Similarly, at any meeting, a member may make a motion to add an item to the agenda of a future meeting. This would again require a seconder and approval by a majority of the Committee.
- (c) Third, a member may submit a written request, signed by at least 10% of the Committee's members (usually four members) to include a matter on the agenda of the next regular meeting. The request must be submitted to the Secretary prior to the conclusion of the previous meeting. The matter automatically appears on the agenda of the next meeting (subject to the limitation below).
- (d) Fourth, an individual member may present a notice of motion to be considered at the subsequent meeting of the Board. The Chair, with the advice of the agenda planning group (see above), would rule on the disposition of the individual member's notice of motion. The Chair could rule that the motion be considered by the Committee, that it be referred to the administration, that it simply not be considered, or that there be some other appropriate disposition.
- (e) Finally, it is possible to make a motion to add an item to the agenda of a particular meeting. Because the matter would then be considered without notice, such a motion is used only in very unusual circumstances, and it would require the assent of at least two thirds of those present and voting.

Proposals that affect only one division originate with the Council of that division. Just as it would be out of order for the Committee to amend proposals forwarded by a divisional council for Committee approval, so too it would be out of order for the Committee to purport to approve proposals concerning an individual division, which proposals properly originate with the divisional council. Therefore, an individual member may not propose such a matter for the approval of the Committee.

SUPPORT TO THE COMMITTEE

Who provides support to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs and its members?

The Committee is supported by staff from the Governing Council Office. In 2014-15, the Committee Secretary is Patrick F. McNeill (patrick.mcneill@utoronto.ca / 416-978-8428.) He is available to answer members' questions about the Committee's work and to provide additional information about governance at the University .

The Governing Council Office may also be contacted by telephone at 416-978-6576 or by e-mail at governing.council@utoronto.ca.

Information about the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs is available on the web at http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing_Council/bac/APP_1.htm.

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