

Senate governance

Academic year 2024/25

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Introduction and scope

1. For the purposes of this document, governance can be defined as the structures, policies and processes that are in place to assure the setting and maintaining of academic standards and the quality of the student experience. *Senate Governance* sets out how the University's academic governance works in relation to structure, function and operation. It is informed by the Office for Students' Regulatory Framework¹ (including the ongoing conditions of registration) and the Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code for Higher Education².

Academic governance - structure

2. Senate is the body where academic issues are debated and scrutinised. According to the Terms of Reference (see Appendix 1), the Senate has responsibility (under the control and approval of Council) for oversight and assurance of the Academic Endeavour of the University, as set out in Charter and Statutes. It is supported by other committees and a sub-structure below that extends to Faculty and School/Department level. A diagram of the committee structure is shown on the following page:

Senate committees/panels

- University Education Committee (UEC)
- University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC)
- Senate Progression and Conferment Executive (SPACE)
- University Promotions Committee
- Honorary Degrees Committee
- Senate Nominations Committee
- Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression (AFFE) Committee
- Access and Participation Governance Panel

UEC sub-committees

- Quality Enhancement Sub-committee
- Student Experience Sub-committee

URIC Sub-committees

- Doctoral College Board
 - Admission, Progression and Examination Sub-committee (PGR)
- Research Integrity and Governance Committee
 - Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body
 - Non Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act
 - University Ethics Committee

Faculty committees

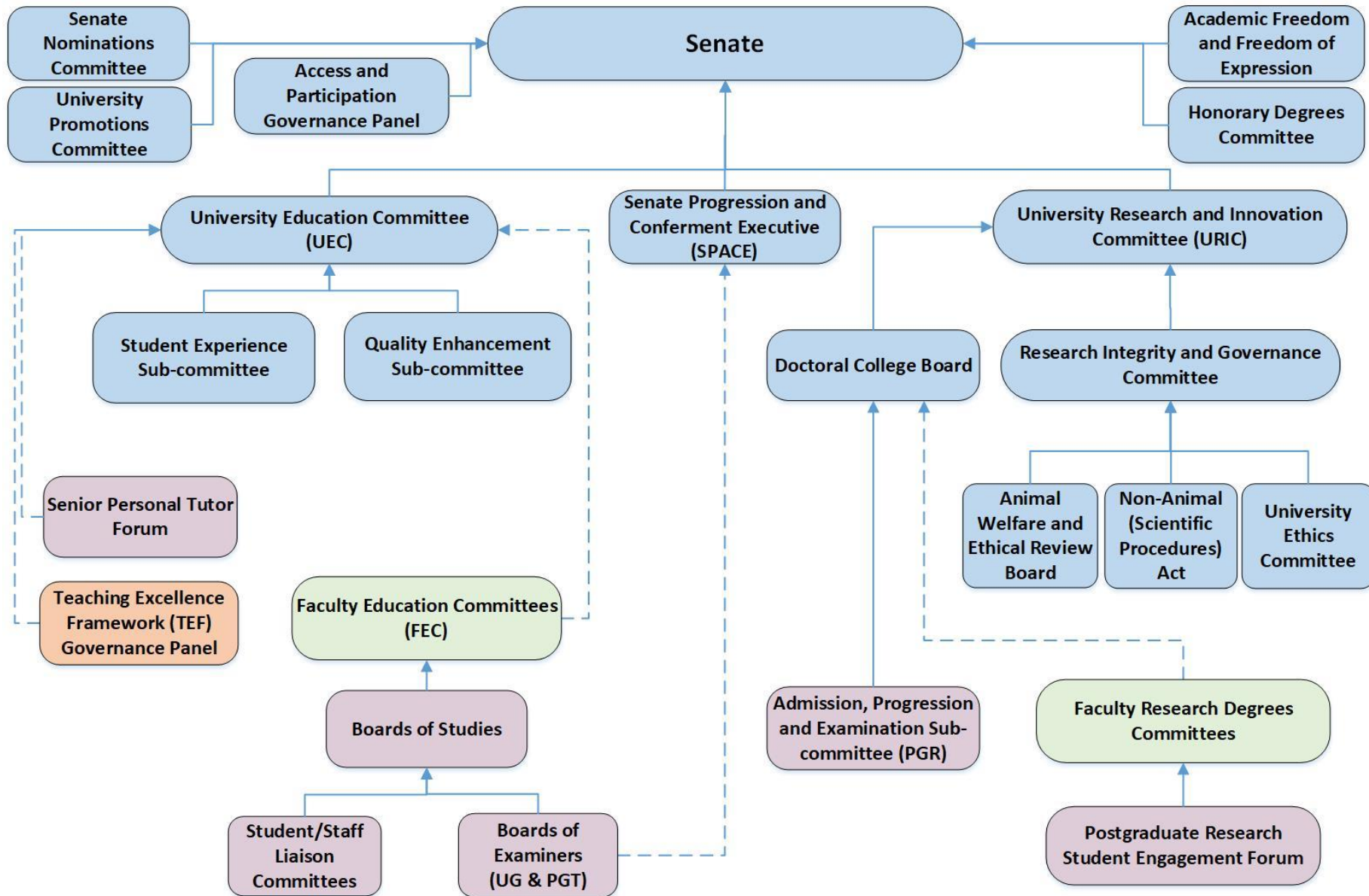
- Faculty Education Committees (FECs)
- Faculty Extraordinary Board of Studies
- Faculty Research Degrees Committees (FRDCs)

School committees

- Boards of Studies
 - Boards of Examiners
 - Student/Staff Liaison Committees
- Postgraduate Research Student Engagement Fora

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/part-v-guidance-on-the-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/>

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code>



Academic governance - function

- 3 The [Charter](#) is the overall instrument of governance of the University and sets the University's objects in the pursuit of learning and the advancement and dissemination of knowledge. The [Statutes](#) and [Ordinances](#) provide detailed information about the running of the University in terms of its governance. They present information on the roles and responsibilities of the officers of the University, including the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor and, also the core statutory bodies and committees.
4. The academic governance structure is responsible for the consideration and approval of academic-related strategies, [Regulations](#), [Codes of practice](#), policy statements and related information and committee terms of reference and membership. Strategies set out the high level approach to achieving a particular set of aims. Regulations provide the framework under which the academic activities of the University are carried out. They are structured into two areas: academic regulations which govern programmes of study, and student regulations which govern student behaviour and procedures for student complaints and appeals. Policy statements clarify the University's position on a particular matter, often prior to developing a *Code of practice*. [Codes of practice](#) set out policy and provide operational advice on how a particular process is carried out. Terms of reference and membership describe the activities of a committee, the limits of its authority and those who attend the committee in a particular capacity.
5. The following table sets out the levels of authority for the approval of the various types of documents.

| Type of document | Considered by³ | Approved by |
|--|---|---|
| New strategy | UEC / URIC | Senate |
| Amendments to existing strategies | UEC / URIC | UEC and/or URIC – Senate informed of amendments |
| Regulations – new and amended | UEC / Doctoral College Board / URIC | Senate |
| Codes of practice and Procedures | UEC Sub-committees / Doctoral College Board | UEC and/or URIC – Senate informed of new Codes and Procedures |
| Policy statements | UEC / URIC | Senate |
| Amendments to terms of reference and membership – UEC and URIC | UEC and URIC | Senate |
| Amendments to terms of reference – UEC sub-committee | Relevant sub-committee | UEC |
| Amendments to terms of reference – URIC sub-committee | Relevant sub-committee | URIC |

³ Depending on the subject, documents are considered by either UEC or URIC/Doctoral College Board or all.

Academic governance - operation

6. Senate's mode of operation and membership are prescribed in the [University Ordinances](#). Within its terms of reference Senate takes oversight of academic matters but delegates responsibility for detailed consideration of policy issues and the management of quality assurance to its sub-committees.
7. The terms of reference and membership for academic governance committees are set out in the Appendices, see paragraph 9 below. Students are represented on all levels of committees in the structure (with the exception of those dealing with examination matters and research management and governance). Further information on student involvement in academic governance and quality assurance is given in the [Code of practice for student engagement](#).

Chairing of Committees and Sub-committees

8. For senior academic staff, the chairing of University-level committees is an expectation of the role. It is normally the case that UEC and URIC are chaired by the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor, who can delegate this role to an Associate Dean as required. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor appoints the chairs of the committee's sub-committees. The chairing of Faculty-level Committees is within the remit of relevant Associate Deans. Staff who chair Boards of Examiners and Boards of Studies are provided with appropriate briefing by the University in support of those roles. In the absence of the Chair, a nominated Vice-Chair assumes the role of Chair.

Terms of reference and membership of Senate substructure committees and groups

9. All Appendices to *Senate Governance* are now published separately on the [Quality Framework website](#), alongside this document. This is to ensure that all relevant information regarding Terms of reference for various committees, sub-committees and groups could be updated more efficiently and accessed directly:

Appendix 1 – Senate

Appendix 2 - University Education Committee

Appendix 3 - Quality Enhancement Sub-committee

Appendix 4 - Student Experience Sub-committee

Appendix 5 – Senate Progression and Conferment Executive

Appendix 6 - University Promotions Committee

Appendix 7 - Honorary Degrees Committee

Appendix 8 – Senate Nominations Committee

Appendix 9 – Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression Committee

Appendix 10 - University Research and Innovation Committee

Appendix 11 – Doctoral College Board

Appendix 12 – Research Integrity and Governance Committee

Appendix 13 - Admission, Progression and Examination Sub-committee

Appendix 14 - Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

Appendix 15 - Non Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (NASPA)

Appendix 16 – University Ethics Committee

Appendix 17 - Faculty Education Committees

Appendix 18 - Faculty Extraordinary Board of Studies

Appendix 19 - Faculty Research Degrees Committees

Appendix 20 - Boards of Studies

Appendix 21 - Boards of Examiners

Appendix 22 - Student/Staff Liaison Committees

Appendix 23 - Faculty Postgraduate Research Student Engagement Forum

Appendix 24 – Access and Participation (APP) Governance Panel

Appendix 25 – Senior Personal Tutor Forum

Appendix 26 – TEF Governance Panel