WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC SENATE - STANDING ORDERS

(as approved by the Academic Senate on 3 July 2026)

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Application

(a) These Standing Orders are made by the Academic Senate ("**Senate**") in accordance with the Academic Senate Charter and apply to all meetings of the Senate, subject to the *Western Sydney University Act 1997* (NSW) ("**Act**") and any By-laws, Rules, or Board resolutions passed specific to the Senate.

(b) These Standing Orders also apply to all meetings of Senate Standing Committees, to the extent they are applicable and are not inconsistent with any directions of the Senate. If so, then these Standing Orders apply as if each Committee Member was a Senate member.

(c) The procedures for the election of Committee members are covered in the Elections Policy.

2 CONVENING MEETINGS

2.1 Ordinary Meetings

(a) Ordinary or Regular Meetings are meeting that are listed in the annual schedule of meetings and published each year. Refer to the Meetings and Procedures section of the Academic Senate Charter

(b) A meeting of the Senate should be no longer than three hours, unless those present agree that the meeting should be extended. A meeting may be extended with the concurrence of a majority of the Committee members present.

(c) If there is unfinished business on the agenda at the time at which a meeting is due to end, or when a meeting is no longer quorate, that business is to be deferred to the next Regular Meeting of the Senate, unless the Senate decides to:

i) adjourn its meeting and reconvene at a later date/time; or

ii) hold an Electronic Meeting ("**e-Meeting**"); or

iii) hold a special meeting to consider the business.

(d) The Chair may cancel a meeting if they are of the opinion that there is insufficient business to justify the holding of a meeting.

(e) A Motion or Recommendation put before the Senate becomes a Resolution, at the date of the meeting.

(f) A Resolution is carried when Committee members are in Consensus of the Motion.

2.2 Additional Meetings

(a) The Senate may hold additional meetings as required:

i) if the Senate decides an additional meeting is necessary;

ii) if the Chair decides that a special meeting is to be held;

iii) at the request of the Vice-Chancellor or Senior Executive members; or

iv) upon the written request of one third of the Committee members of the Senate, addressed to the Secretary specifying the business that the Committee members wish to be considered at the meeting.

(b) An additional meeting held in accordance with clause 2.2(a) is to be held at a time and date determined by the Chair, except in the case of clause 2.2(a)iv), where it is to be held no more than fourteen days after the Secretary receives the request.

2.3 Electronic Meetings ("e-Meetings")

(a) If the Chair forms the view that a matter requires the urgent consideration of the Senate, and there is no meeting imminent, or it is impracticable to convene an additional meeting, Committee members may be consulted in writing via an e-Meeting.

(b) An e-Meeting will remain open for consideration by members for a minimum of five (5) business days. For urgent business that needs an earlier resolution, a clear rationale for the reduced duration will need to be provided by the author of the paper ensuring time for consideration is no less than two (2) working days. The Chair will report to the next Senate meeting and provide reasons whenever the voting period for an e-Meeting is shortened.

(c) Normal quorum rules apply as stipulated in section 4.3 - Quorum i.e. at least one-half (or if one-half is not a whole number, the whole number next higher than one-half) of the total number of Committee members of the Senate or a Senate Standing Committee must vote in the e-Meeting to make it quorate.

(d) Unless otherwise stated, all Motions or Recommendations will be decided by a simple majority of Committee members voting (i.e., 50% of Committee members who vote). The Chair has the discretion to change this to an Absolute Majority (50% of all Committee members eligible to vote) based on the nature of the decision in question, and is required to make this decision in consultation with the Office of Governance Services.

(e) The Chair does not have a casting vote.

(f) A Motion or Recommendation put before the Committee members in writing via an e-Meeting shall become a Resolution of the Senate on the date the Motion is passed.

(g) Where a motion or recommendation is not passed due to quorum or voting requirements not being met, then the matter is to be referred to the next meeting of the Senate for discussion and any Resolution.

(h) In exceptional circumstances, where an e-Meeting is close to achieving a simple majority in favour of a resolution, the voting deadline may be extended by up to 48 hours to allow additional votes to be cast. Any such extension will be determined by the Secretary and subject to the approval of the Chair. The Chair will report to the next Senate meeting and provide reasons whenever the voting period for an e-Meeting is extended.

(i) If one-third of the Senate Committee members submit a written request to the Secretary, asking for the matter to be considered by e-Meeting to be discussed at a Senate meeting, the e-Meeting will be cancelled and the matter will be considered at the earliest available Senate meeting arranged.

(j) A report on the outcome of an e-Meeting will be provided to the next Senate meeting.

3 AGENDAS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

3.1 Agendas and papers

(a) An agenda is a structured list of the items or topics that will be discussed at the meeting.

(b) The Chair will set the agenda for the meeting.

(c) Any business to be actioned at a meeting must be by way of Recommendation included in the agenda for that meeting.

(d) Members of the University community may submit items and documents for inclusion on the agenda only with the consent of the Chair. Any such documents must be submitted to the Secretary at least fourteen (14) days before a Regular Meeting.

(e) If the Chair determines that an item raised by members of the University community or its committees should not be placed on the meeting agenda, the Chair must report the reasons at the meeting.

(f) Items which the Chair considers requiring further report and/or discussion during the meeting are starred on the agenda.

(g) The Senate is to consider items of business in the order in which they are listed on the agenda, unless it decides otherwise, or at the discretion of the Chair.

(h) The Secretary is responsible for preparing and sharing agendas and any supporting papers to Committee members.

(i) Meeting agendas and papers will normally be made available at least five (5) business days ahead of the meeting.

(j) All agendas must set out the time, date, and location of the meeting and the business to be conducted at the meeting.

(k) Late agenda items must be approved by the Chair, who has considered that urgent business that has arisen after the agenda for the meeting was issued.

(l) Late agenda items must be shared no later than two (2) working days before the meeting is to be held.

(m) Only business that is shown on an agenda for a meeting should be considered at that meeting unless, on the Motion of the Chair, the Chair agrees to consider other business of an urgent and important nature.

(n) The sending of information to Committee members following the dissemination of the agenda and original supporting information is at the discretion of the Chair.

(o) The Chair may include Recommendations on an agenda item or additional agenda items, regarding action that the Senate may take in respect of business to be conducted at the meeting.

(p) All agenda and meeting documentation will be distributed via electronic means only.

4 MEETING PROCEDURES

4.1 Attendance

(a) Committee Members are expected to attend all meetings.

(b) If a Committee member is unable to attend a meeting, then they must notify the Secretary as soon as possible and no later than two (2) working days before the meeting is held.

4.2 Apologies and Absences

(a) The Senate notes Apologies and grants a Leave of Absence when a Committee member advises the Secretary in writing of their inability to attend the meeting.

(b) Apologies must be sent to the Secretary in writing via email or by declining the meeting invitation.

(c) Senate records absences when a Committee member is absent, without submitting a notification in writing to the Secretary to advise of their absence.

(d) In accordance with clause (13)c. of the Academic Senate Charter, a person ceases to be a Committee member if they are absent from three consecutive meetings, without submitting their Apologies to the Secretary and/or the Chair.

(e) In the case of elected and appointed Committee members who have been absent for two consecutive meetings, the Senate will consider granting a Leave of Absence when a Committee member seeks leave (in writing) to miss a third consecutive meeting.

(f) If an elected or appointed Committee member has been absent for three consecutive meetings, without Apology or Leave of Absence being granted, that Committee member will be requested to Show Cause as to why their membership should not be discontinued. The Chair will consider the response and make a determination and advise the Secretary of the outcome. No response or an unsuccessful Show Cause will result in a vacated position.

(g) Student elected Committee members will need to be present for at least half the duration of the meeting for attendance to be counted.

(h) Absent Ex-Officio Committee members may be represented by the acting incumbent of the position. The person representing the Committee member in those limited circumstances may attend meetings of the Senate. Those persons will have all the rights and functions of the absent substantive Committee member.

4.3 Quorum

(a) At any meeting, a quorum is one-half (or if one-half is not a whole number, the whole number next higher than one-half) of the total number of Committee members of the Senate or a Senate Standing Committee.

  i) For example, if a Senate Standing Committee has 23 Committee members in office, a quorum will require 12 Committee members to be in attendance (being 23 divided by 2, to the next whole number).

(b) *Quorum for student matters* – Students are excluded from the quorum count for matters relating to other students (e.g., results, thesis examination, etc).

  i) For example, if a Senate Standing committee has 23 Committee members

in office, with 2 student Committee members, a quorum will require 11 non-student members to be in attendance (being 23 – 2, divided by 2, to the next whole number).

(c) Abstaining does not exclude a Committee Member from the quorum count.

(d) *Quorum where Conflicts of Interest arise*: Committee Members with Conflicts of Interest are not included in the count of its members in office. A quorum is determined as one half (or if one half is not a whole number, the whole number next higher than one half) of the total number of its Committee members then in office, less those Committee members with a Conflict of Interest.

i) For example, if a Senate Standing Committee has 20 members in office, a quorum will require 10 Committee members to be in attendance (being 20 divided by 2). If one of its Committee members has a Conflict of Interest in one item for consideration, a quorum for that item will also require 10 Committee members to consider it (being 19 divided by 2, to the next whole number, that is 10).

(e) If a quorum is not present within thirty minutes after the stated commencement time, the business listed on the agenda for the meeting shall be listed on the agenda for the next meeting (which may be an additional meeting or an e-Meeting).

(f) Quorum is not a consideration in e-Meetings or where an Absolute Majority vote is required by the Chair.

(g) Business listed on an agenda for the next Regular Meeting from the previous inquorate meeting of the Senate is to have precedence over other business unless the Senate decides otherwise at that meeting.

4.4 Who Presides at Meetings

(a) The Chair presides at all meetings of the Senate at which they are present.

(b) At any meeting of the Senate at which the Chair is not present, one of the Deputy Chairs is to preside.

(c) In the absence of both the Chair and the Deputy Chairs, a Committee member elected by and from the Committee members present is to preside.

4.5 Starring of Items

(a) To improve the efficiency of meetings, a starring system is used to identify agenda items that require discussion. These are designated with a star (☆) in the agenda. As part of the procedural items of the agenda, Committee members will be asked to consider items that are not already starred that they wish to be starred for discussion.

(b) Agenda items that are not starred shall be taken as having been considered and resolved as approved by the relevant Senate Standing Committee as a block.

4.6 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

(a) If a Committee Member of the Senate has a Conflict of Interest, then that Committee Member must immediately declare their interest or involvement at a meeting of the Senate.

(b) The Senate must then determine whether or not that Committee Member may

be present during any discussion or participate in any decision relating to that matter.

Note: Quorum calculations in clause 4.3(d) are different when a Conflict of Interest is declared.

4.7 Open and Closed Sessions

(a) Meetings of the Senate shall be open to members of the University community. This includes staff, students, and graduates, who may attend meetings of the Senate as Observers, and shall be admitted subject to the availability of space.

(b) Observers shall not be accorded speaking rights without the Chair's permission.

(c) The Senate may resolve to go into closed session for the purpose of considering confidential or privileged items, if the meeting is quorate. All non-members who are present shall, with the exception of those non-members as the Senate may determine, be required to leave the meeting room and shall not be readmitted until the Chair declares that open session has been resumed.

(d) Any matters discussed or documents considered in closed session remain strictly confidential, subject to any legal requirements for disclosure.

4.8 Decisions of Senate

(a) All matters considered by the Senate are decided by Consensus.

(b) The Senate may Endorse or Approve a Recommendation before it, with or without amendment.

(c) If the Senate cannot resolve a matter by Consensus, then that matter is to be resolved by voting on the Recommendation(s).

(d) Votes will be cast anonymously through an appropriate voting mechanism. If there are an equal number of votes for and against a Recommendation, the Recommendation lapses.

(e) The Chair does not have a casting vote if there is an equality of votes.

5 MINUTES AND ACTIONING OF DECISIONS

5.1 Minutes

(a) The Secretary is to prepare and circulate Minutes to Committee members for confirmation, either with or without amendment, at the next Regular Meeting of the Senate.

(b) The Minutes will record:

i) the names of all Committee Members present and not present (regardless of whether apologies have been given) at any meetings;

ii) the arrival and departure of Committee members during the course of a meeting;

iii) the names of any people in attendance, including as Observers;

iv) a summary of all business, including Motions transacted;

v) all Resolutions passed at meetings; and

vi) any declarations of Conflicts of Interest made during the course of the meeting.

5.2 Actioning of Senate Decisions

(a) Senate outcomes – A short summary of discussions and decisions made at a Senate meeting, reviewed by the Chair, should be prepared and shared with University Staff as soon as is practical after the meeting. This should be in an easy reading format, like slides or dot points.

(b) The Secretary is to notify relevant University staff of Senate decisions that those staff are required to action.

6 MISCELLANEOUS

6.1 Matters not dealt with in Standing Orders

(a) The decision of the Chair is final in relation to procedural matters arising during a meeting of the Senate, which are not covered in these Standing Orders.

6.2 Review of the Standing Orders

(a) The Standing Orders will be reviewed by the Senate on a triennial basis.

Glossary of Terms follows.

7 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abstain: To refrain from voting.

Absolute Majority: More than half of the total membership votes in favour of an item.

Act: *Western Sydney University Act 1997 (NSW)*

Apology: Committee Members who are unable to attend the meeting need to email the Secretary or Chair to advise that they will not be attending the meeting. This can also be done by declining the meeting invitation. The Apology is noted in the agenda and announced at the beginning of the meeting and recorded in the Minutes.

Approve: Agreement by Committee members for a Recommendation to be implemented.

Chair: The person authorised to preside at a meeting in accordance with section 21 of the Act.

Committee Member: An Ex-Officio, elected, or appointed person listed in the Academic Senate Charter or Terms of Reference of a Senate Standing Committee. Committee Members have speaking and voting rights.

Conflict of Interest: Where a Committee Member has a direct, personal or pecuniary interest or involvement in an item for consideration by the Senate or Academic Senate Standing Committee.

Consensus: Agreement reached by a group as a whole.

Electronic Meeting (e-Meeting): A meeting to consider urgent matters electronically.

Endorse: Support by Committee members for a Recommendation to be taken to a higher committee for approval.

Ex-Officio: "By virtue of one's position or office" - A person who is a Committee member of Academic Senate or a Senate Standing Committee due to holding a specific position at the University.

Leave of Absence: Permission granted by the Chair that enables an elected or appointed member to be absent from Senate Meetings for a period of time, without vacating their seat on the Senate.

Minutes: The official record of what decisions were made, who was in attendance, and all other consequential events that occurred during the meeting. Minutes are not a verbatim account of every commentary in the meeting.

Motion or Recommendation: A proposal that is put before a meeting for discussion and a decision.

Observer: A person who is not a Committee Member and attends the meeting to take

note on what happens rather than participate. Observers do not participate in voting and do not have speaking rights; they must obtain permission from the Chair to speak.

Regular Meeting: A meeting that is listed in the annual schedule of meetings.

Resolution: A formal record of the decision of the meeting on any matter; a Motion that is passed; a decision that is made by the Senate or Senate Standing Committee.

Secretary: A person appointed as Secretary to the Senate or a Senate Standing Committee.

Show Cause: The process to persuade a person or organisation, in this case, the Senate, not to take disciplinary action; that is, not to uphold the decision to vacate the elected member's position on the Senate or a Senate Standing Committee.