

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE 2023-24

Purpose

This Code articulates the standardised structures, responsibilities and roles within the academic governance of the University of Leicester.

The implementation and management of a standardised structure for the governance of learning, teaching and assessment is designed to ensure the consistent, effective and transparent operation of:

- core quality assurance processes;
- enhancement of student learning opportunities at the University;
- enhancement of wider aspects of the student life at Leicester; and
- how the institution involves the student voice.

This Code sets out how Senate, as the ultimate academic authority of the institution, delegates various elements of its responsibilities. Where appropriate, these are also set out in the University Schedule of Delegation. Senate receives periodic/regular reports on the operation of the powers and processes delegated to subsidiary Committees.

The Governance Office is responsible for the implementation and ongoing management of the structures set out within this Code.

This Code is reviewed annually with any significant amendments presented to Senate for approval.

Reference points used to inform this Code

The development of this Code has been informed by a number of external documents and benchmarks including:

- Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Code of Governance (updated 2020)
- Office for Students guidelines

This Code links to a number of wider documents for the operation of various quality assurance and other academic management activities including:

- Code of Practice on the Development, Approval and Modification of Taught programmes
- Code of Practice on Annual and Periodic Developmental Review
- Code of Practice for the Personal Support of Students
- Code of Practice on Managing Higher Education Provision with Others
- Senate Regulations
- Schedule of Delegation
- Standard University Structure guidelines

This Code comprises three sections.

Section 1 – Underpinning principles

Section 2 - Committee structure and Terms of Reference

Section 3 – Role descriptors and Appointment Procedures

Section 1: Underpinning Principles

A standardised structure

The standard descriptors and terminology used within this Code to describe roles and processes were approved by the Senate and should be applied consistently across all Colleges and Schools of the University. No alternative terminology or role descriptors should be used.

Below the level of the School Education and Research and Enterprise Committees, individual Schools may define their organisational structure so as best to reflect their disciplinary coverage, in accordance with the principles of the [Standard University Structure](#). However, the role of the School Education Committee is fixed and this body retains responsibility for directly overseeing the development, monitoring and continuous enhancement of the quality of taught programmes. In the same manner, the role and remit of the School or Department Research and Enterprise Committee is fixed.

For the purpose of this Code, it is required that every academic programme has a single, defined host School.

A standardised cycle of business

The timing and process for the consideration of certain core aspects of academic governance, academic standards and quality assurance are defined centrally via a published calendar of Quality and Standards processes.

All of the following processes should be considered in line with the schedule released annually by the Governance Office or the Division of Student and Academic Services:

- Terms of Reference (Governance Office)
- Annual Developmental Review
- Periodic Developmental Review
- Curriculum Planning
- External Survey Outputs
- Module Evaluation Process
- External Examining reports and responses

A standardised system of recording and reporting

The Governance Office maintains resources for the effective support of University Committees.

In addition to the standard cycle of business, all Committees that fall under the remit of this Code will use the standard University templates for the production of agendas and minutes and observe all of the conventions set out within the <https://le.ac.uk/about/who-we-are/governance/minutes>.

Copies of agendas and minutes relating to all Committees under the remit of this Code will be retained for the periods specified in the University Retention Schedule. This schedule has been informed by the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations, which came into force in May 2018.

Standing Orders

Consistent Standing Orders for the management of any Committee named within the academic governance framework will be developed and issued annually.

Training

The Governance Office may be approached for support e.g. when a new Committee Secretary is appointed.

Effectiveness reviews

Effectiveness Reviews of Senate and all Standing Committees of Senate (Education Committee, Research and Enterprise Committee, Senate Student Discipline Committee) should be undertaken at minimum once every four years, and should be conducted in line with good practice guidance and support available from the Governance Office.

The outcome of an effectiveness review may require amendments to this Code of Practice. Depending on the nature of the amendments these will be considered by the Academic Registrar in the first instance, and approval sought via Senate, if required.

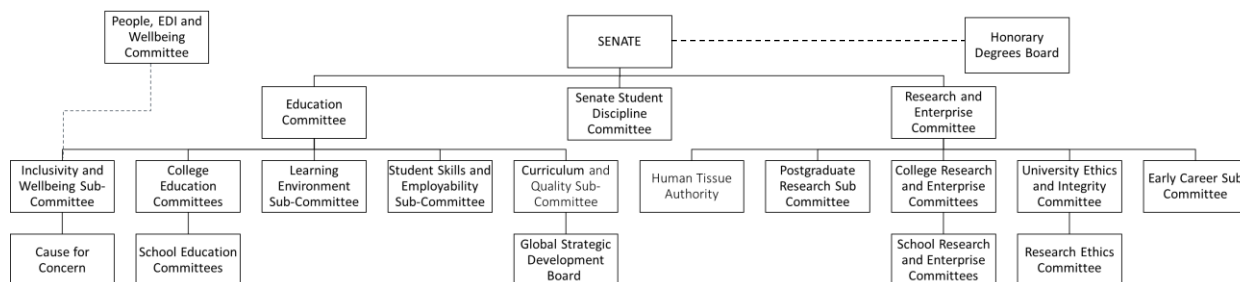
Monitoring and review

The wider operation of this Code of Practice will be reviewed at least annually in light of developments in the internal or external policy landscapes, specifically where amendments may be required to meet additional requirements from national or other regulatory bodies, particularly the Office for Students.

Section 2 - Committee structure and reporting lines for academic processes and policies

Senate Sub-Structure and reporting lines

Senate and its subsidiary Committee structure form the academic governance framework of the institution. There are four levels of defined academic governance:



This structure is concerned with the bodies reporting into Senate as part of the Institution’s formal academic governance. As such, it does not incorporate:

- Task-and-finish or other working groups established periodically, and on a fixed-term basis, to consider individual issues. The reporting line for such groups will be defined by their focus, remit and approval route for their output.
- Groups or bodies which are part of the management structure of the Institution and which operate outside the direct remit of Senate.

Committees at all levels will routinely receive and consider reports from committees that sit within their remit further down the governance structure. They have a responsibility to facilitate effective two-way communication and to receive and consider recommendations for the enhancement to institutional policy and practice. Committees at all levels have a critical role to play in enhancing teaching and learning practice, the student experience, quality assurance processes, and responsiveness to the student voice.

Level 1

Senate

Senate, as ultimate academic authority of the Institution, is a level 1 body and has authority to define the organisation of all governance bodies beneath it. The Membership and Powers of Senate are set out in Statutes and Ordinances respectively and cannot be amended without approval of Council.

Level 2

Standing Committees

Standing Committees of Senate have authority, delegated from Senate, to approve policies, codes of practice, and procedures that ensure the effective operation of all procedures relating to learning and teaching, student conduct, or research and enterprise.

Level 3

Sub Committees

Sub Committees of the Standing Committee typically do not have any delegated authority from Senate. They have authority to consider and recommend policy/code of practice changes to the Standing Committee. They have delegated authority to approve changes to operating procedures that support the effective operation of processes.

The one exception to this general principle is the authority to approve, suspend or withdraw new taught programmes of study and appoint External Examiners, which is delegated to the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee.

College level Committees

College level Committees do not have any delegated authority for making any changes to institutional regulations, policy or procedure. They are, however, encouraged and expected to identify potential enhancements to institutional policy and practice, recommending these to the relevant University committee or sub-committee for consideration.

College Education Committees oversee and coordinate the work of School Education Committees as part of the Institution's academic governance.

College Research and Enterprise Committees and the Research Ethics Committee are key in ensuring that College approaches and activities in these areas are aligned with Institutional strategy and priorities.

Level 4

Groups

Groups do not have any delegated authority for making any changes to regulations, policy or procedure. They are an operational part of the Institution's academic governance.

School Education Committees

Every School will have a single Education Committee to cover all levels of taught provision. Schools may create sub-committees that report to the School Education Committee, where needed, to consider separately subject-specific business or undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. Authority resting with the School Education Committee may not be delegated to its sub-committees.

For all joint programmes, the School's Education Committee in the lead school for the joint programme will have responsibility for conducting all of the standard programme management and quality assurance and enhancement processes for the joint programmes.

Distance Learning programmes will sit within the remit of the School Education Committee for the relevant level.

School/Departmental Research and Enterprise Committees

Every School will have a single Research and Enterprise Committee to cover all levels of research and enterprise activity. Schools may create sub-committees that report to the School Research and Enterprise Committee, where needed, to consider specific areas of activity. Authority resting with the School Research and Enterprise Committee may not be delegated to its sub-committees.

Committee operations

The Terms of Reference and membership for all Committees are set out in the second half of this Code which may be updated from time to time.

Senate

The Terms of Reference and membership of Senate are set out in Statute and Ordinance and therefore may be amended only with the approval of Senate and Council.

Standing Committees and Sub-Committees of Senate

No significant amendment can be made to the Terms of Reference of a Standing Committee of Senate without the approval of Senate. Any significant amendments to the Terms of Reference of a Sub-Committee of Senate must be approved by the parent committee.

College Committees

The terms of reference of the College Committees for Education, Research Ethics and Research and Enterprise will remain consistent across all of the Colleges. No individual College Committee may amend its Terms of Reference. Amendments which have the support of all three Colleges may be submitted to the relevant Committee of Senate to which the College Committee reports, for approval.

School Committees

Similarly, Terms of Reference for School Education Committees, and Research and Enterprise Committees are consistent and defined at University level. No individual School Committee may amend its Terms of Reference, but may request amendments via the relevant College Committee to the relevant Committee of Senate, which will consider whether the change should be implemented for all equivalent school committees.

Groups

Terms of Reference for Groups of Senate may be amended on the approval of the relevant Committee of Senate.