

## The Role of Senate

### Role

Senate has delegated authority from the Council in the Charter for the enhancement of academic quality and assurance of academic standards. Annex A shows the hierarchy of Committees.

Council relies on Senate for:

- a) **Assurance and Governance in respect of academic quality and standards:** - Senate provides Council with an annual report and assurance of standards.
- b) **Advice:** - Council can ask for advice from Senate on academic aspects of matters over which Council takes decisions and Senate can express its opinion on academic aspects of what Council decides.

Senate has the following primary responsibilities:

- a) To regulate the academic work of the University in both education and research.
- b) To approve related policies and procedures.
- c) To be responsible for assuring academic quality and standards.
- d) To assure itself that student satisfaction is appropriately monitored.
- e) To ensure that processes are in place to ensure that learning is continually enhanced.
- f) To regulate the approval of all educational programmes and collaborative provision.
- g) To regulate the integrity of academic qualifications.
- h) To regulate validation and other academic partnerships with other third parties.
- i) To approve the academic calendar.
- j) To approve regulations for student discipline.

Senate approves regulations and policies covering these matters. It also monitors these matters to assure itself that the University's academic quality and standards are satisfactory. It delegates some decisions and monitoring to sub-committees, especially Boards of Studies, and to the Vice-Chancellor. Senate monitors the effectiveness of its sub-committees. Internal Audit assists Senate in gaining assurance by auditing some academic processes each year.

Senate's role is vital in ensuring that the University's academic reputation is maintained and that the University continuously seeks to improve the quality of its education and research by reviewing best practice and innovating.

### Composition

Senate comprises 38 members. Senates are deliberately large bodies and a diverse representation is encouraged to ensure that issues are debated by the representative body and "buy-in"/ownership is thus gained across the University. The sub-committee structure reinforces this by involving more staff and students especially through Boards of Studies.

Just over half the membership is elected by the academic staff - at least two members will be elected from each of the Board of Studies areas. The balance comprises ex-officio members e.g., Chairs of Senate Committees and academic members of the

Executive and 5 student members. The student members include the President of the Students Union, the Vice-President Education, the Vice-President Activities & Development and up to two other students nominated by the Trustee Board, ensuring that the student members include at least one undergraduate, one postgraduate taught and one postgraduate research student.

The Vice-Chancellor chairs Senate as the University's senior academic officer in order to ensure academic quality and standards. The University Secretary acts as Committee Secretary. There is a Senior *Elected* Senator (SES) elected by the elected members. The role ensures that there is an alternative route of communication to Council for members of Senate if they have concerns in respect of academic quality and/or standards that have not been addressed by the Vice-Chancellor and his/her team.

### **The Way Senate Operates**

Senates do not operate like commercial boards. They act in a collaborative way as a group of experts advising Council on areas outside its expertise. Their primary focus is governance especially regulation and policy. They receive papers which help to give them the assurance they need to fulfil their role and report to Council. They also allow a forum for healthy debate. All Senators have a common duty to ensure academic quality and standards. All Senators work collaboratively together in fulfilling this remit.

Papers for Senate may come from sub-committees or senior officers. Executive Committees are informed of and input to Senate papers but do not have a role in recommending decisions to Senate. Officers may wish to present papers for information which give Senators important background information and may also wish to ask Senate's advice on issues which are within or possibly outside its delegations of academic quality and assurance.

Some ex-officio members wear two or even three hats in Senate e.g., a Dean may be the leader of the School, Chair of the Board of Studies and a Senator. Senates do not "hold the executive to account" but work with the Executive in monitoring the implementation of strategies to improve education, regulations and policies. It is worth noting that the ex-officio member presenting the paper cannot exclude themselves from wearing several hats at that time including the need to fulfil their role as a Senator.

### **Senators**

The role of Senator is an important position in the University and academic staff are encouraged to put their names forward for election. The Students' Union are responsible for nominating 2 students and agreeing the process for their nomination. The standards expected of a Senator are set out in a Senator role profile in Ordinance A3. Senators will often address issues from their own knowledge, background or standpoint but they should always seek to act in the interest of the University as a whole. Although, Senators have no obligation to report back to their colleagues or to take up issues raised by their colleagues, they are encouraged to discuss academic issues raised at Senate with their colleagues. If they have concerns in respect of academic quality or standards it is important that they feel able to raise these in Senate and they are treated respectfully. Senators can also present papers to Senate though this only happens occasionally.

### **The Executive and Council/Senate Decisions**

Council and Senate delegate a considerable number of decisions to Sub-Committees or to the Vice-Chancellor who will ask a Senior Officer (DVC, PVC) to deal with them on his/her behalf.

The Executive is also responsible for implementing decisions made by Council and Senate. Regulation 27 sets out the key decisions that Senate is responsible for and who is authorised to make the decision.

Annex B sets out some examples of decisions which are made by various bodies. Annex C lists the Regulations and Academic Policies approved by Senate in 2012/13.

### **How should staff and students interact with Senate?**

Senate papers and minutes are posted to the web so that they are accessible for all staff and students [http://webapps.city.ac.uk/adu/university\\_governance/senate/sc\\_info.html](http://webapps.city.ac.uk/adu/university_governance/senate/sc_info.html). Boards of Studies minutes are presented to Senate as part of the agenda papers. The Regulations are located at <http://www.city.ac.uk/about/city-information/governance/constitution/senate-regulations> and academic policies in the [Quality Manual](#).

Staff and Students are encouraged to involve themselves in standing for election to Senate or becoming involved in Senate's sub-committees especially Boards of Studies. Students are encouraged to become student representatives and to interact with their elected representatives to help improve the student experience.

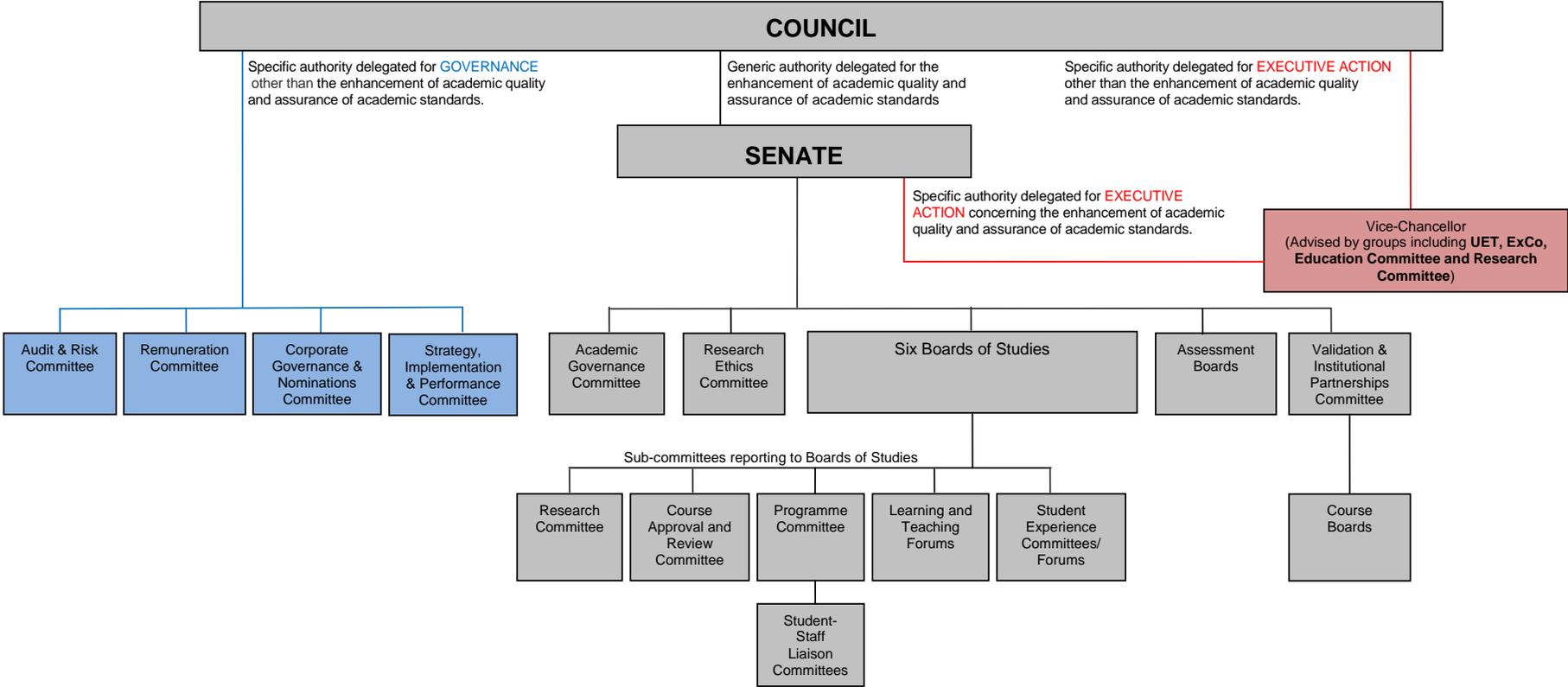
If you have a concern in respect of academic quality and standards you may wish to discuss it with your line manager (staff)/student representative (students) or a member of Senate who can advise on the best way of progressing the matter. The names and short biographies of members of Senate are given on this web page: <http://www.city.ac.uk/about/city-information/governance/council-senate-and-committees/senate/senate-member-biographies>. If the issue is significant you may wish to use the [Whistleblowing process](#) which seeks to ensure that significant issues are brought to the attention of the Executive while protecting the individual raising the issue.

F Toop  
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CITY UNIVERSITY  
LONDON

GOVERNANCE AND EXECUTIVE DELEGATION STRUCTURE



**Examples of Academic approvals made by:**

1. Council on advice of Senate
  - new Ordinances
  - merger, incorporation and major institutional alliances
  - creation, closure and renaming of schools, faculties, academic departments and disciplines
  - University Strategic Plan
  
2. Senate
  - Regulations and Academic Policies
  - operational plans to improve quality
  - appoint Chairs of assessment boards
  - appoint Chairs of Academic Appeals (University Stage)
  - appoint Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Boards of Studies.
  
3. Boards of Studies
  - creation, closure and renaming of departmental sub-units or research centres.
  - general changes in course content & curriculum for existing educational programmes.
  - annual programme evaluations
  - responses to external examiners' reports
  - sabbatical leave
  
4. Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate
  - appointment of external examiners
  - School partnerships & institutional research partnerships
  - new educational programmes and collaborative partnerships
  - substantial changes in course content & curriculum for existing educational programmes.
  - Research excellence Framework Decisions on Staff

***Examples of Council Approvals made by Officers on behalf of Council***

- School budgets
- capital expenditure projects < £3M.
- appoint Deans and Pro Vice-Chancellors
- Human Resources policies
- professorial banding decisions for remuneration

## Regulations and Academic Policies approved by Senate in 2012/13

### Regulations

- Section 4(b) of Regulation 19, the University Assessment Regulations - The amendments reflected new guidance in the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* and made changes to bring the regulations in line with the new policy for the normal period of appointment of external examiners approved by Senate in June 2012.
- Regulation 11, Conduct of Examinations - covering treatment of mobile phones in examinations.
- Regulation 26 Student Complaints - clarifying the division of cases between the complaints procedure and the Appeals procedure.
- Regulation 3, Board of Studies - to add the Students' Union position, the School Representation Officer, to the composition of the Board
- Regulations 20, 20b, 21 and 21b, Appeals - to enable cases that are referred back from University-Level consideration to be considered by the appropriate School body and not be restricted to being reconsidered by the original School body.
- Regulation 17, Postgraduate Programmes - to add a new postgraduate degree title to those that the University may award – Master of Public Health.
- Two exceptions to Regulation 19 were approved allowing an award without classification.

### Policies

The following policies were amended or established.

- Research Students who teach (Principles of Good Practice also noted) – QAA recommended introducing a requirement for postgraduate research students and/or teaching assistants in all Schools to undertake adequate and appropriate preparation prior to commencement of teaching.
- Publicising Programmes of Study Policy and Partnerships Policy - QAA recommended strengthening the process for managing the quality of information produced about partnerships provision.
- Programme Amendment Policy – QAA recommended the process for amending programmes at School and University levels be revised. The revisions should provide greater clarity in the definitions and ensure that Education Committee were fully informed of these amendments to ensure effective oversight.