

## **SENATE – GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS**

The purpose of this guidance is to assist members in understanding the role and responsibilities of Senate and its members.

### **Context**

Traditionally pre-1992 universities or higher education institutions have a Senate which is responsible for regulating and directing the academic work of the institution (although subject to the governing body where decisions have financial and resource implications). The Senate is chaired by the head of the institution and membership is drawn from within the institution.

### **Senate**

At LSHTM the Senate Constitution/Terms of Reference (on the School's intranet at: <http://intra.lshtm.ac.uk/management/committees/senate/SenateConstitution.pdf>) set out Senate's overarching responsibility for overseeing academic activity at the School:

*The Senate shall be responsible to the Council for setting the academic framework for teaching, learning and training, and research at the School.*

The Terms of Reference break down this responsibility into more detailed specific duties, in particular for strategy and implementation, and quality and quality assurance.

Senate is the principal academic committee in the School and is responsible for advising and making recommendations to Council on academic matters.

Senate meets twice a year, in the Autumn and Summer Terms. Meeting agendas are normally structured around matters for discussion, followed by matters for report.

### **Sub-committees**

Given the extent and range of Senate's duties it is supported by a number of sub-committees (and other committees on matters of common interest) which provide advice on specific issues, proposals for new initiatives or changes to current activity, undertake routine business and so on. This ensures that detailed work is undertaken on behalf of Senate, which Senate may not otherwise have sufficient time or expertise to carry out. Although Senate may not have a detailed working knowledge of sub-committee (and other relevant committee) activity, it performs an important oversight role that is essential for assurance and accountability purposes.

Communications between Senate and sub-committees are facilitated by reporting and cross over membership (including for specific roles and elected members also serving on Senate sub-committees).

Senate sub-committees are:

- Senate Executive Group – is responsible for overseeing/approving operational business, including from other Senate sub-committees, on behalf of Senate allowing Senate to focus on more strategic matters. It is also responsible for preparing business, including identifying strategic items, for Senate agendas through reviewing business from other Senate sub-committees and elsewhere. It meets four times a year. For further information see Senate Executive Constitution/Terms of Reference (<http://intra.lshtm.ac.uk/management/committees/senate/SEGconstitution.pdf>)

- Learning & Teaching Committee – advises Senate on all matters relating to the School’s taught course programme and is responsible for academic oversight, strategic planning and development of the taught course programme. It meets three times per year. For further information see Learning & Teaching Committee Constitution/Terms of Reference (<http://intra.lshtm.ac.uk/management/committees/teaching/LTCconstitution.pdf>)
- Quality & Standards Committee – advises Senate on all matters relating to quality assurance and enhancement procedures, and academic standards, of the School’s taught course programme, and responsible for development, implementation and monitoring of internal policy and procedures which ensure alignment with external requirements and guidance. It meets four times per year. For further information see Quality & Standards Constitution/Terms of Reference (<http://intra.lshtm.ac.uk/management/committees/teaching/QSCconstitution.pdf>)
- Research Degrees Committee – advises Senate on all matters concerning research degrees. It meets six times per year. For further information see Research Degrees Constitution/Terms of Reference

Other committees which report to Senate from time to time, due to areas of common interest include:

- Information Services Advisory Group (ISAG)
- Ethics Committee
- Clinical Trials Sub-Committee
- SMT (or Research SMT/Teaching SMT)

### **Membership**

Senate is chaired by the Director and the secretary is the Secretary & Registrar. The chairman of Senate Executive Group also serves as deputy chairman on Senate.

The broader membership comprises:

- specific academic management roles who are *ex officio* members- i.e. Heads of Academic Faculties, Dean of Studies, Deputy Director (Research), Taught Course Directors, Research Degree Directors and so on;
- elected academic staff members for each faculty – including Heads of Department and a range of junior to senior academic staff;
- elected professional support staff members, and
- student members.

For further detail see the current Senate Membership list on the intranet at:

(<http://intra.lshtm.ac.uk/management/committees/senate/SenateMembers.pdf>)

The membership of Senate is deliberately broad to reflect a wide range of knowledge, expertise, viewpoints and interests. Elected members are not expected to collect/disseminate feedback for or on behalf of Senate, this is the responsibility of senior management (which is undertaken through various mechanisms e.g. FMG/FPGs, Chariot, email consultation/notices – although may not be labelled ‘Senate’ business), although this does not prohibit members

representing/reporting non-members views to the meeting. In general all members should exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the School as a whole rather than as a representative of any constituency. Members should:

- prepare for meetings by reading papers in advance, considering matters upon which Senate is required to make a decision, seeking clarification where necessary, identifying issues to raise at meeting;
- during meetings ask questions and seek clarification where necessary, support and challenge matters under discussion, engage in constructive debate, and
- attend meetings regularly.

### **Standing orders**

The Standing Orders regulate aspects of Senate business and related matters; e.g. frequency of meetings, quorum, reserved areas of business, order and conduct of business, membership and election matters. These are annexed to the Constitution/Terms of Reference (<http://intra.lshtm.ac.uk/management/committees/senate/SenateConstitution.pdf>).

### **Intranet**

Constitutions and terms of reference, membership lists and minutes from past meetings of Senate and sub-committees can be found on the intranet at: (<http://intra.lshtm.ac.uk/management/committees/senate/SenateMembers.pdf>)

July 2010/revOct2010