

As approved by Council 13 June 2007

ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE
STANDING ORDERS OF THE COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

Interpretation and Definitions

1. These Standing Orders of the Committees of the Council of the Royal Veterinary College are made subject to the provisions of the Charter and Statutes of the College, which in the case of conflict shall prevail.
2. In these Standing Orders the term 'Chairman' shall be understood so as to include the Vice-Chairman in respect of those occasions when the Chairman has ceased to hold office or is absent or is otherwise unable to act, on which occasions the duties and privileges of the Chairman shall fall to the Vice-Chairman.
3. In these Standing Orders the term 'Secretary' shall be understood to mean the person appointed to be the Secretary of a Committee for the time being.
4. In these Standing Orders the term 'clear working days' shall mean a period of days excluding the day on which notice is given and the day on which it is to take effect, as well as Saturdays, Sundays, Bank Holidays and other days on which the College is closed for normal business.

Committees

5. The Council has created the following standing Committees to which these Standing Orders apply: Finance and General Purposes; Nominations and Fellows; Audit; Senior Staff Remuneration; Safety; Ethics and Welfare. For the purpose of these Standing Orders the Academic Board shall also be regarded as a Committee of the Council. The Council will establish the membership and terms of reference of each Committee. No Committee shall vary its membership or exceed its terms of reference without the prior consent of the Council.

Ordinary Meetings

6. There shall be held in every academic year of the College such number of meetings of all Committees as may be required for the efficient conduct of their business to be known as ordinary meetings. Ordinary meetings shall be held on such dates and at such times and places as shall be decided by each Committee.

Special Meetings

7. Upon requisition of the Chairman or of not less than one third plus one of the members of any Committee the Secretary shall convene a special meeting of the Committee. Such requisition shall specify the object of the desired meeting and the Secretary shall as soon as is reasonably practicable convene the special meeting for the purpose specified in the requisition.

Notice of Meetings

8. All notices of meetings shall be issued by the Secretary. Such notices may be sent in writing by first class post to the address which each member has notified to the Secretary for the purpose or, where a member is an employee of the College, by internal College mail to the member's departmental address. Alternatively, such notices may be sent electronically to the email address which each member has notified for this purpose to the Secretary.
9. Whether sent by post or email, notice of meetings shall be issued not less than three clear working days before the meeting of the Committee of which notice is being given.
10. Exceptionally, and notwithstanding Standing Order 8, the Chairman may declare an emergency and direct the Secretary to summon an extraordinary meeting of the Committee at shorter notice.
11. Accidental omission to notify any member or the non-receipt of notification by any member shall not invalidate the proceedings of the Committee meeting concerned.

Agenda

12. The notice convening a meeting of any Committee shall be accompanied by an Agenda paper for that meeting specifying the business to be transacted at the meeting. No business other than that specified in the Agenda may be transacted at that meeting, save that business of an urgent nature which has arisen too late to be included in the Agenda may be transacted provided that two thirds of the members present so agree.
13. Any member wishing a matter to be included in an Agenda shall give notice in writing or by email to the Secretary not less than 10 clear working days before the meeting. If such notice is received less than 10 clear working days before a meeting, that matter may be included in the Agenda at the discretion of the Chairman.

Reserved Business

14. With the exception of papers relating to reserved business (see Standing Order 15), all members of a Committee shall receive all papers for all meetings of the Committee. Papers for and Minutes of reserved business shall not be sent to any student member of any Committee, who may not be present during any discussion of reserved business.
15. 'Reserved Business' is any matter relating to named or individually identifiable members of the staff or students of the College, including but not limited to the consideration of courses of study, including research projects, and the appointment of examiners for individual students; consideration of the academic performance of individual students; disciplinary and grievance procedures concerning individual members of staff and students; the promotion of individual members of staff; the award to any individual of any prize, scholarship or grant; or any other matter affecting the personal affairs of any member of staff or student. In any case of doubt the Chairman shall decide whether any business constitutes reserved business, and his/her decision shall be final.

Confidentiality

16. With the exception of papers and Minutes relating to reserved business and to other matters which for commercial or other reasons a Committee decides shall remain confidential, the papers and Minutes of Committees shall be regarded as public documents once the Minutes or a report of the Committee's business have been considered at the next following ordinary meeting of the Council.

Quorum

17. At any meeting of any Committee the quorum shall be one third of the members plus one, of whom in the case of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Nominations and Fellows Committee a majority shall be independent members of the Council.
18. If any member is disqualified by reason of the declaration of a conflict of interest, he/she shall no longer count towards the quorum. If for this reason a meeting becomes inquorate there shall be no further discussion of the matter concerned. The inquoracy and the reasons for it shall be recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting.

Minutes

19. The Secretary shall record the names of all members present at a meeting of any Committee in the Minutes of that meeting.

20. The Secretary shall ensure that Minutes are kept of all decisions and proceedings of the Council. The following shall be taken as prima facie evidence of the business transacted at any meeting:
 - a Minute signed by the Chairman of the meeting of which it is a record;
 - or a Minute signed by the Chairman of the next meeting;
 - or a copy of a Minute signed by either Chairman which has been certified by the Secretary.
21. The Agenda for any ordinary meeting of a Committee shall include as an item the approval of the Minutes of the previous ordinary meeting, together with the Minutes of intervening special and emergency meetings, if any. All such Minutes shall be circulated with the Agenda paper. If approved by that meeting, they shall be signed by the Chairman and retained by the Secretary as an agreed record of the proceedings of the Committee.

Order of Business

22. Consideration and if appropriate approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting shall take place at the next ordinary meeting prior to the consideration of general business. No discussion shall be allowed on the Minutes except as to their accuracy. Matters arising on the Minutes not otherwise indicated for discussion on the Agenda may be considered, after which the general business shall proceed in accordance with the Agenda.
23. With the consent of the Committee the Chairman may vary the order of business on the Agenda.
24. Committees shall have the power to create such further sub or ad hoc Committees as they think desirable for the efficient conduct of their business. These Standing Orders shall apply to the conduct of any sub-Committees so created.
25. Committees shall report to the Council on matters within their terms of reference in a manner prescribed by the Council.
26. Subject to these Standing Orders the Chairman determines the procedure to be adopted at any meeting of a Committee, and the Chairman's ruling on points of order shall be final in the meeting at which it was delivered.

Adjournments

27. Any meeting of a Committee may by consent of the Committee be adjourned to such time and place as it thinks fit, but no business shall be transacted at an adjourned meeting except that set out on the Agenda of the meeting of which it is an adjournment. The Secretary shall give as much notice as is reasonable in all the circumstances to all members of the time, date and place of the re-convened meeting.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

28. The Council shall appoint the Chairmen and (except for the Academic Board) Vice-Chairmen of all Committees for such periods of office as it thinks fit. In the absence of the Chairman, the Chair shall be taken at any meeting by the Vice-Chairman, and in the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman shall be taken by one of the members present as those members may appoint.

Attendance

29. A Committee may from time to time invite persons to attend all or part of its meetings. Such persons may contribute to discussion when invited to do so but may not vote.
30. Members of a Committee who are unable to attend any meeting shall send apologies to the Secretary. Subject to the consent of a Committee the Chairman or the Secretary may speak briefly on their behalf or read a short statement which they have submitted on any matter on which they wish their views to be known.
31. Members of a Committee shall not be permitted to send an alternate or proxy in their place, except that student members, if prevented from attending any meeting by reason of the requirements of their courses of study, shall be permitted to send alternates being other elected officers of the Students' Union Society for the time being.

Voting and Conduct

32. Except as otherwise provided by the Charter, Statutes or Standing Orders any question arising before a Committee shall be determined by a majority of the members present. A member absent at the time of the vote may not vote by proxy. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.
33. The procedure for voting shall be a matter for the Chairman at the meeting, subject to the consent of the Committee but shall normally be by show of hands. For any matter upon which a vote is taken, the Minutes shall record the number of those for and against the proposal being considered, along with the number of those abstaining, if any.
34. The Council requires that all Committees exercise their responsibilities in a corporate manner, that is to say, decisions are taken collectively by all members acting in a body. Irrespective of their method of appointment, members may not act individually or as representatives of a constituency.

Urgent Business and Chairman's Action

35. Urgent business is deemed to be any matter which has arisen which requires a decision or recommendation of a Committee at a date before it is practicable to call an ordinary or special meeting, but which cannot properly be regarded as an emergency. In such cases the Chairman shall consult with as many members of the Committee as is practicable in the circumstances before deciding whether to take action, and if appropriate what action to take. The Chairman is empowered to make decisions on matters of importance when delaying a decision would result in clear disadvantage to the College. The decisions taken by the Chairman and the reasons for them shall be reported to the next meeting of the Committee for ratification.

4 June 2007