

Bursars' Committee

Terms of reference

1. Purpose

The Bursars' Committee was first constituted in 1928. The purposes of the Committee are:

- a. to provide an intercollegiate forum for the exchange of views and information between Bursars with the intention of addressing collectively common problems and of promoting the efficient and economical operation of the Colleges;
- b. to constitute an intercollegiate body for liaison with the University and with other bodies in relation to bursarial matters affecting the Colleges generally;
- c. to work with the Colleges' Committee and with the Senior Tutors' Committee in the formulation of intercollegiate policy
- d. to report on its business to the Colleges' Committee and to make recommendations on intercollegiate agreements.

2. Standing

The business of the Bursars' Committee is conducted on a confidential basis.

The Committee has no power to make decisions binding on, or to represent the views of, any College: equally, the Committee is not subject to the direction or control of the Colleges, either jointly or severally.

Any advice provided to Colleges and other institutions, either through members of the Committee or through its appointed officers, or through staff of the Office of Intercollegiate Services, is provided on the basis that the advice is offered without any warranty as to its accuracy and that no liability shall fall on the Committee or any of its officers or members for such advice.

3. Membership

The Bursars' Committee includes in its membership:

- a) Bursars of the Cambridge Colleges *ex officio* (or the person or persons whose role in the institution best corresponds to that of a Bursar), who shall be nominated by the Senior Bursar if a College has more than one Bursar: for each College, one Bursar shall be specified by the College as a "voting member" of their College;
- b) the Bursars of the Houses of the Cambridge Theological Federation who are also members of the Office of Intercollegiate Services Limited *ex officio* (or the person whose role in the institution best corresponds to that of a Bursar), who shall also be "voting members" for their House.

The Bursars' Committee may elect from time to time for its membership to include other persons, either on a fixed term or permanent basis.

Attendees

The following are also invited to attend all meetings, and to receive all agenda, papers and minutes of the Committee:

- i. a Head of House, nominated by the Colleges' Committee;
- ii. the Chair of the Senior Tutors' Committee *ex officio*;
- iii. a Development Director, nominated by the Colleges Development Directors Committee;
- iv. the Head of the Office of Intercollegiate Services (OIS) and other relevant officers or administrative staff of OIS *ex officio*;
- v. the Pro-Vice-Chancellor primarily responsible for resources and financial planning *ex officio*;
- vi. the University's Chief Financial Officer *ex officio*;
- vii. the University's Head of the Finance Division *ex officio*; and
- viii. the Head of Education Services of the University of Cambridge *ex officio*.

The officers of the Committee, at their discretion, may permit other persons to attend all or part of one or more meetings, providing that permission has been sought in advance of any meeting. Attendees do not have voting rights.

Officers

The Bursars' Committee select for themselves a Chair and Secretary as officers of the Committee. Terms of office are for three years, with the Secretary automatically succeeding the office of the Chair at the end of their term. In the event of an early retirement of the Chair, the Secretary shall immediately be appointed as Chair for at least a three-year term (and no more than four years) and until the appropriate 1 October date: an Appointments Committee will be convened to appoint a new Secretary. In the event of an early retirement of the Secretary, an Appointments Committee will be convened to appoint a new Secretary for the remainder of the current term.

Officer appointments, including unexpected vacancies, are recommended to the Committee by an Appointments Committee consisting the Chair and Secretary of the Bursar's Committee, with three other Bursars who have no interest in the position, chosen by the Bursars' Business Committee. In making recommendations, the Appointments Committee shall offer no more than two candidates, along with the option to refer the matter back to the Appointments Committee for further consideration.

The voting procedures for selecting officers shall be agreed by the Committee from time to time.

4. Meetings of the Committee

4a Conduct of meetings

Meetings are convened by the Chair: the Bursars' Committee meets at least once each Term. Notice of the date, time and place of meetings, and agenda and papers, is provided by the Office of Intercollegiate Services, in a manner to be determined by them.

There is no quorum for the discussion of business; quoracy for specific decisions is outlined below. It is expected that members of the Committee will normally attend meetings. Where a voting member is unable to attend a meeting, he or she is permitted to nominate to the Secretary in advance someone to vote in their place. For an in-person meeting, no College shall have more than two members in attendance: there is no limit on attendance for meetings held entirely by teleconference.

Attendance of individual persons at the Committee by remote attendance through teleconferencing or other mechanisms will not normally be practicable. On occasions, meetings may be held with all attendees engaging through teleconferencing, at the discretion of the Committee officers.

In the absence of the Chair, the Secretary will assume the Chair for the duration of that meeting. In the absence of the Chair and the Secretary, the Chair will nominate another member of the Committee to chair that particular meeting. Otherwise, the Committee determines amongst those members present who chairs the meeting as its first item of business: this may be agreed by circulation in advance.

4b. *Reserved business*

The Committee may conduct reserved business, which include only the presence of its members. Reserved business may be conducted exceptionally in the presence of attendees at the discretion of the Chair.

Reserved business would include:

- i. the appointment, employment, financial remuneration or promotion, or any related matter, of individuals (but would normally not include recommendations or decisions about committee representation on other bodies);
- ii. concerns about the conduct of any officer or member of the Committee;
- iii. any other matter at the absolute discretion of the Chair.

4c. *Conduct of business outside of meetings*

In exceptional circumstances, the Committee may agree to conduct business by circulation.

The Committee may also agree which matters it may wish to delegate to a single member of the Committee, to decide on its behalf. Any item of delegated business is reported on at its next meeting.

The Committee may, at its discretion, set up (and otherwise suspend or disband) Standing Committees, Sub-Committees or Working Groups, each with its own membership and terms of reference, to be agreed by the Committee. The approval or changes of terms of reference for any Sub-Committee or Working Group cannot be delegated.

5. *Decisions of the Committee*

All decisions of the Committee, including the conclusions of discussions, informal and formal recommendations and intercollegiate agreements, are normally arrived at by consensus. Where this is not possible, the Chair at their absolute discretion may call for a formal vote. Decisions that impact on the business of the other principal intercollegiate committees should take into account any views or recommendations made by them or their representatives.

Where decisions in the categories below require a formal vote, this may be conducted either by a show of hands or a formal paper or electronic ballot, at the absolute discretion of the Chair. A vote may be conducted at a formal meeting, or outside of meetings, again at the absolute discretion of the Chair.

5a. *Decisions that commit the actions or behaviours of the Colleges¹*

The Committee has no automatic power to make decisions binding on, or to represent the views of, the Colleges collectively, unless it is explicitly asked to do so with the agreement of all Colleges, or implicitly may do so as a result of a decision made with the agreement of all Colleges.

Where a decision is requested that would commit the actions or behaviours of the Colleges:

- a) the officers should ensure that the Colleges' Standing Committee is aware of the decision to be taken in advance of the meeting at which it will be presented, and with sufficient time for the representatives of the other principal intercollegiate committees to determine whether there are views to feed into the discussion.
- b) should the decision be one that commits the actions of behaviour of the University, the officers should ensure that relevant areas of the University are aware of the discussion with sufficient time for the University to feed its views into the discussion.
- c) a formal vote should be taken to include only the voting members in category (a) of the Committee (or their delegated representative attendee).¹ Those members should ensure they have the relevant delegated authority from their respective Colleges prior to the vote. Any vote should record those Colleges formally voting and every effort should be made to seek the vote of Colleges who are not represented at the meeting (either before or after the formal vote).
- d) A record of the vote and its outcome should be communicated without delay to the Colleges' Committee and the Colleges' Standing Committee.

Where it is clear that a decision has been made that is unanimous across all Colleges:

- i. individual Bursars will be expected to report the decision to their Colleges as soon as practicable and take steps to ensure any appropriate actions arising from the decision are taken forward in their Colleges.
- ii. the Chair of the Bursars' Committee may sign documentation to reflect those unanimous decisions.

Where, however, it is clear that there is not consensus about the decision, the Committee may at its discretion:

- i. report the outcome to the Colleges, in order to consider the matter further at a later meeting, with either the same proposal or a revised proposal.
- ii. report the outcome to the Colleges' Committee for it to consider whether to take forward a majority vote outcome as a decision for all Colleges.

5b. *Decisions that recommend actions to the Colleges*¹

The Committee may act, as a committee or through its officers, to advise Colleges on particular actions or behaviours, including policies and practices that relate to harmonising or converging the actions of the Collegiate University and/or the Colleges collectively. Any advice provided to Colleges and other institutions, either through members of the Committee or through its appointed officers, or through staff of the Office of Intercollegiate Services, is provided on the basis that the advice is offered without any warranty as to its accuracy and that no liability shall fall on the Committee or any of its officers or members for such advice.

Where a recommendation is simply for advice or guidance, the Committee can delegate such matters to its officers, or any of its Standing Committees, Sub-Committees or Working Groups.

¹ i.e. This represents decisions only of the Colleges, and not the Houses of the Cambridge Theological Federation.

Where a recommendation is made that anticipates a universal adoption by all Colleges, the matter should be discussed first at a formal meeting of the Bursars' Committee. Should a recommendation of the Committee to the Colleges not be made by consensus, confirmation of the recommendation shall be made by a formal vote, which shall be passed by a 2/3 majority of the voting members in category (a) present and voting.

Any such recommendation of the Committee shall be adopted by the individual Houses of the Cambridge Theological Federation at their absolute discretion.

5c. *Appointments made by the Committee to other bodies*

Proposed membership for any Standing Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Group shall normally be made through the Business Committee (although the Bursars' Committee may elect to determine membership directly at one of its meetings or by circulation): the standard term of membership of any Standing Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Group shall be of three years in duration, providing that a term of membership is renewable for an unlimited number of terms.

Should an appointment not be made by consensus, confirmation of the appointment shall be made by a formal vote, which shall be passed by a 2/3 majority of the members in both categories (a) and (b) present and voting.

The officers of the Bursars' Committee are accountable for their actions to the Bursars' Committee: any complaints about the behaviour or conduct of an officer in relation to their duties will be considered in the first instance by the Bursars' Business Committee. The Business Committee will appoint two or more of their number to consider and investigate any allegation, and report their findings to the Business Committee: if any allegation results in a recommendation to address the behaviour or conduct of an officer, a written report including those recommendations will be made to the Bursars' Committee for decision.

Where the Bursars' Committee makes appointments to other bodies, the following provisions will apply:

a) Chair of a Bursars' Committee Standing Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Group

- the Chair shall act to represent the consensus views of the Sub-Committee in all matters;
- the Chair is accountable to the Bursars' Committee for their behaviour or conduct in relation to those duties;
- any complaints would be considered by the Bursars' Business Committee through the process outlined above, save that the appointed persons for any investigation would normally include the Chair and Secretary of the Bursars' Committee.

b) Appointment to committees external to the Bursars' Committee

- the representative shall act to represent the Bursars in all matters, and shall seek to consult other Bursars where appropriate and practicable;
- the representative is accountable to the Bursars' Committee for their behaviour or conduct in relation to that representative appointment;
- any complaints would be considered by the Bursars' Business Committee through the process outlined above, save that the appointed persons for any investigation would normally include the Chair and Secretary of the Bursars' Committee.

5d. *Terms of reference of the Bursars' Committee*

The terms of reference of the Committee are approved by the Bursars' Committee: it shall receive the terms of reference at least annually and may make recommendations on proposed changes at any time.

Should an amendment to the terms of reference not be made by consensus, confirmation of the amendment shall be made by a formal vote, which shall be passed by a 2/3 majority of the voting members in both categories (a) and (b) present and voting.

Last considered and approved by the Bursars' Committee on 17 November 2023