

**Colleges' Committee**  
**Terms of reference**

**1. Purpose**

The Colleges' Committee was constituted in its present form in 1964. The purposes of the Committee are:

- a. to consider matters of common concern to the Cambridge Colleges in their relations to one another, and with the University;
- b. to determine on such matters whether the Colleges should work collaboratively;
- c. to receive regular reports from the University, normally through the Vice-Chancellor;
- d. to consider recommendations made to it by the Bursars' Committee or the Senior Tutors' Committee, in accordance with reporting and decision lines for the principal intercollegiate committees, as agreed from time to time, or by any of its Standing Committees or Working Groups;
- e. to receive reports from, and to refer matters of consideration to, the Bursars' Committee, the Senior Tutors' Committee, the Colleges' Standing Committee and the University and Colleges Joint Committee.

**2. Standing**

The business of the Colleges' 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 Committee includes in its membership the Heads of House of each of the Colleges in the University of Cambridge.

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

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

- a) the Chair and Secretary of the Bursars' Committee *ex officio*;
- b) the Secretary and Associate Secretaries of the Senior Tutors' Committee *ex officio*;
- c) the Chair of the Colleges Development Directors Committee *ex officio*;
- d) the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge *ex officio*;
- e) the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge *ex officio*;
- f) the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) of the University of Cambridge *ex officio*;
- g) the Registry of the University of Cambridge *ex officio*;
- h) the Academic Secretary of the University of Cambridge *ex officio*; and
- i) the Head of the Office of Intercollegiate Services.

The Chair and Secretary of the Committee, at their joint 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.

### **4. Officers**

The Colleges' Committee select for themselves a Chair and Deputy Chair as officers of the Committee, through a nominations and voting procedure as agreed by the Committee from time to time. Terms of office are for two years, with the Deputy Chair automatically succeeding to the office of the Chair at the end of his or her term.

The Head of the Office of Intercollegiate Services shall serve as Secretary to arrange and record the meetings, and to prepare and distribute agenda and papers.

### **5. Meetings**

Meetings are convened by the Chair: the Committee meets at least once annually, and normally once in each of the Michaelmas and Lent Terms and twice in the Easter Term. Notice of the date, time and place of meetings, and agenda and papers, is provided by the Secretary, in a manner to be determined by him or her.

There is no quoracy for a meeting of the Committee. Members who are unable to attend are permitted to send a formal representative on his or her behalf, providing this is notified to the Secretary in advance of the meeting. The formal representative shall have the authority of the member to act on his or her behalf.

By exception, attendance at the Committee may include remote attendance through teleconferencing or other mechanisms, providing it is clear that the members can contribute effectively to any discussion.

In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair will assume the Chair for the duration of that meeting. In the absence of the Chair and the Deputy Chair, 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.

Decisions and recommendations of the Committee are made by consensus. All intercollegiate agreements require the consensus of all Colleges and take into account the recommendations of other principal intercollegiate committees where appropriate.

## **6. 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 group of members, or a single member, of the Committee to resolve 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 and Working Groups, providing that these relate directly to the purposes of the Committee outlined above. The Committee may establish the membership, terms of reference, and duration of any Standing Committee and Working Group.

## **7. Conduct of officers and other appointments made by the Colleges' Committee**

The officers of the Colleges' Committee are accountable for their actions to the Colleges' Committee: any complaints about the behaviour or conduct of an officer in relation to his or her duties will be considered in the first instance by the Colleges' Standing Committee (in the absence of the officer in question). The Standing Committee will appoint two or more of their number to consider and investigate any allegation, and report their findings to the Standing 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 Colleges' Committee for decision.

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

### **a) Chair of a Standing 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 Colleges' Committee for his or her behaviour or conduct in relation to those duties;
- any complaints would be considered by the Colleges' Standing Committee through the process outlined above, save that the appointed persons for any investigation would normally include the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Colleges' Committee.

### **b) Appointment to committees external to the Colleges' Committee**

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

**8. Terms of reference**

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

*Approved by Colleges' Committee on 19 March 2022*