Senior Tutors' Committee
Terms of reference

1. Purpose

The Senior Tutors' Committee was constituted in its present form in 2021. The purposes of the Committee are:

a. discuss and approve intercollegiate policies relating to the provision of education and student experience.

b. constitute an intercollegiate body for liaison with its member Colleges, the University, the Cambridge Students' Union and with other bodies in relation to matters relating to education and the wider student experience.

c. maintain an overview on the wider implications of policies on undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers and all matters relating to student admissions.

d. gather and disseminate examples of good practice with regard to College issues.

e. receive reports from University bodies and joint committees and working groups, consider recommendations of the University, and when appropriate make recommendations to the University and co-create policies with the University.

f. to work with the Colleges' Committee and the Bursars' Committee in the formulation of intercollegiate policy.

g. to inform Colleges' Committee regularly of its reported business and to make recommendations on intercollegiate agreements.

2. Membership

The Senior Tutors' Committee includes in its membership:

a) the Senior Tutors of each of the Colleges in the University of Cambridge.
b) the appointed officers of the Senior Tutors' Committee (if they are not current Senior Tutors included under membership a) above).
c) two student members, nominated by the Cambridge Students' Union.

The Senior Tutors' 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:

i. the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge *ex officio*;
ii. the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) of the University of Cambridge *ex officio*;
iii. the Director of Admissions for the Cambridge Colleges *ex officio*;
iv. a Head of House, nominated by the Colleges' Committee;
v. the Secretary of the Bursars' Committee *ex officio*;
vi. a Development Director, nominated by the Colleges Development Directors Committee;
vii. the Head of the Office of Intercollegiate Services *ex officio;*
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.

3. Officers

The Senior Tutors' Committee select for themselves a Chair and one or more Deputy Chairs as officers of the Committee, through a nominations and voting procedure as agreed by the Committee from time to time. The term of office for each of these officers is for a period not exceeding three years in the first instance, with the possibility of renewal for a further period of three years. The total term for any person serving one or more of these offices shall normally not exceed six consecutive years. Previous terms of office shall not disbar a member serving again in the same or a different capacity, providing that a period of no less than one year elapses between them.

4. Conduct of officers

The officers of the Senior Tutors' Committee are accountable for their actions to the Senior Tutors' 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 Senior Tutors' 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 Senior Tutors' Committee for decision.

5. Meetings and the conduct of business

5a. Conduct of meetings

Meetings are convened by the Chair: the Committee meets at least twice each Term.

The Head of the Office of Intercollegiate Services, or their deputy, shall serve as an Executive Secretary to arrange and record the meetings, and to prepare and distribute agenda and papers. The Executive Secretary is not an officer of the Committee.

Notice of the date, time and place of meetings, and agenda and papers, is provided by the Executive Secretary, in a manner to be determined by them.

There is no quoracy for a meeting of the Committee or for the approval or discussion of business. It is expected that members of the Committee will normally attend meetings. Each member who is unable to attend is permitted to send a formal representative on their behalf, providing this is notified to the Executive Secretary in advance of the meeting. Where a voting member is unable to attend a meeting, they are permitted to nominate to the Executive Secretary in advance someone to vote in their place.

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, a Deputy Chair designated for this purpose by the Chair will assume the Chair for the duration of that 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.

The Chair of the Committee may from time to time, normally once or twice per term, convene an informal meeting of Senior Tutors and officers of the Committee to discuss in depth one or more topical issues. At the discretion of the Chair, additional attendees may be invited as appropriate.

5b. Reserved business

The Committee may conduct reserved business, which include only the presence of members from categories (a) and (b). 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. the College admission and membership and/or academic assessment of individuals;
iii. concerns about the conduct of any officer or member of the Committee;
iv. any other matter at the absolute discretion of the Chair.

5c. 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.

5d. Standing Committees and Working Groups

The Committee may, at its discretion, set up (and otherwise suspend or disband) Standing Committees or 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.

The Standing Committees and Working Groups may make recommendations to the Committee, but will not normally have any decision powers (see section 6 below).

6. 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, providing they take into account the expressions of views on that mode of voting by any member of the Committee. A vote may be conducted at a formal meeting, or outside of meetings, again at the absolute discretion of the Chair.

6a. Decisions that commit the actions or behaviours of the Colleges

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 members in category (a) above. 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 Senior Tutors will be expected to report the decision to their College governing bodies or Councils 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 Senior Tutors' 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.

6b. Decisions that recommend actions to the Colleges

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 or Working Groups.

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 Senior Tutors' 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 members from categories (a) and (b) present and voting.

6c. Appointments made by the Committee to other bodies

Proposals for membership for any Standing Committee, Working Group or representation on an external committee shall normally be made through the Business Committee (although the Senior Tutors' Committee may agree to confirm a membership appointment directly at one of its meetings or by circulation).

The standard term of membership of any Standing Committee or Working Group shall be of three years in duration and renewable for a second term of three years. Previous periods of representation shall not disbar a member serving again in the same or a different capacity, providing that a period of no less than one year elapses between them.

Members of Standing Committees and Working Groups, or representatives on external committees, taking leave of two terms or less shall be replaced on a temporary basis only, with the current member returning after their period of leave.

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 from categories (a) and (b) present and voting.

Where the Senior Tutors' 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 Standing Committee or Working Group in all matters.
- the Chair is accountable to the Senior Tutors' Committee for their behaviour or conduct in relation to those duties.

- any complaints would be considered by the Senior Tutors' Business Committee through the process outlined above, save that the appointed persons for any investigation would normally include one of the officers of the Senior Tutors' Committee.

b) Appointment to committees external to the Senior Tutors' Committee

- the Committee's representative shall act to represent the Senior Tutors in all matters, seek to consult the other Senior Tutors where appropriate and practicable, and to notify the officers of the Senior Tutors' Committee promptly after any meeting of any urgent or important matters;
- where they cannot attend a specific meeting, they should inform in advance any other College representatives and/or the officers of the Senior Tutors' Committee of their likely absence;
- the representative is accountable to the Senior Tutors' Committee for their behaviour or conduct in relation to that representative appointment;
- any complaints would be considered by the Senior Tutors' Business Committee through the process outlined above, save that the appointed persons for any investigation would normally include one of the officers of the Senior Tutors' Committee.

6d. Terms of reference of the Senior Tutors' Committee

The terms of reference of the Committee are approved by the Senior Tutors' 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 members present and voting, from all categories of membership.

Last considered and approved by the Senior Tutors' Committee on 3 November 2023