

Complete Policy Title:

**Terms of Reference For  
Department Chairs<sup>1</sup>**

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by:

**Senate**

Date of Most Recent Approval:

**May 24, 2000**

Date of Original Approval(s):

**Senate, May 20, 1981**

**Board of Governors, June 24, 1981**

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated:

**October 13, 1993**

**December 9, 1993**

Responsible Executive :

**Provost and Vice-President (Academic)**

Enquiries:

**[University Secretariat](#)**

**DISCLAIMER:**

*If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails.*

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The role of a Chair is an important one in the governance of the University. The Chair is at a central point in the administration, representing the Department in Faculty and University affairs, and leading and managing the affairs of the Department.

The Chair is nominated by an *ad hoc* Selection Committee (see [Procedure for Selecting Departmental Chairs](#)). The nomination must be endorsed by the Senate Committee on Appointments and is forwarded to the Senate for approval and then to the Board of Governors for final ratification. The Chair will serve for a term of five years, renewable for a second term of up to five years. In extraordinary circumstances the Chair may be appointed for a third consecutive term, or for a term of less than five years.

The Chair is the chief executive officer of the Department and is responsible to the Dean of the Faculty. The Chair or a delegate represents the Department in any matters dealing with Departmental, Faculty or University policy, curriculum, appointments, and nominations to committees. The Chair is responsible for the management of the Department's physical, financial and human resources, ensuring that they are utilized as effectively as possible to meet both the short-term and long-term objectives of the Department, the Faculty and the University.

In essence, the duties of a Chair are to foster a healthy climate within the Department for the conduct of scholarship, teaching, and service, a climate which is inclusive, in which Department members receive equitable treatment and support, and in which procedures are open and visible. Many of the

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<sup>1</sup> These terms of reference apply to Department Chairs and Directors of Schools in the Faculties of Engineering, Humanities, Science and Social Sciences and to Directors of Programs.

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responsibilities of a Chair are carried out through delegating duties to members of the Department and to support staff. Chairs are responsible for:

### **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

ensuring that all University and Faculty policies are followed within the Department and that all the members of the Department are familiar with those policies;

representing Departmental interests at other levels;

establishing an administrative and committee structure for sharing administrative activities with Department faculty and support staff;

### **PERSONNEL**

#### ***Faculty***

overseeing the career progress of faculty members, and fostering and encouraging their teaching and research programmes;

establishing a Departmental tenure and promotion committee and ensuring that it carries out its duties as specified in the *McMaster University Revised Policy and Regulations With Respect to Academic Appointment, Tenure and Promotion (1992)*;

submitting to the Faculty Dean, when required, reports outlining the activities of members, including consulting and outside professional activities;

recommending to the Faculty Dean research leaves and leaves of absence without pay;  
recommending to the Faculty Dean merit salary increases;

recruiting new faculty members in accordance with Faculty and University policies and procedures;

#### ***Non-academic Staff***

supervising the non-academic staff, ensuring that career development guidance is available to them and that their salaries are set and reviewed in accordance with University policies and procedures;

### **TEACHING**

determining which faculty members will teach the courses and give the tutorials and laboratories offered by the Department;

providing leadership in relation to curriculum planning and development, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels;

ensuring that administrative matters in connection with the Department's graduate and undergraduate education programmes are carried out, that the Faculty and University deadlines for the submission of examination copy and curricula revisions and for evaluations of students are met, etc.;

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ensuring, in co-operation with the appropriate Dean, that the teaching and related responsibilities (e.g. safe laboratory procedures) of the Department are carried out and that all courses are carefully planned and effectively taught;

overseeing the training of graduate student teaching assistants and the definition of the role(s) they are expected to fulfill in the context of the Department's educational objectives;

ensuring that students are properly advised and counselled;

### **BUDGET AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION**

preparing annually a Departmental budget proposal for consideration by the Faculty Dean, and monitoring the spending of the funds allocated;

allocating, in consultation with the Faculty Dean, the office and research space at the disposal of the Department;

allocating the Department's secretarial and other support staff.