

Complete Policy Title:
**Procedures For Selecting Department
Chairs ¹**

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by:
**Senate
Board of Governors**

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Responsible Executive:
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Enquiries:
[Policy \(University Secretariat\)](#)

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Chairs play a key role in the administrative structure of the University. It is important, therefore, that the selection procedure be conducted carefully with a representative and informed committee. While the members of the *Ad Hoc* Selection Committee are chosen by their peers and should consult with their peers during the deliberations of the Committee (within established confidentiality limitations), it is the members of the *Ad Hoc* Committee who are responsible for selecting the Chair.

Normally, by September in the last year of the term of the Chair of an academic department an *Ad Hoc* Selection Committee will be formed with the membership shown below. In the event of a vacancy other than by expiration of the term of the appointment, the Committee shall be constituted as soon as possible.

Composition of the *Ad Hoc* Selection Committee

Dean of the Faculty (Chair)
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies

Three faculty members from the department concerned, one from each rank elected by and from the full-time faculty members of that rank in the department². An incumbent chair is not eligible for election to the Committee.

¹ This procedure applies in the selection of Department Chairs and Directors of Schools in the Faculties of Engineering, Health Sciences, Humanities, Science and Social Sciences.

² With the approval of the Dean of the Faculty, representation by rank may be varied when the composition of the Department so warrants.

One staff member from the department concerned, elected by and from the staff members in the department. To be eligible for election, a staff member should normally have at least one year of service within the department or at least two years of service within the Faculty and, in either case, there should be the expectation of continued service within the department for a year or more beyond the start of the term of the new or re-appointed department chair. For this purpose, a staff member is defined as any full-time employee of the University who is not a member of the teaching staff.

The election of the committee members just named shall be by secret ballot using a single transferable voting process. Should such an election result in a tie, the tie will be resolved by random selection. The election and its resolution, when required, will be the responsibility of the Dean's Office.

For departments offering undergraduate degrees only, two undergraduate students who are in Levels III, IV, or V of programmes offered by the department, such students to be selected by a process determined by the Dean. For departments offering both graduate and undergraduate degrees, one undergraduate student as above, and one full-time graduate student elected by and from the students registered in graduate degree programmes in the department.

One faculty member from the Faculty, but outside the department concerned, appointed by the Chair of the Committee. In addition, the Chair of the Committee may appoint one extra faculty member from within the department to provide representation from an unrepresented group, such as female faculty members, teaching-stream faculty, or an important research area. The Chair of the Committee may also appoint one extra staff member to the Committee, not necessarily from within the department.

Additional members as specified in the By-laws of the Faculty.

Procedures

Once the committee membership is settled the Dean shall communicate with all members of the department (faculty, staff and students), indicating the membership of the committee and inviting them to address their comments and concerns on the future of the department. Department members should also be encouraged to suggest the nomination of candidates they feel should be considered as the next chair, to any member of the selection committee.

The deliberations of selection committees are held in confidence. This is essential to enable a frank and open discussion of the needs and aspirations of the department as well as the attributes of candidates being proposed for the position. While committee members are encouraged to solicit input from the constituencies that they represent, they must not divulge confidential information and comments shared by committee members.

The committee should be given a copy of the most recent departmental review along with the IQAP reports for programs that are offered by the department.

These reports shall be considered by the Committee. The Committee may wish to seek further information and engage in discussion on the following.

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- (a) current position and future opportunities of the department in terms of its academic programs, research and community engagement;
 - (b) the adequacy of communication (including communication with students) within the department, and with outside groups such as alumni and the private and public sectors as appropriate;
 - (c) the department's process for the development of long-term plans;
 - (d) the effectiveness and role of support staff in the department/school;
 - (e) the adequacy and appropriateness of consultation (including committees) within the department; and
 - (f) the adequacy of practices and procedures on appointment matters.

In reviewing the current status of the department, the Committee should seek the views of the incumbent Chair.

The Committee shall communicate its views on these matters to the department, and may make recommendations on any of the subjects under review. This is particularly relevant in cases where the latest department review is several years old at the time of the selection process.

Following its review, the Committee shall identify one or more suitable candidates. Prospective candidates should receive copies of the Terms of Reference for Department Chairs and the Committee may wish to interview these candidates and seek their views on the issues facing the department and on how they would endeavour to foster a healthy climate, conducive to scholarly activity, teaching and service, in the department. In arriving at its final recommendation, the Committee shall take into consideration the degree of support accorded each candidate by the department, and the general welfare of the department as it may be assessed in the context of the ongoing development of the Faculty and the University generally.

Once its deliberations are complete the chair will discuss the selection with the candidate of choice to ensure that they are aware of their nomination and that they are willing to serve provided that the appointment recommendation is approved. The chair will then forward a recommendation to the Senate Committee on Appointments. This should include the name of the candidate, a copy of their CV and a summary of the reasons which led the committee to its choice of the best candidate to undertake the role.