

Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee Standing Orders

Legislation and background

1. The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 established the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council. Schedule 1 of the Act makes provision for certain administrative and other matters with respect to the Council, including the establishment of committees.
2. Schedule 1 states that:
 - The Council must establish a committee (a “research committee”) for the purposes of advising the Council on matters concerning research [section 12(1)].
 - The Council is to appoint one of its members to chair meetings of the research committee [section 12(2)].
 - In appointing members of the research committee, the Council is to have regard to the desirability of including persons who [section 12(3)]:
 - a) Have experience, and have shown capacity, relating to research or the application of research.
 - b) Are currently engaged in research or the application of research.
 - Subject to the points above, the Council is to determine the composition of its committees, the terms and conditions of committee membership, and the procedure (including any quorum) of its committees [section 14(1)].
 - Any of the committees of the Council may include persons who are not members of the Council [section 14(2)].
 - The Council is to pay to the members of its committees (whether or not they are also members of the Council) such allowances as the Scottish Ministers may determine [section 14(3)].
 - The Council is to keep under review the structure of its committees and the scope of the activities of each [section 14(4)].
3. Schedule 1 also states that the Council may authorise any of its committees to exercise such of its functions to such extent as it may determine [section 15(1)]. Delegated authority for each committee is contained in the remit for each committee as agreed by the Council.
4. At its meeting on 3 October 2005, the Council agreed to establish a Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee. The remit, membership, and standing

orders were approved by the Council at its meeting on 10 March 2006. The remit of the Committee is reviewed on an annual basis.

Committee membership – general

5. As set out in the Council's Standing Orders, the membership of a committee will be determined by the chair of the committee and the Chair of the Council.
6. Council committees must have Council representation. The chair, who will be determined by the Council, will be a Council member. Other committee members who are not members of the Council will be referred to as "external members"; and the executive's guidelines for appointing members should be followed in their selection.
7. The Chief Executive, although a member of the Council, will not normally be a member of any committee.
8. A Council member's term of office on a committee will run concurrently with their Council term of office. Each external member will be appointed for a period of three years, with the possibility of serving for a further period thereafter. Before a member reaches their end of term, the Chair will consider the future remit of the committee and whether the skills set and experience required to meet this remit has changed as a result. This could result in members not being asked to serve a second term and the Chair will initiate a new recruitment process to source the required skills set. Outgoing members can, if they choose, be kept informed of future committee business as 'past members'.
9. An external member may by giving notice in writing to the chair of the committee resign as a member of a committee. A Council member may by giving notice in writing to the Chair of the Council resign as a member of a committee.
10. If the Chair of the committee and the Chair of the Council consider that a member's attendance at meetings has been unsatisfactory or that the member is otherwise unable or unfit to discharge the functions required of a member, they may be given notice in writing regarding removal from the committee.

Remit of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

11. The Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee has a role to respond to, recommend and advise the Council on research and knowledge exchange strategy, policy and funding issues relevant to Scottish HE institutions and colleges, with broad areas of advice including but not limited to:
 - Providing regular analyses of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the areas of research and innovation support, taking a broad view.
 - Providing regular and timely advice to the Council on prioritisation, in the use of Council's resources to maximise delivery of the SFC Corporate Plan and to address Scottish Government outcomes.
 - Working with enterprise agencies and other stakeholders to give Council advice on a strategy for innovation and support of knowledge exchange for sustainable economic growth.
 - Identifying opportunities for Council to consider interventions to leverage significant resource into Scotland in support of research and/or knowledge exchange. Examples include the Technology Strategy Board and European funding.

Membership of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

12. The Chair of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee will be a member of the Council. At least two further Committee members will be members of the Council. It is expected that there will be about 10 external members.
13. The membership composition should have regard to equalities and include an appropriate balance across types of institutions, geography and subject specialist areas, as well as seeking to include various additional qualities such as a UK wide view, challenge, international perspective, knowledge of post-graduate issues and research pooling.
14. The target membership profile includes members with the following key skill sets
 - Chair – council member.
 - University research academics (min. 4).
 - Universities Scotland's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee convener (1).

- University research management (1).
- College sector senior management (1).
- Science Policy academic (1).
- University/ business and/or policy interface (1).
- Business (2).
- Business organisation (1).
- Public/ third sector policy/ research user (1).

*Individual members may cover more than one of the above characteristics.

15. In addition to the Committee's members, there should be observers with relevant research and knowledge exchange expertise from the following stakeholder groups:

- Highlands and Islands Enterprise and/or Scottish Enterprise.
- Scottish Government.
- Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

16. Key stakeholder groups should be consulted with on the appointment of external committee members in line with the executive's guidelines for appointing members.

Proceedings of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

17. The validity of any proceedings of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee is not affected by a vacancy in membership or by any defect in the appointment of a member.

18. The secretariat function is provided by the lead SFC directorate – Research and Innovation.

Quorum

19. The quorum for a Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting is one in excess of half the membership, and this must include at least one Council member. However, when not quorate the members present may decide to proceed with a meeting at which items on the agenda are considered and any recommendations reached are put to the next Committee meeting for decision

if time allows or otherwise are put to Council for decision, with a clear statement that the meeting had not been quorate.

Role of the Chair in Committee meetings

20. It is the role of the Chair to see that Committee business is conducted in an orderly fashion and to ensure that members obtain a fair hearing. Members wishing to speak shall do so through the Chair.
21. The Chair is also responsible for leading the meeting to reach decisions. The Committee will normally make decisions on the basis of agreement by consensus, but where the Chair believes it to be in the interest of the progress of a debate, or where it is proposed and seconded by two members present, the Clerk may be asked to count and record a vote by a show of hands.
22. As set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation, generally committees are expected to take matters as far as appropriate before making recommendations to the Council. The Chair of the Committee will normally have responsibility for judging when it is appropriate to make recommendations to Council: where items are routine, they will stay with the Committee until the final stage of decision-making; and where items are novel, unusual or potentially contentious, proposals should be considered by Council at an earlier stage.

Collective responsibility and standards of conduct

23. Committee members should be encouraged to express any differing views within the Committee's internal decision-making process. In the event that a member has a reservation regarding a particular decision, they may ask for their dissent to be formally recorded in the minute. Once a decision has been reached, all members should support it.
24. Committee members should observe the same rules as those set out under the [Code of Conduct for SFC board members](#).

Nomination of a Vice-Chair

25. The Chair may nominate a Vice-Chair to act as deputy in the absence of the Chair at Committee meetings. This nomination will be subject to the approval of the Committee.

Clerk to the Committee

26. The Clerk to the Committee will advise the Chair on the conduct of Committee business and agenda planning. The Clerk will also advise Committee members on formal matters relating to the Committee.

Conflict of interest

27. All external members are required to complete a register of interests on appointment (Council members complete this form on appointment to the Council) and must notify the Clerk when any changes to this need to be made. Members' registers of interests will be made publicly available on the Scottish Funding Council website.
28. If any member has, or could be perceived to have, an interest in a matter that is being considered by the Committee, then it is their duty to declare that interest at the start of the meeting or as soon as they become aware of it, whether or not that interest has already been recorded in their register of interests. This declaration will be recorded in the minutes by the Clerk. The member must decide, taking advice from the Chair, whether they should:
 - Remain in the meeting and participate fully.
 - Remain in the meeting but make no contribution.
 - Withdraw from the meeting for the discussion of, and any decision on, the relevant item.

The Chair may, in any event, ask a member to leave the meeting if s/he thinks it is appropriate.

29. Whilst individual members have a responsibility to consider their position with regard to conflict of interest, prior to the meeting the Clerk will consider the agenda in the context of the register of members' interests and advise the Chair accordingly.

Attendance at meetings

30. Meetings will normally be attended by the executive's Director of Research and Innovation.
31. In addition, other members of staff of the Council's executive may attend meetings as required for agenda items for which they are presenting information, to be available to respond to questions on matters arising from

papers, to hear the debate where the Committee's discussion will inform their work, or as part of their on-going professional development.

32. Attendees may have a role in introducing papers, providing clarification, and contributing to discussions, but may not take part in Committee decisions.
33. As set out in the legislation, a representative of the Scottish Ministers is entitled to participate in any deliberations (but not in decisions) of any committee of the Council [section 16 of Schedule 1].

Observers

34. Any member of the Council has the right to attend Committee meetings as an observer by agreement with the Chair.
35. Observers may, with the permission of the Chair, speak and contribute to discussions, but may not take part in Committee decisions.

Timing of meetings

Scheduled (or ordinary) meetings

36. The Committee will meet on an appropriate number of occasions in a year to carry out its duties effectively, but will meet at least twice a year.
37. The schedule of meetings for each year will be agreed by the Committee in the previous year, following consultation with the Chair by the Clerk and taking into account the dates of Council meetings.

Extra (or special) meetings

38. The Chair may convene additional meetings as s/he deems necessary.
39. The Committee may agree to delegate to a sub-group responsibility for a particular matter. The sub-group would then report back to the Committee.

Agenda and papers

Agenda items

40. Members will have the opportunity to suggest items of business and comment on the draft agenda and draft minute before each meeting. The Clerk to the Committee will be the first point of contact for members. The final agenda and designation of business will be decided by the Chair.

41. Unless otherwise agreed with the Chair, items for endorsement or for noting will be starred (*) on the agenda and the Chair will ask at the start of the meeting whether members wish to discuss any of the starred items. (Members should notify the Clerk to the Committee of this wish in advance of the meeting.) Unless members specifically ask to discuss these items, the Chair will assume that they have been endorsed or noted.

Distribution of agenda and papers

42. The agenda of business and accompanying papers will normally be distributed no later than one week before a scheduled meeting of the Committee.

Freedom of Information

Publishing papers

43. The Committee will decide at its meeting which of its papers will be published, or published in edited form, on the Council's website. The Committee's agenda and those papers that the Committee considers publishable/ publishable in edited form will be made available on the Council's website after the next meeting of Council.
44. Committee papers, as with all documentation produced by the Council, are subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Requests for Committee papers not published on the Council's website will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's normal freedom of information procedures.

Approval of minutes of Committee meetings

45. Minutes of a Committee meeting will be submitted to the Chair for preliminary approval, and thereafter to the subsequent meeting of the Committee for formal approval.

Reporting to the Council

46. The minutes of each Committee meeting will be reported to the Council at the next scheduled Council meeting for noting – whether they have been confirmed or are unconfirmed but approved by the Chair.
47. At each Council meeting there will be the opportunity for the Chair to raise orally matters that s/he thinks the Council needs to be aware of.
48. The Committee will also conduct an annual self-evaluation.