



Roles and Responsibilities of Members

Introduction

General Faculties Council (GFC) is the principal academic decision-making body of the university. It is established in the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) and given authority, subject to the Board of Governors, over the academic affairs of the university.

For GFC to be successful in fulfilling its terms of reference and meeting its responsibilities to the university it depends on the active engagement of its members. GFC has delegated much of its authority for routine matters to standing committees allowing GFC to engage in high level strategic and stewardship policy issues. GFC members have the opportunity to serve on the standing committees that approve matters with the delegated authority from GFC.

GFC operates under the principle of collegial academic governance including:

- A commitment to inclusive and participatory governance decision-making
- A desire to facilitate meaningful individual-level engagement in governance processes
- A commitment to openness, transparency, and respectful communication
- A commitment to responsiveness, respect, and reciprocity between governing bodies and between governing bodies and university administration

Roles and Responsibilities of Members

1. Understand GFC

- 1.1 Members should understand that not all matters under GFC jurisdiction will come before that body for approval. Some decisions are made at the standing committee level as GFC has delegated authority to approve and report on actions taken on certain matters.
- 1.2 The university operates in a bicameral governance system. Members should understand the distinction between the role and responsibilities of GFC and the Board of Governors.

2. Meeting Attendance

- 2.1 Members have a responsibility to attend GFC meetings.
 - a. If a student misses two consecutive meetings, or more than three meetings in one academic year, the Students' Union or the Graduate Students' Association may request that the Chair declare the position vacant.
 - b. If a Faculty representative or a non-student member misses two consecutive meetings or more than three meetings in one academic year without a reason satisfactory to the members of the GFC Executive Committee, the Executive Committee shall declare the position vacant.
- 2.2 Members have a responsibility to serve on GFC committees as appropriate and attend committee meetings.
 - a. If an elected member is absent from three consecutive meetings or is frequently absent without a reason satisfactory to the remaining members of the committee, the Chair shall declare the position vacant.

2.3 Members should advise the GFC Secretary or committee coordinator if they are unable to attend a meeting.

3. Participate in GFC Business

3.1 Members should prepare for meetings by reviewing agenda materials in advance that, for open sessions, are publicly available at ualberta.ca/governance

3.2 Members should engage in candid and respectful discussion of matters which are brought before GFC and its various bodies

3.3 When voting on motions:

- a. Members must act in good faith with the view to the best interests of the university as a whole. While members may be informed by matters raised by various constituencies, it is the duty of a member to ensure that all constituencies are fairly considered in the process of decision making.
- b. When notified of an e-vote, members should vote in a timely manner in order to ensure that quorum requirements are met.

4. Manage Conflict of Interest and Act Ethically

4.1 Comply with the university's policies and procedures regarding both [ethical conduct](#) and [conflict of interest](#). Members must declare conflicts when they arise.

4.2 Maintain confidentiality of all information included in closed session meetings.

5. Ask Questions

5.1 Information requests may be made of the University Governance office, should members require more information than is provided with the meeting agenda.

5.2 If a member wishes to raise a question at GFC within the jurisdiction of the body, a question may be submitted in writing to the GFC Secretary up to six working days before the next GFC meeting to receive a written response.

5.3 Every GFC meeting has Question Period as a standing item wherein members may raise a question during the time set aside for this item. Procedures for Question Period are available at ualberta.ca/governance

5.4 If a member has a question with regard to an item on the agenda, it may be raised during consideration of that item at the GFC meeting.

5.5 If a member wishes to add an item to the agenda for debate, the member should contact the Chair or GFC Secretary for assistance.

6. Communicate Information to Constituents

6.1 Members should communicate with their Faculty or constituency regarding agenda items coming before GFC.

6.2 Members should communicate with their Faculty or constituency on matters which were discussed/approved at GFC in Open Session.