

Senate Committee Guide

Approval Authority: Senate

Established On: 2026 06 12

Amendments: none

Category: Senate

1.0 Purpose

The Senate Committee Guide is developed in direct alignment with Senate Bylaws Section 8 – Committees, providing a structured framework for the establishment, operation, and governance of Senate committees. It ensures that committees function effectively in fulfilling Senate’s mandate by outlining their composition, responsibilities, reporting requirements, and decision-making authority. This guide supports transparency, accountability, and alignment with Senate priorities, enabling committees to contribute meaningfully to the academic and governance functions of the university.

2.0 Establishment, Merger, and Dissolution of Committees

The Senate reserves the right to establish, merge, and dissolve committees as needed, in response to the evolving priorities and needs of the university.

Committees may be created by Senate resolution, and their scope, responsibilities, and powers will be defined upon formation.

A formal review process should be conducted to assess committee effectiveness, including engagement levels, mandate relevance, and deliverables. These reviews will be reported to the Senate annually and may be conducted through assessments of committee performance as well as feedback from committee members via evaluation surveys. Committees may be merged if their mandates significantly overlap or dissolved if their function is deemed redundant or inactive for more than one academic year.

3.0 Types of Senate Committees

The Senate shall operate with the following types of committees:

1. Senate Executive Committee: The primary body responsible for overseeing Senate operations, agenda setting, and coordination of Senate activities.
2. Standing Committees: Permanent committees addressing ongoing Senate responsibilities. Each standing committee must submit regular reports to the Senate at the meetings as well as an annual workplan aligning with Senate priorities. These committees carry out continuous duties, established to address long-term or ongoing responsibilities of the Senate. Standing committees are a permanent fixture within Senate operations unless merged or dissolved by Senate resolution.
3. Program Committees: Oversee academic programs, ensuring alignment with institutional goals, academic standards, and policies. While these committees operate independently, they must submit reports at each Senate meeting and provide an annual summary of key decisions and their alignment with Senate directives. Additionally, key program-related policies and regulations are subject to Senate approval, ensuring academic oversight and consistency with institutional governance.
4. Ad hoc Committees: These are temporary committees created to undertake specific tasks, projects or address issues. Once the committee has fulfilled its assigned duties, it will be dissolved, and its mandate will expire.

3.1 Functions, Duties, Responsibilities, and Powers

Each committee's functions, duties, and powers will be specified in its Senate resolution, terms of reference, or charter.

- Review Period: Terms of reference should be reviewed at least once every three years to ensure alignment with Senate priorities as well as the needs of the programs.
- Decision-making Authority: Committees must clearly define whether they make recommendations or decisions, specifying Senate oversight where applicable.

3.2 Terms of Reference items

The Terms of Reference for any committee should include the minimum required information as follows:

- Purpose: Clearly defined scope and strategic alignment.
- Responsibilities: Specific duties and deliverables.
- Membership & Leadership: Including co-chair options and advisory roles.
- Meetings: Frequency, format, and quorum requirements.
- Reporting: Standardized structure and submission deadlines.
- Decision-making Process: Whether the committee makes recommendations or final decisions.
- Dispute Resolution/Conflict of Interest: Steps for handling internal conflicts within committees.

3.3 Reporting Requirements

All Senate Committees are required to report regularly to the Senate on the deliverables and actions taken in relation to their mandate. This includes how the committee's work aligns with the broader business of the Senate.

- Annual Reports should be submitted according to a predetermined schedule, ensuring timely updates that facilitate Senate oversight and decision-making.
- Each report should detail:
 - Progress on tasks assigned by Senate.
 - Outcomes and deliverables achieved.
 - Any challenges faced may impact on the completion of tasks.
 - Recommendations for Senate consideration, if applicable.

Committees may use their own format for regular reports as long as all required elements are included. For reference, a template is available: [NOSM-University-Report-Template-Senate 2025](#).

4.0 Election

4.1 Timeline and Term Duration for Committees

Elections and appointments must be completed before the June Senate meeting annually. This ensures that committees are fully constituted and ready to operate starting July 1 of each year. Committee members will serve a term from July 1 to June 30, though appointments may be renewed based on the needs of the committee and Senate.

Elections and Appointments: Must be completed before the June Senate meeting annually, ensuring committees are fully constituted by July 1.

Term Limits:

- Learner members: One year (renewable once)
- Faculty/Other members: Up to three years (renewable)
- The length of terms is outlined in the terms of reference but should not be more than one year (renewable once) for learners and no more than 3 years (renewable) for faculty or other members.

Members may be added during the year to fill vacancies as needed aligned with the terms of reference and applicable policies.

5.0 Membership Eligibility

- While non-members of the Senate may serve as members of Senate committees (excluding the Senate Executive Committee), only Senators are eligible to serve as Senate Committee Chairs.¹
- Committee Membership: Non-Senators may serve as members (excluding the Senate Executive Committee).
- Eligibility: Only Senators may serve as chairs, but non-Senators or community members may be considered as Vice-Chairs.
- Advisory Committees: External members may serve as chairs for advisory or non-governance committees, subject to Senate approval.

6.0 Appointment of Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Members

Appointments to Senate Committees generally occur before June each year, with the confirmation of the Chair, Vice Chair, and membership to be included in the June Senate report. In cases of vacancies, the Vice Chair may assume the role of Chair as outlined in the committee's Terms of Reference, pending

¹ Currently, Senate bylaws and regulations state that only Senators may serve as chairs of committees. However, the Act governing Senate membership also states in its ex-officio membership: "The chair of each standing committee of the Senate, or the person designated by the chair from within each standing committee." This inconsistency introduces potential ambiguity in leadership appointments. To maintain Senate oversight and governance integrity, chairs of standing committees should remain Senators. Upon review of the Act, we will seek necessary amendments to align its provisions with existing bylaws and regulations.

Senate confirmation if required. To ensure continuity in committee operations, mid-term appointments should be made as soon as possible, following established procedures for nominations and approvals.

AUTHORITIES AND OFFICERS

The following is a list of authorities and officers for this policy:

- a. Approving Authority: Senate
- b. Responsible Officer: University Secretary
- c. Procedural Authority: Provost
- d. Procedural Officer: University Secretary

Review and Revision History

Review Period: 3 years or as required

Date for Next Review: 2028 01