



## Rules of the Institutional Forum

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## RULES OF THE INSTITUTIONAL FORUM

### 1 Establishment

The Institutional Forum is established in accordance with Section 31 of the Higher Education Act (“the Act” and paragraph 22 of the Statute of the North-West University (“the Statute”).

### 2 Functions

- (1) In accordance with paragraph 23 of the Statute, the Institutional Forum advises the Council on matters affecting the University, including the following:
  - (a) the implementation of the Higher Education Act and national higher education policy;
  - (b) the selection of candidates for appointment as office bearers in accordance with the Rules for the Appointment of Office Bearers ;
  - (c) policy on equity in respect of race, gender and disability;
  - (d) codes of conduct;
  - (e) dispute resolution processes and procedures;
  - (f) the management of cultural diversity across the university;
  - (g) the fostering of a university culture that promotes tolerance and respect for human rights and creates an environment conducive to learning, teaching and research.
- (2) In addition to the preceding, the Institutional Forum performs such other functions as the Council may determine from time to time.

### 3 Authority

The Institutional Forum has the authority granted to it by the Act and the Statute.

The Institutional Forum has the authority to establish technical and standing committees chaired by members of the Institutional Forum, to which members may be co-opted who are not members of the Institutional Forum. These committees function under the control and in support of the activities of the Institutional Forum.

### 4 Membership

#### 4.1 Composition

In line with paragraph 22(1) of the Statute the composition of the Institutional Forum is as follows, provided that sensitivity for race, gender, disability and the nature of the NWU as a multi-campus institution are borne in mind:

STANDING MEMBERS				
	Number of representatives	Stakeholder group	Term and special conditions	Process to determine representatives
22(1)(a)	One	Council	Three years / until membership of Council ceases	Council designation
22(1)(b)	One	Vice-Chancellor / Institutional Management Committee (IM)	Three years	University Management Committee designation

<b>STANDING MEMBERS</b>				
	<b>Number of representatives</b>	<b>Stakeholder group</b>	<b>Term and special conditions</b>	<b>Process to determine representatives</b>
22(1)(c)	Three	Senate	Three years / until membership of Senate ceases <i>Provided that the respective campuses are represented</i>	Senate designation
22(1)(d)	Three	Academic staff (permanent)	Three years <i>Provided that the respective campuses are represented</i>	Nomination and election process facilitated by the Registrar
22(1)(e)	Four	Recognised Trade Union(s)	Three years <i>Provided that representatives are permanent NWU staff members</i>	Trade Union(s) designation
22(1)(f)	Three	Support staff (permanent)	Three years	Nomination and election process facilitated by the Registrar
22(1)(g)	Six	Student Representative Council (SRC)	One year / until membership of the SRC ceases <i>Provided that the respective campuses are represented by two student leaders each</i>	SRC designation
22(1)(h)	Two	Convocation	Three years	Designation by the President of the Convocation via Convocation Exco
22(1)(i)	Two	Persons to perform specialised tasks related to the functions in 2 above.	Three years	Process of co-opting by the Institutional Forum
<b>MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE</b>				
		Secretariat	-	

## 4.2 Term of office

A person may serve on the Institutional Forum for not more than two consecutive terms. .

## 4.3 Termination of membership

Membership of the Institutional Forum terminates if the member concerned –

- (a) resigns in writing to the chairperson;
- (b) ceases to be an employee or student respectively of the university;
- (c) is absent from three consecutive ordinary meetings without prior apology having been made to and formally accepted by the chairperson;
- (d) is declared insolvent by a court of law;
- (e) is convicted of any offence involving dishonesty or for which the sentence is imprisonment without the option of a fine;
- (f) becomes incapacitated, or his/her continued membership is deemed improper after a due process in accordance with the prescribed code of conduct, taking into consideration the provisions of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000;
- (g) ceases to be a member of the body which designated or elected the member;
- (h) is found guilty of contravening an applicable code of conduct in disciplinary proceedings against the member, and the institutional forum confirms the recommendation by the disciplinary committee to terminate membership.

## **5 Executive Committee of the Institutional Forum and the role of the chairperson and deputy-chairperson**

- 5.1 In accordance with Paragraph 22(3) of the Statute, a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary are elected annually at the first meeting of the Institutional Forum by means of a process determined by the Registrar. These members form the Executive Committee of the Institutional Forum.
- 5.2 The election takes place among the representatives as contemplated in sub-paragraphs 22(1)(c) to 22(1)(i) of the Statute.
- 5.3 The following guidelines are applicable with regard to the election process:
  - 5.3.1 The annual election process is executed under the facilitation of the Registrar and takes place by means of secret ballot process.
  - 5.3.2 Nominations are invited among members contemplated in paragraphs 22(1)(d) to 2(1)(i) of the Statute.
  - 5.3.3 Members whose terms expire before September of the particular year cannot be nominated which means that, if the term of office of members designated from the ranks of the student body lapses before September, these members would not be regarded eligible for election to the executive committee.
  - 5.3.4 A member who is absent from the first meeting cannot be nominated, unless a formal indication is provided to the Institutional Forum that the member has indicated his availability for nomination.
  - 5.3.5 Following nomination, the member has to indicate his/her willingness to accept the nomination before voting by means of a secret ballot takes place.
- 5.4 The IF Exco is to dispose of urgent business on behalf of the Institutional Forum, while all business so disposed of must be ratified or reviewed at the first ensuing meeting of the Institutional Forum.
- 5.5 The Chairperson chairs all meetings of the Institutional Forum; in his/her the absence, the Deputy Chairperson will chair a particular meeting.
- 5.6 In the absence of both the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, the Institutional Forum is to elect an Acting Chairperson for a particular meeting

## **6 Co-opted members, observers and visitors**

Any staff member and student from the University may from time to time be invited by the Chairperson to attend a meeting of the Forum for a particular purpose of the meeting.

The Institutional Forum may allow observers and/or visitors at a meeting. At the discretion of the Chairperson, observers may be allowed to speak during meetings.

## **7 Voting rights of members**

All standing members of the Institutional Forum have voting rights. Members in attendance, observers and visitors do not have voting rights.

While the view of a member who is unable to attend a meeting may be submitted in writing, such a view may not count as a vote of such a member.

## **8 Termination of membership**

In line with Section 22(6) of the Statute, membership of the Institutional Forum is terminated when the member:

- (a) resigns in writing to the Chairperson of the Institutional Forum;
- (b) is absent from three consecutive ordinary meetings of the Institutional Forum without prior apology for absence from the meetings;
- (c) is declared insolvent by a court of law;
- (d) is convicted by a court of law of an offence which, in the sole opinion of the Institutional Forum, is of such a serious nature that it is not desirable that such membership should continue;
- (e) becomes incapable of performing the duties of a member of the Institutional Forum; or
- (f) ceases to be a member of the body which had designated or elected the person.

## 9 Substructures / technical and standing committees of the Institutional Forum

Substructures, technical, and standing committees are chaired by a member of the Institutional Forum.

Stakeholders who are not members of the Institutional Forum may be co-opted into such a committee.

The substructures, technical and standing committees function under the control and in support of the activities of the Institutional Forum.

## 10 Secretariat

Secretariat services are provided by Corporate and Information Governance Services.

## 11 Meetings

Meetings are convened in line with the following guidelines

Frequency	Quarterly meetings are scheduled as indicated in the Institutional Almanac. Meetings are planned to take place before Council meetings to enable the Institutional Forum to discuss matters relevant to Council.
Extraordinary meetings	The Chairperson may convene an extraordinary meeting, if urgent matters require it, as long as members are given adequate notice (five working days).
Electronic appointments	All the meetings are electronically scheduled at the end of the previous year (including member's personal assistants).
Notice	At least 14 days before an ordinary meeting, the Secretariat electronically notifies members of the date, time and place of the meeting. At least five days before an extraordinary meeting, the Secretariat electronically notifies members, provides the reason for the extraordinary meeting, as well as indicating the date, time and venue of the extraordinary meeting.
Agenda	At least seven days prior to the meeting, the Secretariat electronically provides members with the complete agenda pack. At least two days prior to an extraordinary meeting, the Secretariat electronically provides members with the complete agenda pack. Following a decision by the Institutional Forum, agenda packs will only be provided electronically. Should a member however require a printed copy of the agenda pack, a request can be submitted to the Secretariat.
Attendance register	An attendance register will be circulated by the Secretariat at the start of each meeting. Every member present must sign the attendance register. The attendance register is proof of attendance for purposes of minuting.
Apology	An apology will be noted when a member electronically submits it to the Secretariat and/or the Chairperson at least one day prior to the meeting. Members absent from the meeting without the abovementioned apology are indicated as "without apology".
Punctuality	If a meeting cannot commence within 30 minutes from the scheduled starting time (grace period) due to the absence of one member or union/party, the Institutional Forum will either decide to continue without said member(s), or to postpone the meeting until further notice. Members who are late should advise the Secretariat that they are on their way. Punctuality is therefore a mutual courtesy.
Quorum	The quorum of the meeting will be half (50%) of the filled positions plus one member.
Lack of a Quorum	If there is no quorum, the meeting will be postponed for a maximum of seven days and the members present at the next meeting shall be regarded as the quorum.
Speaking turns	Speaking turns are requested through and managed by the Chairperson only.

Revoking of a resolution	The revoking of any resolution entails a formal process by means of which a member of senate is to table a formal written request for a rescission, motivating the reason for the review of the resolution in question, as well as providing a suggestion for a resolution.
Conflict of Interest	A member may not take part in the discussion of or vote on any matter in which the member has a direct financial or other interest, unless the members first discloses the nature and extent of the interest and obtains the leave of the meeting to take part in the discussion or to vote.
Point of Order	A point or order, clarification, or information may be raised against any member, in which instance the ruling of the Chairperson is binding. The ruling of the Chairperson is binding and cannot be challenged.  Should the above point of order, clarification, or information be immediately challenged by a member, the ruling is put to the meeting for determination – without it being discussed, and the decision of the meeting is final.
Disrespectful / Disorderly conduct	Anyone attending a meeting who, after having been requested to refrain from disrespectful or disorderly conduct, continues to disobey a ruling from the Chairperson, must be requested to leave the meeting.  If that person does not leave the meeting immediately, such a person could be removed from the meeting with the assistance of Protection Services.
Confirmation of Minutes	An ordinary meeting, after being constituted and opened, commences with reading and confirmation (by means of the chairperson signing) of the minutes of the previous meeting(s).  Any objection to the minutes is raised and disposed of before the minutes are confirmed.  The minutes may be regarded as read, if a copy of the draft minutes was provided to members prior to the meeting.
Decision-making process	Matters are concluded by means of general consensus.  The Chairperson might however decide when a decision should be taken by means of a voting procedure. Each member will have one vote.  The Chairperson may decide that voting must be by secret ballot, provided that voting for persons must always be by secret ballot.  The number of votes in favour of or against any proposal is not recorded in the minutes, unless the meeting or the Chairperson so decides.  The majority decision will represent the meeting's resolution.
Equal vote	In the case of an equal vote, the Chairperson will exercise one of the following three options:  (1) To keep the matter in abeyance and to refer it to the following meeting.  (2) To appoint a commission to investigate the matter and to report at the next meeting.  (3) To adjourn the meeting and to reconvene after seven days to reconsider the matter.
Noting	“Noting” of documents assumes that the information was considered and understood prior to the meeting. Members are responsible to ask clarity-seeking questions, should the information not be clear to them.
Recording of meeting	At the opening of the meeting, the Chairperson indicates that a recording will be made for minuting purposes.
Round-Robin Process	The Chairperson may electronically submit urgent matters in-between scheduled meetings. The Secretariat will assist in this process.  At least two thirds of the members have to electronically confirm their involvement in the process by giving feedback; approval or non-approval.  When a majority of members reaches agreement, it is taken as a resolution. Such a resolution is equivalent to a resolution of the Institutional Forum and must be recorded in the minutes of the following meeting.
Records management	All records of meetings are kept by the Secretariat in accordance with the Records Management Policy of the NWU. Institutional Forum records are archived in the Archives of

	<p>the NWU in hard copy. Soft copies of all Council records are kept on the access controlled network drive of the Department Corporate and Information Governance Services.</p> <p>Records of Institutional Forum meetings are filed with reference number 1.3.31</p>
Access to records of the Institutional Forum	<p>Members have automatic access to all records of the Institutional Forum.</p> <p>All other interested parties must complete a request form in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, which will be assessed in terms of the prescriptions contained in the Act.</p> <p>Institutional Forum records are regarded as confidential.</p>
Resources and Budget	<p>A central budget regarding travel and accommodation arrangements and refreshments is managed within Corporate and Information Governance Services.</p>
Travelling and Accommodation	<p>All transport arrangements should be done by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Due to budget constraints, a pool vehicle will be used when possible.</p> <p>Members should share transport with other members from the same area.</p> <p>Members will not be reimbursed for transport costs incurred outside the Secretariat's arrangements, or pertaining to other campus or personal events.</p>

## 12 Reporting

- 12.1 The Institutional Forum receives and considers reports that are submitted by its standing and technical committees, and of relevant structures that table reports within the mandate of the Institutional Forum and advises Council accordingly.
- 12.2 The Institutional Forum reports bi-annually on its activities to the Council (in June and November).
- 12.3 Annually, the Institutional Forum reports on its activities by means of the NWU Annual Report. The Chairperson is responsible for compiling the report.
- 12.4 The following standing reports are submitted to the Institutional Forum:
- report on membership
  - transformation reports
  - reports from Campus Student Representative Councils
  - report from the Human Rights Committee
- 12.5 Regarding substructures, technical and standing committees of the Institutional Forum:  
The Terms of Reference of these committees need to be approved by IF; and bi-annual reports have to be submitted.

## 13 Evaluation

A self-evaluation questionnaire is annually completed by members during the last meeting of the Institutional Forum.

Feedback on the self-evaluation questionnaire is provided at the first meeting of the following year.

## 14 Steering

The following documents steer the operations of the Institutional Forum:

Document	Status	Authority	Date
Higher Education Act	Approved	Legislative	Act 101 of 1997
NWU Statute	Approved	Legislative	24 March 2017
Rules of procedure for the Institutional Forum	Reviewed	Directive	