

## **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 23 of the Statute of the North-West University (“the Statute”).

### **2 Functions**

- 1) In accordance with paragraph 24 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 policy on higher education;
  - (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 23(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 is borne in mind:

STANDING MEMBERS				
	Number of representatives	Stakeholder group	Term and special conditions	Process to determine representatives
23(1)(a)	One	Council	Three years/until membership of Council ceases	Council designation
23(1)(b)	One	Vice-Chancellor/ Institutional Management Committee (IM)	Three years	University Management Committee designation
23(1)(c)	Three	Senate	Three years/until membership of Senate ceases. Provided that the respective campuses are represented	Senate designation
23(1)(d)	Three	Academic staff (permanent)	Three years Provided that the respective campuses are represented	Nomination and election process facilitated by the Registrar
23(1)(e)	Four	Recognised Trade Union(s)	Three years Provided that representatives are permanent NWU staff members	Trade Union(s) designation
23(1)(f)	Three	Support staff (permanent)	Three years	Nomination and election process facilitated by the Registrar
23(1)(g)	Six	Student Representative Council (SRC)	One year/until membership of the SRC ceases. Provided that the respective campuses are represented by two student leaders each	SRC designation
23(1)(h)	Two	Convocation	Three years	Designation by the President of the Convocation via Convocation Exco
23(1)(i)	Two	Persons to perform specialised tasks related to the functions in 2 above	Three years	Process of c-opting by the Institutional Forum

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE				
		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

In accordance with para 23(6) of the Statute, the 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 or ceases to be a member of the body that had designated or elected the member;
- 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) 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 23(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 23(1)(c) to 23(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 23(1)(d) to 23(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 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.

## 9 Secretariat

Secretariat services are provided by Corporate and Information Governance Services.

## 10 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 and to report accordingly 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. The minutes of the previous meeting will be enclosed, and members are requested to provide the Secretariat with input by the closing date of the agenda. Should no response be received by this time, it will be deemed that the members agree with the record. The matters arising will be enclosed with the notice, and members are requested to provide feedback by the closing date of the agenda. The notice will also include the closing date of the addendum. 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	<p>At least seven days prior to the meeting, the Secretariat electronically provides members with the complete agenda pack.</p> <p>At least two days prior to an extraordinary meeting, the Secretariat electronically provides members with the complete agenda pack.</p> <p>Following a decision by the Institutional Forum, agenda packs will only be provided electronically.</p>
Attendance register	<p>An attendance register will be circulated by the secretariat at the beginning of each meeting if the meeting is an in-person meeting. Each member present must sign the attendance register. In the event of a hybrid meeting, an attendance register is kept by the Secretariat.</p> <p>The attendance register and attendance as contained in the minutes are proof of attendance for purposes of minuting and payment of honorariums if applicable.</p>
Apology	<p>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.</p> <p>Members absent from the meeting without the abovementioned apology are indicated as “without apology”.</p> <p>The views of a member who is unable to attend a meeting may be submitted in writing but may not count as a vote of such member.</p>
Punctuality	<p>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.</p> <p>Members who are late should advise the Secretariat that they are on their way.</p> <p>Punctuality is therefore a mutual courtesy.</p>
Quorum	<p>The quorum of the meeting will be half (50%) of the filled positions plus one member.</p>
Lack of a Quorum	<p>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.</p>
Speaking turns	<p>Speaking turns are requested through and managed by the Chairperson only.</p>
Revoking of a resolution	<p>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.</p>
Conflict of Interest	<p>An IF 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 member had first disclosed the nature and extent of the interest and had obtained the leave of the meeting to take part in the discussion or to vote in which the situation is to be managed in accordance with the Policy and Rules on Conflict of Interest and of Declarations of Interest and of Gifts (“the Policy and Rules”).</p> <p>In accordance with the Policy and Rules where the value of a gift or other benefit received from external sources exceeds the amount of R500, receipt thereof must be declared and captured in a register kept by the secretariat of the structure concerned.</p>
Point of Order	<p>A point of order, clarification, or information may be raised against any member, in which instance the Chairperson is obliged to consider the point of order and in which regard the ruling of the Chairperson is considered to be binding. The ruling of the Chairperson is binding and cannot be challenged.</p> <p>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.</p>
Disrespectful / Disorderly conduct	<p>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.</p> <p>If that person does not leave the meeting immediately, such a person could be removed from the meeting with the assistance of Protection Services.</p>

Confirmation of Minutes	<p>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).</p> <p>Any objection to the minutes is raised and disposed of before the minutes are confirmed.</p> <p>The minutes may be regarded as read, if a copy of the draft minutes was provided to members prior to the meeting.</p>
Matters arising	<p>Within five days after the meeting a schedule of matters is electronically provided to members.</p>
Decision-making process	<p>Matters are concluded by means of general consensus.</p> <p>The Chairperson might however decide when a decision should be taken by means of a voting procedure. Each member will have one vote.</p> <p>The Chairperson may decide that voting must be by secret ballot, provided that voting for persons must always be by secret ballot.</p> <p>The Chairperson has an ordinary vote, but must, in addition, exercise a casting vote in the event of an equality of votes on any matter.</p> <p>The Chairperson may decide that voting must be by secret ballot, provided that voting for persons must always be by secret ballot.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The majority decision will represent the meeting's resolution.</p>
Noting	<p>"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.</p>
Recording of meeting	<p>The meetings of the committee are recorded for minute purposes.</p> <p>The audio file is regarded as a resource tool for the secretariat and is saved for minuting/archival/historical purposes but does not constitute the record of the meeting once the minutes have been signed.</p>
Round-Robin Process	<p>The Chairperson must provide permission for any matters regarded as urgent and that would need to be considered between scheduled meetings. The relevant member must motivate the urgency of such matters to the Chairperson and upon permission for the administering of a round-robin process, the secretariat will administer the process.</p> <p>At least two thirds of the members have to electronically confirm their involvement in the process by giving feedback; approval or non-approval.</p> <p>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.</p>
Records management	<p>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 the NWU in hard and soft copy.</p> <p>Records of Institutional Forum meetings are filed with reference number 1.3.31</p>
Access to records of the Institutional Forum	<p>IF 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

All transport arrangements should be done by the Secretariat.

Due to budget constraints, a pool vehicle will be used when possible.

Members should share transport with other members from the same area.

Members will not be reimbursed for transport costs incurred outside the Secretariat's arrangements, or pertaining to other campus or personal events.

## 11 Reporting

11.1 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.

11.2 The Institutional Forum reports after each regular meeting on its activities to the Council (in March, June, September and November).

11.3 Annually, the Institutional Forum reports on its activities by means of the NWU Annual Report. The Chairperson is responsible for compiling the report.

11.4 The following standing reports are submitted to the Institutional Forum:

- report on membership,
- transformation reports,
- reports from Student Campus Councils, and
- report from the Human Rights Committee

11.5 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.

## 12 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.

## 13 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	Approved	Directive	28 March 2018

Original details: (11664754) C:\Users\11664754\OneDrive - North-West University\Policies\2023\Rules of IF\Rules of the Institutional Forum.docm  
14 March 2023

Current details: (11664754) [https://nwuac-my.sharepoint.com/personal/eric\\_swanepoel\\_nwu\\_ac\\_za/Documents/Policies/2023/Rules%20of%20IF\Rules of the Institutional Forum 2023.docm](https://nwuac-my.sharepoint.com/personal/eric_swanepoel_nwu_ac_za/Documents/Policies/2023/Rules%20of%20IF\Rules of the Institutional Forum 2023.docm)  
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