



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE & BYLAWS OF PROCEDURE**

### **SLIS ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

*Drafted Jan. 23, 2026 by Kenneth Gariepy, Chair*

Approved Feb. 27, 2026

#### **0.0 Mandate**

The SLIS Academic Committee (AC) is the discussion and consultation forum and first-level decision making body of the School. As of July 1, 2023, SLIS is an administrative unit within the Faculty of Education.

As necessary and appropriate, and within the governance frameworks of the Faculty and the University, the Academic Committee discusses, recommends, and makes decisions about the following.

- Major and minor changes to the MLIS program
- Major and minor changes to courses within the MLIS program
- New course proposals for the MLIS program
- Course discontinuations
- New program proposals
- Admissions to the MLIS program
- Scholarships, bursaries, awards, and honours for the MLIS program
- Facilities and educational technology supporting the MLIS program
- Other matters identified by the Director or a Committee member

#### **1.0 Composition**

The following (or their equivalents), shall constitute the SLIS Academic Committee.

- Director of SLIS (Ex-officio & Chair)
- Academic staff teaching full-time in the MLIS program, including staff on any leave permitted by the Collective Agreement, or staff on secondment within the University
- Graduate Coordinator for the MLIS program
- Graduate Administrator for the MLIS program
- SLIS Program Coordinator

## **2.0 Officers**

The Officers of the Academic Committee shall be the following (or their equivalents).

- Director (Chair)
- Graduate Coordinator (Vice-chair)

## **3.0 Administrative Support**

The SLIS Program Coordinator shall serve as Secretary by providing administrative support to the Committee, including the preparation, distribution, and archiving of agendas and minutes.

## **4.0 Guests**

Guests may be invited to join Academic Committee meetings to speak about issues affecting SLIS, the MLIS program, or the institutional environment in the Faculty of Education or University of Alberta. Guests are not eligible to vote.

## **5.0 Process**

The Academic Committee will consider a pre-distributed agenda that is prepared by the Secretary and approved by the Chair. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-chair may approve the agenda. The agenda shall be distributed in a timely manner.

In addition to new and arising business, the Committee will receive and discuss the regular reports and updates of its Officers.

Decisions and recommendations made by the Committee may require additional discussion, consultation, and/or approval, most particularly through the MLIS External Program Advisory Committee (MEPAC), but also the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee (GAAC), the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, the Dean of Education, the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, General Faculties Council (and its various subcommittees, such as the Academic Planning Committee), and Education Faculty Council.

## **6.0 Quorum**

The quorum for SLIS Academic Committee meetings shall be at least the Chair or Vice-chair, three academic staff teaching full-time in the MLIS program, and the Secretary.

## **7.0 Meetings**

Meetings of the Academic Committee shall be held on a monthly basis from September to April, if sufficient agenda items are received. In cases of insufficient agenda items, meetings may be cancelled at the discretion of the Chair. Meetings may be scheduled during the months

of May, June, July, and/or August at the discretion of the Chair. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-chair may schedule a meeting during May, June, July, and/or August.

An exceptional meeting of the Academic Committee may be called by the Chair to consider urgent item(s) of business. Provisions governing exceptional meetings are the same as for regular meetings, except that the agenda shall be restricted to the urgent item(s) of business for which the meeting was called. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-chair may call an exceptional meeting.

Meetings are normally held in-person on the University of Alberta North Campus. Members are expected to attend in person whenever possible. In circumstances where members are not able to attend in person, participation shall be accommodated by Internet videoconferencing or teleconferencing. Meetings may be held by Internet videoconference or teleconference if deemed necessary for operational or practical reasons, or as mandated by the University (e.g., public emergency). Members who participate in a meeting by such means are deemed to be present at the meeting for quorum and voting.

## **8.0 Responsibilities**

The Academic Committee's primary responsibilities shall be the following.

### **8.1 Curriculum**

- Recommending major and minor changes to the MLIS program to the MLIS External Program Advisory Committee
- Recommending major and minor changes to courses within the MLIS program to the MLIS External Program Advisory Committee
- Recommending new course proposals for the MLIS program to the MLIS External Program Advisory Committee
- Recommending course discontinuations to the MLIS External Program Advisory Committee
- Recommending new program proposals to the MLIS External Program Advisory Committee

### **8.2 Admissions**

- Admitting applicants to the MLIS program per the admissions procedures approved by the Committee

### **8.3 Scholarships, Bursaries, Awards & Honours**

- Deciding and recommending recipients of scholarships, bursaries, awards, and honours for the MLIS program and the School, per relevant terms of reference and procedures

#### **8.4 Additional Responsibilities**

The Academic Committee shall also attend to the following.

- Receiving reports and updates from Officers and taking action, as necessary and appropriate
- Regularly reviewing the mandate, mission, goals, and objectives of the School and the MLIS program
- Providing advice and guidance to the Director about issues relating to the School and the MLIS program, including accreditation
- Drafting policies and procedures for the School and the MLIS program that are consistent with Faculty-, College-, and University-level policy
- Making recommendations about facilities and educational technology supporting the MLIS program
- Setting agendas for School retreats and strategic planning meetings
- Revising these terms of reference, as necessary and appropriate

#### **9.0 Procedures**

Meetings of the SLIS Academic Committee shall be conducted in accordance with the Bylaws of Procedure formally approved by it.

#### **10.0 Approval**

These terms of reference approved by the SLIS Academic Committee February 27, 2026.

## **Bylaws of Procedure for the SLIS Academic Committee**

### **0.0 Preamble**

The SLIS Academic Committee procedures are adapted from those established by General Faculties Council (GFC). GFC voted against adopting *Robert's Rules of Order*. Instead, GFC is governed by precedent, and, in situations not covered by precedent, it is guided by the Chair, whose rulings are subject to challenge. Relevant sections of GFC policy concerning rules of meetings and adapted for the use of the SLIS Academic Committee are identified below (see GFC 28 OCT 1974).

### **1.0 Chair**

The Director of the School shall chair the SLIS Academic Committee. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-chair serves as Chair.

### **2.0 Meetings**

Meetings of the Academic Committee are open to members and specific guests.

#### **2.1 Guests**

Specific guests may be invited by the Chair to attend and speak to certain agenda items. Members who wish a guest to be invited for a given agenda item shall inform the Chair well in advance of the meeting date and in time for this to be recorded in the agenda. Non-participating observers may attend meetings subject to the will of the Academic Committee and the discretion of the Chair. (CFGSR 1991/3/15)

#### **2.2 In Camera**

In camera may be used to describe a closed meeting (non-members not permitted) that covers information not reflected in the minutes and not available to the public. Such sessions may discuss personnel, financial, or other sensitive decisions that must be kept secret (for example, a strategic change which the faculty does not yet want the public to know about). (EFC Feb 2 2010)

#### **2.3 Duration**

The agenda for Academic Committee meetings shall be set in the expectation that the meeting will not exceed three hours in length. If this time is exceeded, the meeting shall be immediately adjourned unless the Chair and a majority vote of members present agree to an extension. (CFGSR 1991/3/15)

### **3.0 Voting**

#### **3.1 Proxy Voting**

Proxy voting is not permitted for meetings of the Academic Committee.

#### **3.2 Electronic Voting**

Electronic voting by email, Google Form, or other means is permitted, as required. Voting on motions during a meeting shall take place as described in §3.3 "Voting Procedures." Electronic voting conducted after a meeting is adjourned must be completed within a reasonable timeframe AND before the next scheduled meeting.

#### **3.3 Voting Procedures**

When every member who wishes to speak on a motion has done so, the Chair shall call the vote. Voting during meetings shall normally be conducted by a show of hands and/or voice unless some other method is decided upon by motion. This procedure applies regardless of in-person or virtual attendance.

Voting shall be by majority vote except on a 'Motion to Rescind' without previous notice, when a two-thirds vote of those present is required. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

Each voting member of the SLIS Academic Committee shall have one vote.

#### **3.4 Members**

Voting members may participate in discussions and may move, second and vote on motions (EFC Jun 8 2010). Voting members on leave shall retain all voting rights and membership responsibilities pertaining to Academic Committee while on leave.

#### **3.5 Chair**

The Chair shall normally vote only in the instance of a tie vote. When there is a tie vote, the motion is lost if the Chair abstains. The motion is adopted if the Chair votes in the affirmative and is defeated if the Chair votes in the negative. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

#### **3.6 Guests**

Guests may be invited to attend a particular meeting and to participate in discussion related to a specific item they were invited to address. Guests cannot move, second or vote on motions. (EFC Jun 8 2010).

### **3.7 Voting Results**

The results of all votes taken at meetings shall be announced by the Chair or Secretary. The results of votes (i.e., exact number of votes in favour, opposed, or abstained) shall not be recorded in the minutes. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

### **3.8 Voting Responsibilities**

All voting members of the SLIS Academic Committee are responsible for thoroughly examining issues before meetings and voting as they judge fit on such issues. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

## **4.0 Agenda**

### **4.1 Responsibility for the Agenda**

The authority to decide which items are to appear on an Academic Committee agenda resides with the Chair. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-chair has this authority.

Agenda items, including the wording of proposed motions (if applicable) shall be submitted in written form and delivered to the Secretary of the Committee no later than seven (7) working days in advance of the meeting for which the item is being submitted.

### **4.2 Order of Business**

At least the following business shall be observed by the Chair as necessary at regular meetings. The order of the agenda is at the discretion of the Chair.

- a. Approval of the agenda
- b. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting
- c. Continuing business
- d. New business
- e. Reports from Officers
- f. Reports from members
- g. Information items

#### **4.3 Agenda Approval**

Approval of the agenda requires a majority vote.

When the Agenda is being approved, the Chair will entertain a request to change the order, for specified reasons. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

New items cannot be introduced at Academic Committee meetings except by a two-thirds vote of those present. In cases where the Chair or Secretary has been informed in advance of a request to add a new item, the proposal shall be circulated, time permitting, to members. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

#### **4.4 Agenda Distribution**

The agenda and supporting documents for all meetings shall be distributed by electronic means at least five (5) working days before the meeting is to be held.

### **5.0 Minutes**

Minutes of the previous Academic Committee meetings shall be approved as submitted or approved as amended by a motion. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

Minutes include matters raised, the actions taken, and a summary of what was said. They shall include the date of the meeting and names of members present.

The record of discussion shall reflect fully the basis of decisions. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

Minutes of Academic Committee meetings shall indicate what further action may be called for on any matter discussed.

Original agendas and supporting documents are archived for historical reference. SLIS Academic Committee agendas, minutes, and memberships shall be made available to the public. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

### **6.0 Motions**

A motion is a formal proposal that the assembly take certain action. To make a motion, a member must obtain the floor, that is, the member must be recognized by the Chair. (In the interest of clarity, it is advisable to write out a motion in advance. Giving a copy to the Secretary usually expedites business.) The member making a motion will be invited by the Chair to speak first in any ensuing debate. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A motion must be seconded. A second merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should be debated and not that the seconder necessarily favours the motion. If no seconder is found, the motion is dead and the meeting moves on to other business. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

## **7.0 Notice of Motion**

A Notice of Motion is a method of informing the membership in advance of the intention to make a specific motion. When Notice of Motion has first been given at an Academic Committee meeting, the Chair will decide whether it is appropriate that such a motion be placed on the agenda of the next meeting. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

## **8.0 Amendment to a Motion**

An amendment is a subsidiary motion. It is used to modify the wording and, within certain limits the meaning, of a pending motion before the pending motion itself is voted upon. Its adoption does not adopt the motion thereby amended, and its rejection leaves the pending motion unaltered. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

The amendment must be germane; that is, it must be closely related to, or have bearing on, the subject of the motion. No new subject can be introduced under the pretext of being an amendment. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

An amendment must be seconded and is debatable. Such debate must be confined to the desirability of the amendment and must not extend to the merits of the motion to be amended, except as may be necessary to determine whether the amendment is advisable. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

An amendment can be amended, by a motion to amend the amendment. A majority vote is required. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

The mover with the consent of the seconder may incorporate a 'friendly' amendment into the main motion if the mover and seconder of the amendment are agreeable. The Chair has discretion to adjudicate challenges to the status of the friendly amendment. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

## **9.0 Motion to Table**

A Motion to Table enables the Academic Committee to lay aside the pending question until some future time. A Motion to Table must be seconded, cannot be debated, and requires a majority vote. The mover may make a brief statement on what information they believe would be necessary to lift an item from the table, followed by the proposer of the original item, who may make a brief comment to the Academic Committee on the impact of tabling the motion. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

## **10.0 Motion to Take From Table**

A Motion to Take from the Table is a motion to bring back before the Academic Committee the matter laid aside. Such a motion must be seconded, cannot be debated, and requires a majority vote. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

### **11.0 Motion to Reconsider**

A Motion to Reconsider enables the Academic Committee, within a limited time, to bring back for further consideration a motion that has already been voted on. The effect of a Motion to Reconsider is to restore proceedings to the point immediately prior to the vote to which it applies. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Reconsider must be brought forward at the same or next calendar month's meeting, after which Motion to Rescind procedures must be followed. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Notice of Motion to Reconsider must be provided with at least ten (10) working days' notice if the Motion to Reconsider does not take place at the same meeting. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Reconsider must be seconded and is amendable. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Reconsider is debatable, unless the motion to which it applies was not debatable. Debate may pertain to reasons for reconsideration only. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A simple majority vote is required. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

An approved Motion to Reconsider suspends action on the original motion to which it applies until the original motion has been decided upon. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A motion can be reconsidered only once. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A motion which has already been acted upon cannot be reconsidered. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

### **12.0 Motion to Rescind**

A Motion to Rescind is the motion by which a previous act or order can be cancelled or reversed. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Rescind is only used when a Motion to Reconsider is out of time. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Rescind must be seconded, and is amendable. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Rescind is debatable, unless the motion to which it applies was not debatable. Debate may pertain to reasons for reconsideration only. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Motion to Rescind requires a Notice of Motion provided to Committee membership with at least ten (10) working days notice. A two thirds majority vote of those present is required. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

### **13.0 Motion to Adjourn**

A Motion to Adjourn is a motion to close the meeting. It must be seconded, is not debatable or amendable and requires a majority vote. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

### **14.0 Debate Procedures**

#### **14.1 Interrupting a Speaker**

A member who has the floor may not normally be interrupted. However, the Chair may interrupt a speaker if the speaker is out of order by using unacceptable language, is abusive of other members, or is not speaking to the motion. If the Chair does not do so, a member may raise this as a point of order. A speaker may not be interrupted because the listener does not agree with what is being said. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

#### **14.2 Calling the Question**

Calls of "Question!" by members from their seats are informal expressions of individual members' desires to proceed to a vote on the matter under discussion. (Such calls are disorderly if made while another member is speaking.) Upon hearing such a call, the Chair will ask members if they are ready to vote on the motion being discussed. If there appears to be opposition to closing the debate, the Chair may ask for a motion to close debate. If seconded, eligible members will then vote on this motion and proceed accordingly. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

#### **14.3 Challenging the Chair**

The Chair may allow debate on a point of order before making a ruling. The Chair should state the basis on which such a ruling is made and no debate thereon is permitted. When the Chair rules on a question of procedure, any member may rise and state to the Chair, "I respectfully appeal to the SLIS Academic Committee from your ruling."

The Chair will respond by stating, "The Committee has heard the ruling of the Chair. The question is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?" This issue is then put to a vote. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

#### **14.4 Committee of the Whole**

Debate should be either for or against a motion. However, an issue may arise which is not so clear-cut or for which the rules may seem to be a hindrance. In such a case, a motion that the Academic Committee resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole may be made. If carried, the visitors are asked to leave the Chamber, the Chair steps down and another Chair is appointed or elected for

the duration of the meeting of the Committee of the Whole. Minutes are not taken and members may speak more freely and informally. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A motion need not be seconded in order to be discussed. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

When the Committee of the Whole reaches agreement, a motion is made “that the Chair rise and report,” upon the adoption of which motion the Committee of the Whole is dissolved, the Chair of Academic Committee resumes the Chair and the Chair of the Committee of the Whole reports to the Chair of Academic Committee on the action taken by the Committee of the Whole. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

#### **14.5 Special Debate**

Special debate can be declared by the Chair in cases where there is very active debate that is monopolized by a few speakers, but multiple participants wish to speak. In a special debate, no member may speak for a second time until the Chair is satisfied that all those wishing to speak for the first time have done so. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

#### **15.0 Point of Order**

It is the right of every member who notices a breach of the rules of the Committee to insist on their enforcement. If the Chair fails to notice such a breach, any member may make the appropriate Point of Order, calling on the Chair for a ruling. If the Chair, being in doubt, refers the point of order to the judgement of the Committee, it thereby becomes debatable. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Point of Order is the only time when a member is allowed to interrupt a speaker who has the floor. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Point of Order does not require a seconder, it is not debatable (except in the circumstance noted above), it is not amendable, and cannot be reconsidered. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

A Point of Order should not be raised which has nothing to do with procedure and is merely a tactic to say something which would not normally be allowed. (EFC Feb 2 2010)

#### **16.0 Committees**

The SLIS Academic Committee may delegate authority to a subcommittee or ad hoc committee, but these shall be responsible and report to the Academic Committee, unless otherwise approved. Any decisions made by subcommittees or ad hoc committees shall be reported to the Academic Committee and are then brought forward to the MLIS External Program Advisory Committee, as appropriate.

## **17.0 Secretary of SLIS Academic Committee**

The Secretary of the SLIS Academic Committee shall be a non-academic staff member designated by the Chair. The Secretary shall be a non-voting member of the Committee.

The following are the main duties of the Secretary of the SLIS Academic Committee.

- Arranging all meetings, preparing agendas, and ensuring that comprehensive documentation, including an outline of the issues, is distributed
- Ensuring that minutes concerning all meetings of the SLIS Academic Committee are archived and available
- Liaising with other university governance bodies and providing information and support pertaining to governance matters, as required.

## **18.0 Amendments**

### **18.1 Amendments of Bylaws**

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the SLIS Academic Committee by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

### **18.2 Amendment of Terms of Reference**

SLIS Academic Committee terms of reference may be amended at any regular meeting by a majority of those present and voting, prior to which there has been five (5) working days notice of the proposed amendment before the meeting.

### **18.3 Review of Terms of Reference**

Terms of reference for the SLIS Academic Committee will be reviewed every three years or sooner, as required.

## **19.0 Impeachment**

No member of the SLIS Academic Committee, its subcommittees or its ad hoc committees can be impeached. (EFC Feb 2 2010)