

Rules of Procedure for the University Council University of Groningen 2024

Chapter 1 General provisions

Article 1.1

In these Rules of Procedure, the following terms are understood to mean:

- a. the Act: the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (WHW)
- b. the University: the University of Groningen
- c. the Board: the Board of the University
- d. Supervisory Board: the Supervisory Board of the University
- e. University Council: the Council of the University
- f. Central Voting Office: the Central Voting Office of the University.

Article 1.2

All other terms in these Rules of Procedure, to the extent that they are also mentioned in the Act, have the same definitions as assigned to them by the Act.

Section 1: The Chair, Deputy Chair(s), and Registrar of the University Council.

Article 2.

The Chair of the University Council is responsible for preparing and chairing meetings and maintaining order during meetings in accordance with the provisions of these Rules of Procedure. The Chair is assisted by the Registrar.

Article 3.

Each Council section selects a Deputy Chair for the University Council from among its members.

Article 4.

1. The Chair and one or more Deputy Chairs together form the Presidium of the University Council.
2. In the absence of the Chair, a Deputy Chair takes over their duties and powers.
3. In unforeseen circumstances, in the absence of the Chair and their deputies, the Council makes a temporary arrangement for chairing the meeting.

Section 2: Appointment of University Council members.

Article 5.

1. The Central Voting Office notifies each candidate who is elected a University Council member and simultaneously also informs the Chair of the University Council of this fact.
2. The Chair of the Council may require an appointed member of the Council to present their means of identification.

Chapter 2: University Council meetings

Section 1: Preparations for University Council meetings.

Article 6.

1. The Chair is responsible for preparing the University Council meetings.

2. The Registrar is responsible for the immediate distribution or making available of all relevant documents drawn up by the Chair and any additional documents referred to below.

Article 7.

1. The Chair draws up the University Council meeting agenda, including:
 - a. the topics for discussion suggested both by them and the members
 - b. the proposed decisions announced by the Board of the University.
2. At least 21 days prior to the meeting date, the Chair of the University Council must notify the members of the time and place of the meeting and provide the agenda and any additional documentation.
3. If additional documents cannot be sent to the Council members at least 14 days before the date of the meeting, the Chair must explain the reasons for this to the Council. The Council decides as the occasion arises whether and how these documents will be discussed.
4. The agenda and the documents referred to in Articles 7.2 and 7.3 are made available for inspection immediately after they have been dispatched, unless the Chair declares them to be confidential.

Article 8.

If a Council member wants to submit suggestions, amendments, and/or sub-amendments to the documents referred to in Article 7.2 to the Council, they must inform the Chair of this in writing or electronically at least three working days before the date of the meeting, enclosing digital or equivalent copies of the relevant documents.

Article 9.

1. The documents referred to in Article 8, as well as any other proposals made by the Chair arising from points to be added to the agenda or points that have been approved or proposed, must be sent to the Council members no later than the second working day before the meeting.
2. The provisions of Article 7.4 apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Article 10.

In a meeting at which more than half of the sitting members are present, the Chair may decide to remove the provisional confidentiality requirement relating to the content of documents referred to in Article 7.4.

Section 2: Time of meetings.

Article 11.

1. The Council meets at least nine times a year, and in any case:
 - a. to discuss topics that are on the agenda for a predetermined consultative meeting
 - b. to issue advice/consent concerning a topic as referred to in Article 5.1 of the University Council Regulations, and further
 - c. whenever the Chair deems necessary
 - d. if a written request, stating reasons, is submitted by one-quarter of the sitting members.
2. If a meeting is deemed necessary by the required number of Council members, the Chair convenes a meeting within eight days.
3. In principle, meetings are held on the Thursday preceding the last Friday of the month. Meetings start at 9.30 a.m. and end no later than 5 p.m., on condition that the agenda item under discussion at that time is completed and a round of questions before closure is held.

4. If, once the last agenda item to be discussed has been completed, the only item left on the agenda is the questions before closing, the discussion of this item may be started after 5 p.m.
5. In extraordinary cases, the Chair is authorized to set an alternative meeting date or start or end time.
6. If the agenda has not been fully dealt with by the time the meeting is supposed to end, the meeting will be continued on the Thursday after the Thursday referred to in Article 11.3 unless a decision is made by motion of order to change the end time or to include any items not discussed in the agenda for the next Council meeting. This meeting also starts at 9.30 a.m.

Section 3: Nature of meetings.

Article 12.

1. Consultative meetings with the Board of the University are public.
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of Articles 10 and 13, the doors will be closed if one-quarter of the members present request that or the Chair deems it necessary, or if documents that the Chair deems provisionally confidential are being discussed.
3. The decision whether or not to continue the meeting behind closed doors must be taken as soon as the doors have been physically closed. The decision is carried if two-thirds or more of the members present vote in favour.
4. Decisions concerning matters to be discussed behind closed doors may be taken in accordance with the provisions of these regulations.
5. Once the confidential status of the meeting has been lifted, and if a majority of the members present so decide, the Council may instruct the Chair to make public the decisions that have been taken behind closed doors.

Article 13.

1. The University Council may impose a confidentiality requirement with regard to the topics discussed in a private meeting and the content of any documents discussed and decisions made during such meetings.
2. The confidentiality requirement must be complied with by the members who were present at the discussions and by the members who have learned by other means of the matters discussed, including the content of documents and the related decisions.
3. The confidentiality requirement continues to apply until the Council discontinues it.

Article 14.

1. Each member of the University community has the right to consult the Council documents referred to in Articles 7.2, 7.4 and 9.1.
2. They may have copies made of these documents at their own expense unless provision is made for this.

Section 4 Meeting procedure.

Article 15.

1. All members must sign the attendance list when they attend a meeting. The provisions of Article 51 apply *mutatis mutandis*.
2. The Chair signs off the attendance list at the opening of the meeting. Only those members whose signature is on the attendance list and who have not given notice of their departure in accordance with Article 15.4 will be deemed to have been present at the meeting.
3. Members who arrive after the meeting has already started must report to the Registrar to sign the attendance list.
4. Members who leave the meeting before it has ended must report to the Registrar, who makes a note on the attendance list.

5. If so many members leave during the meeting by notifying the Registrar that at some point fewer than half of the active members are still present, the Chair may decide to close the meeting.

Article 16.

1. If more than half the number of sitting members have signed the attendance list, the Chair opens the meeting at the specified time.
2. If the attendance list shows that fewer than half the number of sitting members are present, the opening of the meeting is postponed for no more than half an hour on the understanding that the Chair will open the meeting without delay as soon as the required number of members are present.

Article 17.

1. If after the time stated in Article 16.2, the required number of members have not turned up, or if on the basis of Article 15.5, the Chair decides to close the meeting, the Chair may, contrary to the provisions of Article 11 and bearing in mind Article 17.2, set a day and time for a new meeting.
2. Notification of the time referred to in Article 17.1 must be sent at least five working days before the date on which the meeting is to be held.

Article 18.

1. If the Chair determines pursuant to Article 17.1 that the required number of members are not present, the meeting may continue under the proviso that no business will be discussed or decided upon apart from the items on the original agenda.
2. The provisions of Articles 16, 17, and 18 must be included in the notice convening the meeting referred to in Article 18.1.

Article 19.

1. Matters are discussed in the order in which they appear on the agenda for the meeting unless the Council specifically decides otherwise.
2. Proposals concerning issues that are not listed on the agenda must be submitted to the Chair in writing at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting, signed by the proposer and two other members.
3. In extraordinary cases, when discussion of a certain issue is urgent in the opinion of the Chair, the Chair may deviate from the prescribed submission term. However, proposals must always be submitted to them in writing before the start of the meeting.
4. If the Chair is of the opinion that the nature of the matter is such that its discussion cannot be postponed until the next meeting and that it should therefore be added to the agenda, the Chair specifies its number on the agenda.
5. Immediately after the opening of the meeting, the Chair informs those present that the proposal has been received. The meeting then decides, after one round of deliberation, whether the proposal will be discussed and, if the Chair receives a substantiated proposal to change the order of items on the agenda, the meeting decides on this proposed amendment.
6. If the decision regarding the proposal referred to in Article 19.2 is positive, the Chair hands out the proposal to the members if they have not already done so.

Article 20.

1. Members of the Council may not address the meeting unless invited to do so by the Chair.
2. The Chair invites members to speak in the order in which the requests to speak are made.

3. The Chair may propose that a person other than a Council member be invited to address the Council on a particular matter. The Council decides on such proposals without deliberating.
4. Articles 20.1 and 20.2 apply to speakers within the meaning of Article 20.3, as well as Articles 25, 26, 37, and 39.

Article 21.

1. The order in which people are invited to speak may be interrupted in the event of a request to submit a motion of order.
2. Motions of order concerning splitting up a proposal or the order of discussion of a proposal do not require the support of other members. Such motions are decided upon after one round of deliberations.
3. In the event that a motion of order is submitted to close the deliberations, the reasons must be stated. The motion is decided upon after one round of deliberations, for which the Chair may impose a limit on speaking time.

Article 22.

1. The members of the University Council may submit a reasoned request to the Chair for immediate temporary adjournment of the meeting.
2. The Chair adjourns the meeting unless the Council decides differently on the proposal of one or more members.

Article 23.

1. Discussions and decision-making must, in principle, be based on the proposals originally submitted to the University Council and the proposed decisions by the Board of the University in accordance with article 8.
2. All members may submit sub-amendments to proposals discussed in the meeting, as well as proposals in response to topics stated in the agenda. Such amendments or proposals must be submitted to the Chair in writing. They may be explained by the proposer and discussed in the meeting if they are supported by two other members of the Council in addition to the proposer. The Council may decide by motion of order that these submitted amendments or sub-amendments do not apply to the original proposal or that they cause unacceptable damage to the original proposal and therefore may not be regarded as amendments or sub-amendments to the original proposal.

Article 24.

1. If a motion put before the meeting is subdivided into parts or articles, the meeting debates the motion in a general sense first, followed by each individual part or article in the correct sequence, in such manner that the proposals and the proposed amendments and sub-amendments are dealt with as specified in Article 23.
2. If several amendments, sub-amendments and proposals, as referred to in Article 23, are submitted, the Chair determines the order in which they will be discussed, unless the Council determines otherwise by motion of order, as referred to in Article 21.3.

Article 25.

1. With the exception of the Chair and the person defending the proposal, no one else may speak on the same topic more than twice unless the Chair or the Council give permission by motion of order.
2. Proposals are debated in two rounds unless the Council decides otherwise by carrying a motion of order.

Article 26.

1. The Chair of the University Council may limit each speaker's speaking time for individual topics.

2. The Chair may also limit the speaking time for replies and rejoinders by other members. This limit also applies to people who are addressing the meeting for the first time after the speakers have been answered in the first instance.

Section 5. Decision-making during meetings on matters.

Article 27.

1. Once the deliberations have been closed, or if no one has requested to address the meeting, the Chair puts the issue to the vote. If none of the members ask to address the meeting, the decision is deemed to have been taken on the proviso that decisions may only be taken if half the number of members plus one are present and that at least half of the members of each section must be present, unless specified otherwise in these Rules of Procedure. Vacancies are not included when counting the number of members of the University Council. The resulting number of members is rounded off to the next-highest whole number.
Each member may request to have a note made in the report that they wish to be deemed to have voted against.
2. Valid decisions on matters as referred to in Article 5.1 of the University Council Regulations may only be taken if half the members plus one of each section are present at the meeting.
3. An absent member may give another member of the same section a written proxy to vote. A maximum of five proxies can be used per section. The absent member must notify the Registrar of the proxy prior to the meeting with a cc to the Chair and the authorized member.
4. One or more members, after the Chair has asked the question to be decided on as referred to in Article 27.1, only in very exceptional circumstances, may propose to the Council substantiated with reasons that voting take place in accordance with the provisions of Article 33, therefore, with sealed anonymous ballots. Once the Council has determined by a majority of two-thirds of the number of votes cast that the circumstances are very exceptional, a vote will be held in accordance with the provisions of the aforementioned Article 33. In the event of a positive decision, the provisions of Article 51.3 will apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Article 28.

Except in cases where a different type of majority is needed in accordance with statutory provisions or stipulations in these Rules of Procedure, all decisions are taken on the basis of a simple majority vote (i.e. half plus 1). Blank votes count as valid votes cast.

Article 29.

1. If one of the members calls for a vote, the vote is by a show of hands.
2. If five or more members object to the procedure described in Article 29.1, the vote is by roll call according to the sequence of names on the attendance list, beginning with a member whose name is drawn by lot.
3. If the Chair is also a voting member of the Council, they will cast their vote last.
4. The Chair announces the result of the vote, stating the number of votes 'for', 'against', and 'blank'. In addition, the Chair also states the number of abstentions.

Article 30.

1. If amendments have been deliberated upon, the meeting votes first on each sub-amendment, then on the actual amendment, followed by the article, part, or proposal/motion to which they relate.
2. If a number of amendments, sub-amendments, or proposals within the meaning of Article 23.2 have been submitted, the Chair determines the order in which they are voted upon.

Article 31.

1. Members who wish to abstain from voting (for example due to a conflict of interest) must make this clear to the Chair no later than the start of the discussion of the topic.
2. Members who do not wish to abstain vote by roll call are to state the words 'for', 'against', or 'blank' without any addition.
3. It is not possible to change a vote cast once the next member has been called upon to cast their vote.

Article 32.

1. If, when a vote is called, more than half the number of sitting members are absent from the meeting, the vote will not take place.
2. A vote is void if half or less than half of the number of sitting members have cast a vote.
3. A vote is valid, regardless of the number of voters, if the subject of the vote is a proposal for which a vote was requested in a previous meeting but where the vote could not take place in accordance with Article 32.1 or was void on the grounds of Article 32.2, as well as any vote during a meeting as referred to in Article 18.

Section 6. Decision-making during meetings regarding persons.**Article 33.**

1. In the event that persons are to be elected, nominated, or recommended, votes are cast on sealed and unsigned ballots.
2. Subject to being declared void, the number of names on ballots referred to in Article 33.1 must not exceed the number of vacancies.

Article 34.

1. The Chair appoints one or more committees of two vote counters, who collect the ballots and determine the result of the vote.
2. If the number of ballots turns out to exceed the number of members who participated in the vote, the vote is declared void, and a new vote is held.
3. Ballots are deemed void if, in the view of the vote counters, they are not filled in properly or clearly or are not filled in at all. Members who submit such ballot papers are deemed to have cast a vote.

Article 35.

1. A person is elected if they receive the majority (i.e. half plus 1) of the valid votes.
2. Blank votes count as valid votes cast.

Article 36.

1. If there are multiple candidates and none of the candidates receives a majority of votes in the first round, a second round is held. The provisions of Article 35 apply *mutatis mutandis*.
2. If no candidate receives a majority of votes in the second round, a third round is held, and the Chair limits the list of candidates to the two candidates who received the most votes in the second round; in the event that candidates receive an equal number of votes, an individual vote is held on each of these candidates in order to determine who is admitted to the third round.
3. If the vote is tied in the individual vote referred to in Article 36.2, lots are drawn to determine who is admitted to the third round.
4. Blank votes are not permitted in the third round.
5. If the two remaining candidates receive an equal number of votes in the third round, lots are drawn to determine the outcome.

6. Lots, as referred to in Articles 36.3 and 36.5, are drawn in a manner determined by the Chair.

Section 7. Public order during meetings.

Article 37.

1. If a speaker deviates from the subject under discussion, the Chair draws this to the speaker's attention and calls them to order.
2. In the event that a speaker continues to deviate from the subject, the Chair may forbid this person to speak on the topic under discussion for the duration of the meeting, subject to any appeal to the Council.

Article 38.

When the Chair finds that a certain topic has been sufficiently discussed, they suggest to the Council that the agenda item be closed. This does not affect the Council members' power to lodge a motion of order similar to that referred to in Article 21.3.

Article 39.

In the event that a member hinders the proceedings of the meeting, the Chair calls them to order. If the member continues their behaviour, the Chair may forbid this person to speak either for the duration of the current agenda item or the entire meeting or propose denying this person access to the follow-up meeting during which the decision is to be taken.

Article 40.

If a member is denied access to a meeting, their name is removed from the attendance list.

Article 41.

The Chair may order audience members who hinder the proceedings of the meeting in any way to be removed from the meeting.

Article 42.

The Chair may adjourn the meeting for a time to be determined by them to help maintain order and may, if the order proceedings are again hindered after reopening, close the meeting.

Section 8. Reporting of decision-making during meetings

Article 43.

1. The Chair sends a draft list of decisions made during the meeting to all members within 12 days of the meeting.
2. The provisions of Article 12.4 apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Article 44.

1. The list of decisions is approved by the Council at its next meeting.
2. Upon approval by the Council, the list of decisions is signed by the Chair and the Registrar.
3. The Registrar arranges for safekeeping of the signed list of decisions.

Article 45.

The list of decisions must include at least:

- a. the names of the Chair and the Registrar
- b. the names of the members present and of those absent
- c. a brief summary of the announcements made and documents received
- d. a brief overview of topics discussed and proposals submitted
- e. all decisions taken

- f. an overview of the proceedings of each vote, in the event of roll calls, stating the names of members who voted 'for' and those who voted 'against' as well as those who abstained from voting in accordance with these rules
- g. the text of any voting statements issued.

Article 46.

1. The list of decisions taken during a private meeting is kept on file separately, where possible, in keeping with the provisions of this section and stored by the Registrar.
2. In cases as referred to in Article 13.1, discussions on and approval of this list take place behind closed doors unless the Council has discontinued the confidentiality requirement in accordance with the provisions of Article 13.3.

Article 47.

1. The Council informs the Board of the University in a written, substantiated report of all decisions concerning proposals as soon as possible, and in any case, within two weeks.
2. The Council notifies the Board of the University in writing, supported by reasons, as soon as possible and, in any case, within two weeks of all its decisions with regard to advice/consent concerning proposed decisions by the Board of the University as referred to in Article 5.1 of the University Council Regulations.

Section 9. Committees.

Article 48.

1. The University Council has three permanent assistance committees:
 - a. Teaching and Research Committee
 - b. Administrative Committee
 - c. Resources Committee
2. The composition, duties, and working method of each committee are set out by the Council upon their establishment.
3. The committees meet in the presence of a member of the Board of the University at least two weeks before the consultative meeting.
4. The committees are tasked with monitoring and discussing developments in their assigned policy areas in order to contribute to the University of Groningen's policy development and to arrive at decisions that can count on sufficient support.
5. The committees are involved in policies that are still at an early stage, as well as policies that already have the character of a proposed decision by the Board of the University.
6. The relevant portfolio holder of the Board of the University attends the meetings of the committees.
7. Committee meetings intended to prepare for decision-making in the consultative meeting are held in public unless agenda items are marked confidential, or some of the attendees request closed doors in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.
8. If requested by the Board of the University or sections, officials can provide a technical explanation of agenda items.
9. The committees can report to the Council. The General Director of University Services is responsible for the administrative secretary in this regard.

Article 49.

1. When appointing a new member of the Board of the University, the Council nominates a staff member and a student member to sit on the selection committee to be appointed by the Supervisory Board.

2. Upon reappointment, the council establishes a confidential committee consisting of an equal number of staff members and students. The Chair is also a member of the confidential committee.
3. The confidential committee will have one or more interviews with the officer to be appointed, after which it will only issue a positive or negative recommendation to the Council in a confidential meeting. The confidential committee will send the substantive arguments to the Supervisory Board. The other members of the Council and the members of the Board of the University do not have the right to inspect this.
4. Articles 34, 35, and 36 apply *mutatis mutandis* to the nomination for reappointment. The Board of the University leaves the room for this matter.
5. The Council's decision on this recommendation will then be forwarded to the Supervisory Board.

Article 50.

1. The University Council may decide to set up permanent or special working groups to deal with certain topics that fall within the University's responsibility if it deems this necessary.
2. The composition, duties, and working method of the working groups are specified by the Council upon their appointment, if necessary, in separate regulations that then form part of these Rules of Procedure.
3. The Council may terminate the activities of the working groups at any time, or take over the matter that the relevant working group is dealing with.

Section 10. Digital meetings.

Article 51.

1. The Chair may decide to hold a digital meeting which will be streamed live via internet to make it public. In that case, the provisions of this article also apply.
2. In order to comply with the requirements of Article 15, members must state their name and section in the chat upon entering the digital meeting room. Only after that will a member be deemed to be present, and the Registrar will add that person to the attendance list referred to in Article 15. Leaving the digital meeting room should also be made clear in a similar manner.
3. In the case of voting on persons, Articles 33 and 34 do not apply. Instead, an automated voting system will be used to guarantee voter anonymity.
4. A second round, as referred to in Article 36, will be held in a manner to be determined by the Chair.
5. If the meeting or part of it is closed, the livestream of the meeting will be turned off. For the rest, Article 12 applies *mutatis mutandis*.
6. In the case of roll call votes, after stating their name, members are to turn on their camera and microphone and cast their votes orally.

Article 52.

1. In the case of physical meetings, an online link will be made available through which absent council members can still follow the meeting.
2. Members who cannot be physically present will vote by proxy in accordance with the rules of Article 27.3. They will be counted for the determination of the quorum if they have registered in the chat in accordance with the provisions of Article 51.2 and have not left the digital meeting room.
3. In the case of roll call votes as referred to in Article 29.2, the procedure laid down in the previous paragraph may be deviated from at the proposal of one of the members physically present or the Chair, and the members are given the opportunity to cast their votes by roll call, in accordance with Article 51.6.
4. If the meeting or part of it is closed, Council members will be given the opportunity to also attend this part of the meeting digitally.

Chapter 3. Final Provisions

Article 53.

In cases of doubt regarding the application or explanation of any provision in these Rules of Procedure and in all situations not covered by the Rules of Procedure, the meeting decides unless powers have been granted to the Chair with regard to the matter.

Article 54.

Bearing in mind the provisions of Article 32 of these Rules of Procedure, the University Council may at any time decide to deviate from the provisions of these Rules of Procedure if none of those present object to this, and on condition that this does not constitute any violation of the law or the University Council Regulations.

Article 55.

These Rules of Procedure were adopted by the University Council during its meeting on 12 December 2024, will take effect on 13 December 2024, and will be published on the University of Groningen website.