

Code of Practice on Departmental Governance

1. Introduction

1.1 The Code of Practice sets out key principles to inform:

- (a) the internal management of academic departments (Section 2);
- (b) the relationship between academic departments and the School (Section 3);
- (c) the School's governance of academic departments (Section 4).

The main purposes of the Code are:

- (a) to promote a partnership between the School and departments based on the values set out in the Ethics Code, in particular by encouraging greater mutual trust and understanding, so enabling the shared and respective interests of departments and the School to be realised within the context of the LSE.
- (b) to promote equity within and between departments consistent with the tradition of departmental autonomy.

1.2 The Code is binding on Departments. It is included in the Departmental Heads' Handbook.

1.3 The School Management Committee or Heads of Department can initiate a discussion of the Code at Department Heads' Forum, which may result in a review of the Code.

Anyone who has reason to believe that the Code is not being followed should raise the issue with the Head of Department, the Vice President Faculty Development or the President & Vice Chancellor. Should a member of a department report concerns to the School about possible breaches of the Code in the department, the department will be expected to co-operate fully in any investigation conducted by the School under its Whistleblowing Policy and in any subsequent action which may be taken. For its part, the School will ensure that all matters reported under the Whistleblowing Policy are handled according to agreed procedures in a way which appropriately balances confidentiality and transparency.

2. Principles for the internal management of academic departments

The six core principles underpinning the management of the School's academic departments are:

- a) transparency and accountability;
- b) clarity of functions and roles;
- c) adherence to the highest standards of integrity and School-wide values;
- d) clear decision-making frameworks;
- e) clear authority and powers of delegation.;
- f) collegiality in their mode of operation and in relations between members.

Transparency and accountability

2.1 Departments should conduct their affairs in as transparent a way as possible in accordance with the established School and departmental norms of transparency. In the event of doubt or conflict between School and departmental norms, School norms will apply.

2.2 There should normally be appropriate and timely involvement of, and consultation with, staff and students on departmental matters which directly affect their interests, such as, but not restricted to:

- *Academic planning and development*: in particular, departmental strategies and plans should be discussed and agreed at departmental meetings to ensure maximum understanding of, and buy-in to, the department's direction and priorities. Such consultation will strengthen the department's input to the School's annual monitoring and regular review processes
- *The allocation of workloads among staff*
- *The provision of adequate financial information* to all members of the department on an annual basis which accounts for expenditure in the previous financial year of all resources available to the department
- *The provision of information to all members of the department about resources available to the department in a current financial year, eligibility to apply, and the basis of and processes for the distribution of such resources*. Approved departmental budgets should be presented by the Heads of Department to staff annually for information and to give the opportunity for any queries to be raised
- *student experience and satisfaction, teaching and quality assurance*
- *regulatory and legal compliance*
- *issues relating to the School's Ethics Code*

2.3 Some confidential matters concerning the position of individual members of the department, such as staff remuneration, promotion and review, or employee relations matters are not appropriate for widespread consultation within the department. The School's Ethics Code and Guidance as well as relevant School Policies and Guidelines provide a helpful point of reference for establishing the boundaries of consultation.

Clarity of roles and functions, clear authority and powers of delegation and accountability

2.4 Heads of Department are formally appointed by the President and Vice Chancellor of the School on the recommendation of the department. They are responsible for ensuring that the department complies with the legal and other obligation placed upon the School. They are expected to carry out the duties outlined in the latest version of the generic role profile for Heads of Department and their letters of appointment in a way which keeps in view their accountability to the President & Vice Chancellor of the School. Heads of Department will seek to carry out their duties in a transparent, fair, honest and inclusive way (see 2.3-2.4 above) but they are not formally accountable to the members of their department. They will delegate tasks as appropriate to their deputies, department managers and other colleagues with the reasonable expectation that colleagues will be willing to support the Head of Department through collaboration to achieve excellence in teaching, research (including impact and knowledge exchange and transfer), in line with the strategic plan for the department and the goals of the School's Strategic Plan, and to uphold the values of citizenship and collegiality set out in the Ethics Code. Heads of Department may be removed from office by the President & Vice Chancellor following the *Procedure for the Removal from Office of a Head of Department*.

2.5 Deputy Heads of Department, where appointed, are appointed by and are accountable to the Head of Department for the exercise of the responsibilities delegated to them as set out in their role profile. As in the case of Heads of Department, they are expected to carry out their duties in a transparent, fair, honest and inclusive way, but they are not formally accountable to the members of the department. Deputy Heads of Department may be removed from office by the Head of Department following the *Procedure for the Removal from Office of a Deputy Head of Department*.

2.6 Departmental Managers (DMs) are accountable to the Head of Department for the exercise of their responsibilities as set out in the role profile. All other professional services staff in the Department are accountable to the DM for the performance of the duties set out in their role.

Academic (research and teaching), teaching staff and research staff not located in a Research Centre are accountable to the Head of Department for the exercise of their responsibilities as set out in their role profile. The Head of Department is the manager of these staff and thus carries overall responsibility for implementing School processes regarding their recruitment, mentoring, career development, review, promotion and reward. "Management" refers to the allocation of authority and responsibility within Departments which lies ultimately with the Head of Department, but on the understanding Heads of Department will act in a consultative and collegial manner. "Management" with respect to academic colleagues does not extend to directing their research agendas, but does include equitable management of individual workloads, including teaching and citizenship responsibilities, career development and evaluation of performance. The Head of Department may delegate some of their authority to other, usually senior, members of the Department. **The School expects all academic (research and teaching), teaching staff and research staff to make adequate and full contributions to all aspects of their role profile to the high standards expected of staff at LSE, including at the departmental level.**

Heads of Department must ensure that individuals' workloads are fairly distributed and

reasonably balanced so that each staff member is able to make an adequate contribution across the full range of their responsibilities. As a matter of principle and to the extend this is practically feasible, the more senior members of staff in departments are expected to undertake a greater share of administrative and core teaching duties, to facilitate the career development of more junior staff. **Those who fall short of making adequate and full contributions to some aspects of their role profile (e.g. research) can and should be asked by the Head of Department to make commensurably stronger contributions to other aspects of their role (e.g teaching or service and citizenship).** Heads of Department are expected to take into account any individual circumstances when making such workload decisions, and to be able to account for these decisions, in the first instance, to the Vice President Faculty Development and/or their HR Business Partner.

Adherence to the highest standards of Integrity and School wide values

2.7 The Head of Department will be guided in their management of the department by School policies including the Ethics Code, policies in respect of equity, diversity and inclusion as well as any other codes of practice which are from time to time adopted by the School. Department members will be guided by and be responsive to these policies.

The Head of Department will need to exercise their responsibilities within the department in a manner which is fair, transparent and honest and meets the highest standards of professional conduct.

Grievances arising between members of departments will be dealt with under the approved School procedure which applies to the individual bringing the grievance. Every attempt should however be made in the first instance to resolve grievances informally, taking advice as appropriate from the department's HR Business Partner. If there is no approved School grievance procedure applicable to the individual bringing the grievance, the matter will be considered following the principles set out in *The ACAS Guide on Discipline and Grievances at Work*.

Clear decision-making frameworks

2.8 Departments and their members may manage their internal affairs in ways which reflect the traditions and culture of the department, but within the framework of certain principles as described above and subject to minimum standards of conduct and performance.

2.9 Departmental meetings should be run in a professional manner at previously arranged and notified dates, times and locations, with committees having agreed Terms of Reference, and agendas and papers produced for each meeting and circulated in an efficient and timely way most suited to the department. Minutes recording the decisions taken in meetings should be taken and circulated as appropriate in advance of the next meeting, together with an Action Schedule indicating those responsible for taking action and a time line for completion. All agreed actions should be followed up and progress reported as appropriate. Further advice on meeting "etiquette" may be obtained from the School's Governance Team.

Collegiality

2.10 Collegiality refers to the conduct of the business of departments in a fair, open, honest, consultative, respectful and efficient manner which seeks to ensure that the legitimate concerns and interests of all members of the department are taken into consideration in the decision-making

process. An important aspect of collegiality is ensuring that members of the department with a protected characteristic are treated in such a way that places them at no disadvantage in comparison with members of the department who do not have a protected characteristic. (The nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are 'age', 'disability', 'gender reassignment' (now commonly understood as 'gender identity'), 'marriage and civil partnership', 'pregnancy and maternity', 'race', 'religion or belief', 'sex', and 'sexual orientation'). Collegiality also encompasses the nature and quality of relationships between members of a department necessary to help ensure the success of the department and the achievement of its objectives.

2.11 All staff should seek to engage in activities that make an active contribution to an inclusive community in which diversity is embraced and celebrated. This may involve engagement with colleagues, accepting delegated responsibility, co-operation with legitimate requests, fostering good working relationships with colleagues and others and fulfilling one's commitments. Collegiality implies being generous with help and support for others and collaborating in matters relating to research, education and knowledge exchange and impact by working for the benefit of a department and the School as a whole.

3 Principles Governance the relationship of Academic Departments to the School

Transparency and accountability

3.1 Heads of Department are responsible for encouraging transparency in all aspects of the Department's dealings with other parts of the School, and in particular ensuring the accuracy of all data and information about the activities of the Department and its members which is submitted to both internally and to external bodies. The School's central leadership will ensure that all aspects of its procedures which affect Departments are conducted in an open and transparent way, particularly decisions relating to the allocation of resources. The School's central services will provide full accurate and timely information to Departments on matters which impact upon their work and priorities and ensure that there is appropriate consultation on any new demands placed on departments through meetings of the Departmental Heads Forum. The School will endeavour to issue an annual calendar of deadlines for processes to which departments are required to contribute.

Clarity of roles and functions

3.2 The distribution of responsibility for functions between the School and Departments is determined primarily by the location of the expertise which needs to be exercised to ensure the highest quality outcomes for stakeholders. The boundary is permeable, and may be affected by external constraints. Subject to this consideration, and to the availability of resources, the School will, in full consultation with Departments, seek opportunities to assume responsibility for functions which unnecessarily divert Departments' resources from their core functions of teaching, research and knowledge exchange and transfer subject to ensuring the highest quality outcomes for stakeholders. The School will seek to ensure that the level of resource allocated to centrally delivered functions is kept under review and is subject to appropriate benchmarking. When centrally delivered functions are replicated at the departmental level, for example, communications, Departments are asked to ensure there is liaison with the central Division concerned.

3.3 Functions which are driven centrally by the School are informed by the need to ensure:

- that the financial sustainability of the institution is maintained,
- that the factors which underpin the School's global standing and reputation are upheld and managed in a consistent and equitable way- examples include student admission standards, teaching quality assurance, research profile, key elements of the student academic and non-academic experience, processes for the review and promotion of staff
- that the School is compliant with all regulatory and legal requirements
- that the benefits offered by the School are managed in an equitable and efficient way within the constraints of available resources, for example student admissions, staff reward.
- that resources are allocated for the achievement of institutional and departmental priorities in as transparent and equitable a way as possible
- that key risks to the sustainability and reputation of the School are identified, assessed and controlled and that the effectiveness of those controls at the level of the department is assured, for example, through Annual Monitoring, the Academic Planning and Resources Committee Review Process and Internal Audit reviews
- that peer evaluation and benchmarking are appropriately involved in assessing the quality and effectiveness of departmental activities to provide an external point of reference
- that mechanisms necessary to uphold, protect and promote the values of the institution as a whole are in place, in particular processes to ensure adherence to the School's Ethics Code such as the declaration of conflicts of interest, equity diversity and inclusion, and the approval of grants and donations

3.4 In engaging Departments in centrally driven functions, the School will seek to impose as light an administrative burden on departments as possible mindful that their primary focus is to deliver the core functions of teaching and research, including impact and knowledge exchange and transfer. The School will seek to afford departments as much flexibility as possible in implementing centrally driven requirements in ways compatible with departmental culture and the particular needs and characteristics of the academic disciplines which they serve. The School will also seek only the necessary minimum of reporting to the centre.

Adherence to the highest standards of integrity and School-wide values

3.5 Heads of Department are asked to ensure that the School's Ethics Code is observed by all members of the department and to set an example in adhering to it. In particular, members of academic and research staff are expected to work in ways that enhance the LSE's reputation, to adhere to the School's values and be aware of, and contribute to, the School's Strategy.

3.6 Departments and their members are required to act collectively and in the interests of the School and to ensure that the pursuit of their own autonomy does not inhibit any other unit within the School, or the School as a collective entity, from properly functioning or from the pursuit of its own, or collectively agreed, objectives.

In addition to fulfilling the responsibilities set out by the Head of Department or senior colleagues relating to their teaching, administrative, research and other related activities, members of academic and research staff are required to fulfil to adhere to the principles of good citizenship, and to participate in the governance of the School.

Clear decision-making frameworks

- 3.7 Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that all decisions relating to the life and work of the department which require consideration and approval by School committees are referred through the appropriate channels.
- 3.8 Academic Departments or their members do not have a separate legal existence from the School and may not enter legally binding contracts with third parties independently of the School or misrepresent their capacity to do so. Liability for all contracts into which departments wish to enter is taken by the School and all contracts are subject to the provisions of the School's approved Procedures for Delegated Legal Authority. Departments are accountable to the President & Vice Chancellor of the School through the Head of Department for fulfilling the terms of contracts for which their members have responsibility.
- 3.9 Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that the department complies with legal and regulatory obligations placed upon the School.

Clear authority and powers of delegation

Departments are established and disestablished by the School on the authority of the Council. Proposals to establish or disestablish departments are normally first considered by the Academic Planning and Resources Committee and approved by the Academic Board. The responsibility for the leadership of an academic department of the School is delegated by Council to the Director of the School, who is authorised to delegate that responsibility to Heads of Department. The Director remains accountable to Council for the exercise of the authority they delegate to Heads of Department.

The President & Vice Chancellor may delegate aspects of their responsibility for managing Heads of Department to a member or members of the School Management Committee, but Heads of Department remain accountable to the President & Vice Chancellor for the exercise of the responsibilities delegated to them.

4. Governance of Academic Departments

- 4.1 The same six principles which provide the framework for the management of departments and departments' relationships with the central School leadership also apply to the governance of departments.
- 4.2 "Governance" in this context of academic departments refers to the exercise of independent oversight of the management of Departments by the School Management Committee and the Executive Office, the monitoring of progress towards the achievement of agreed objectives within agreed timescales according to agreed indicators of performance and carrying out the role of a "critical friend" to the management of the department.
- 4.3 As noted previously, Departments are accountable through their Head of Department to the President & Vice Chancellor of the School and ultimately to Council for their performance in all areas of their activities. Accountability to the President & Vice Chancellor is exercised primarily through Annual Monitoring and through regular reviews of aspects of the work and plans of the department undertaken by the Education Committee, Academic Planning and Resources

Committee and the Research Committee and such other bodies as the School may from time-to-time determine. The provision of an external peer element in these processes re-enforces the "critical friend" role which forms a key part of the governance of academic departments. The President & Vice Chancellor exercises their accountability to Council for the management of academic departments primarily by means of reports to Council, supplemented on occasion by additional material such as review reports and action plans for the implementation of review decisions.

4.4 Departments may establish Advisory Boards to support and advise them in the achievement of their mission and objectives. The purpose of Advisory Boards is to provide Heads of Departments and members of the department's management team or committee with an external perspective and a forum in which the legitimate interests and perspectives of external academic and non-academic members and funders of research are represented. All Advisory Boards will be established and operate in accordance with the School's Guidance on Terms of Reference for Advisory Boards.

Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
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2	November 2025		

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Will this document be publicised through Internal Communications?	Yes/ No
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