Programme Committee Handbook

Applies to all University of Groningen Bachelor's, Master's and Research Master's degree programmes

Valid from November 2023 onwards ff.

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1 Introduction

As from 1 September 2017, due to an amendment to the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), the role of the Programme Committees (OCs) has changed. Since that date, the OC has been a consultative participation body, within the meaning of the law. Their primary duty has remained unchanged – OCs not only advise about the Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER), but they also give advice for guaranteeing and improving the quality of the degree programme. In addition to this existing right of consultation, a right of consent has been added to parts of the OER, as well as the legal underpinning as an official consultative participation body with the associated right to discuss the proposed policy with the degree programme board twice a year.

Now that the OC is an official consultative participation body, it should be clear to all parties involved that its input and recommendations must be taken seriously by degree programme board/Programme Director and the Faculty Board.

Since April 2023, a participation coordinator has been appointed at the UG. The coordinator provides support to all participation bodies within the university. If there are questions for which it is unclear who to ask, please feel free to contact the coordinator at participation.coordinator@rug.nl. The coordinator will then help directly or refer to the appropriate colleague or department.

2 Role of the Programme Committee

It is the OC's duty to give advice on how to guarantee and improve the quality of the degree programme. This is stipulated in the Higher Education and Research Act (henceforth: WHW). More specifically, it lays down the following rights and duties of the OC:

- concerning elements of the Teaching and Examination Regulations (henceforth: OER):
    - right of consent regarding certain elements of the OER (for more details, see the table in Appendix 1)
    - right of consultation regarding other elements of the OER (for more details, see Appendix 1)
    - right to assess the implementation of the OER each year
- If requested, or on its own initiative, it can issue advice or make proposals to the degree programme board and the Dean of the Faculty '*on all teaching-related matters in the relevant degree programme*'.

Therefore, the OC's purpose is to improve the quality of the degree programme(s). This means that anything related to the quality of the degree programme(s) may be a topic for discussion in OC meetings. During such discussions, the opinions of student members and staff members carry equal weight. Thus, 'novice' OC members need not be afraid to state their views and to participate in the discussions. Chairs of OCs must ensure that all members can have their say.

3 Position of the Programme Committee within the organization

The Programme Committee is a consultative participation body at degree programme level and supplements the consultative participation bodies at the Faculty and University level. At the Faculty level, this role is performed by the Faculty Council, which consults with the Faculty Board. At University level, the University Council (UR) consults with the Board of the University. See also the organization chart in Appendix 6.

Accordingly, this means that if there are any problems at the degree programme level that apply to several or all of a faculty's degree programmes, this is a matter for the Faculty Council. Problems with an even wider scope – involving several faculties – must be discussed in the University Council. Therefore, the OC should know how to address the Faculty Council and, if necessary, the University Council. However, there are also other Faculty bodies involved in matters concerning degree programmes. A number of platforms/individuals that you may have to deal with as an OC, and details of their roles, are listed below.

Faculty Board

The Faculty is governed by the Faculty Board (henceforth: FB). This board comprises a Dean of the Faculty, a Managing Director, and a Member for Education. The latter is the obvious person for the OC to keep in touch with, and the FB is the official body to which the OC addresses its recommendations about the OER from which it receives requests for advice and consent.

Degree programme board/Programme Director

In addition to the FB (or the Faculty Board member for Education), there is a Programme Director (or a degree programme board), who is even more closely associated with teaching than the FB. The FB is officially the consultative body of the OC for OER-related matters, but this does not alter the fact that a good relationship with the Programme Director can be very useful.

An OC can invite anyone to attend its meetings. However, do remember to follow the formal procedures concerning advice and consent to the FB. For matters that do not concern the OER, the OC can opt either to approach the FB or the Programme Director/degree programme board for unsolicited advice. It can also receive requests for advice from both bodies.

Student assessor

The FB's student assessor can also provide OC members with access to the FB. The student assessor is an advisory student member of the FB. This individual participates in FB meetings and is allowed to advise the FB. In addition, they are the go-to person for students where Faculty policies are concerned.

Faculty Council

The Faculty Council (hereafter: FR) is the consultative participation body involved with Faculty matters. Thus, the FR is the body the OC should contact in connection with issues that cannot be resolved at degree programme level. In addition, the FR has right of consent in many matters in which the OC has right of consultation (see Appendix 1 for more details). In order to maintain a good relationship, it is preferable to have proper consultations before issuing any advice on points for which the FR has the right of consent.

Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners is an independent body within the Faculty that determines, in an objective and expert manner, whether individual students satisfy the conditions set out in the OER with regard to the knowledge, understanding, and skills that are required to obtain a degree. In addition, the Board of Examiners assesses individual requests from students, sometimes involving comments about course units, examinations or lecturers. Such signals concern the quality of education and are therefore relevant to the OC. Thus, the OC should have regular contacts with the Board of Examiners about such matters.

4 The OER and the right of consent and consultation

The OER contains all rules and regulations affecting the degree programme and the examination requirements. These include the content of the degree programme and its variants, the requirements to be met by students to obtain a degree, and the way in which course units must be completed.

For several of these OER elements, the OC has right of consent. This means that the Faculty Board cannot adopt the OER before the OC has been asked to agree to subjects for which the OC has the right of consent. In practice, this means that the OC will discuss the proposed changes; if it does not approve of the proposal, it will discuss this with the FB (either verbally or in writing), explaining why it cannot or will not agree to the change and perhaps make a counterproposal that it deems acceptable. In practice, this can also be the Programme Director or another responsible party on behalf of the FB. Ultimately, however, it is the FB to which you give formal approval and that adopts the OER. Keep in mind that a 'no' without further explanation is not particularly useful to anyone; you will be much more influential as an OC if you contribute constructive ideas, not only because items that you oppose are not included in the OER, but also because this enables you to create opportunities to include items in the OER that it does not (or not yet) contain.

The OC has right of consultation for all OER elements for which it does not have right of consent. As with the right of consent, the FB cannot make decisions without first consulting the OC. However, if the OC deems a proposal to be unacceptable, the FB may decide (after explaining its viewpoint and reacting to the OC's objections) to still implement the change. Here, too, it is important that the OC provide arguments for its position so that the FB can look for an alternative that is acceptable to both the FB and the OC.

Appendix 1 shows the elements of the OER for which the OC has right of consent or right of consultation and the elements for which the FR has these rights. In addition, a model OER with a historical summary is sent to the faculties every year; this historical summary also indicates which parts fall under the right of consent or right of consultation.

5 The importance of formal documentation and adequate transfer

The OC's duties have become more formal and thus more important. This means that, in the case of reaccreditation of the degree programme (or programmes), the role of the OC is also examined. Therefore, documents that show the activities of the OC must be available for presentation. Adequate documentation can also contribute to better continuity; it will enable new OC members to become familiar with what concerns this specific OC more quickly.

Finally, it is important to have a clear picture of the members' expectations at the start of the year; therefore, this must be documented. Adequate documentation means keeping the following documents up-to-date:

- the OC's Internal Regulations or Rules of Procedure (see sample document)
- Yearly planning for the OC is determined every year, whereby an administrative calendar is taken. The administrative calendar sets out what the OC can expect or must deliver to other bodies, such as the FB, the FR or other OCs. If this is properly coordinated at the beginning of the year, the OC can make the appropriate internal adjustments to its own planning. (See example document).
- Adequate minutes of each meeting. If someone from the FB (or a representative of that body) is present, it is important that details of the OC's advice and of the FB's response to that advice are legible.
- Recommendations or decisions of approval for the FB: it must be clear whether and why the OC approves or disapproves or issues a positive or negative recommendation.
- Annual report/transfer document: this must be drawn up each year and be ready before the start of the new academic year so that it is available to new members. It can be useful to choose a format in which a document is updated annually; this document should not be allowed to become too large, to ensure that it remains readable. For a more extensive guide to what to should be included in the annual report, see Appendix 7 to this handbook.

Effective support is essential if this is to be organized properly. Every OC is entitled to support; if this has not been arranged (or if it is insufficient), the OC can submit a request to the FB.

6 Legislative amendment of 01-09-2017

The amendment to the WHW came into effect on 1 September 2017, with the result that the OCs' role has changed. This Handbook is based on this new role. However, below is a brief explanation of the differences between the 'old' and the 'new' situation for OC members who are curious about this.

The most important change is that the OC has been given a more important and, therefore, more formal role in the degree programme's quality assurance procedures. The OC is now an official consultative participation body, just like the FR and UR (which already enjoyed this status). This means that the OC's views must be taken seriously by the FB both formally and informally. In addition to the existing right of consultation, the OC has been given right of consent regarding various elements of the OER. The FR also has right of consultation regarding these elements and right of consent regarding several elements for which the OC only has right of consultation. Therefore, good contacts between FR and OC have become more important.

As the WHW has changed in this regard, it is quite likely that this will be given extra attention during reaccreditations. The quality assurance system has also been tested, and the OC has now become an important actor in this.

Finally, an adjustment has been made to the manner in which OC members are appointed. It is now possible to hold OC elections within the degree programme (or programmes), on the

basis of which the OC members are appointed. This is not obligatory: the Faculty Board and Faculty Council must decide on the method to be employed, and this decision must be included in the Faculty Regulations. This decision must be evaluated annually.

Finally

The Board of the University supports the Programme Committees by means of this Handbook, as well as a Brightspace platform ('University of Groningen Programme Committees'), and, if necessary, the provision of information or training (on request). For the Brightspace page, a contact has been appointed at each Faculty, who adds members of the OCs to and removes former members from the platform. Those with substantive questions about the OER should contact the education section of the Department of General Administrative and Legal Affairs, which can be reached via onderwijs.abjz@rug.nl.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultative participation in the OER of the Faculty Council and Programme Committee

Topics - Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER) Article 7.13.2 of the WHW	FR		OC	
	I	A	I	A
a. the content of the degree programme and its examinations				X
a1. the way in which the teaching in the relevant degree programme is evaluated			X	
b. the content of the specializations/tracks within the degree programme			X	
c. the competences in the areas of knowledge, understanding and skills that students must have acquired by the end of the degree programme			X	
d. where necessary, the organization of practical exercises			X	
e. the student workload of the degree programme and each of its course units			X	
f. further regulations as referred to in articles 7.8b.6 and 7.9.5 *(binding study advice)*				X
g. with regard to those degree programmes that are subject to Article 7.5d *(increased student workload)*			X	
h. the number and order of examinations and when they can be taken	X			X
i. whether the degree programme is offered in full-time, part-time and/or dual variants	X			X
j. where necessary, the order in which, the periods in which – and the number of times per academic year that – the opportunity is offered to take the examinations and final assessments, as well as the way in which registration for these examinations takes place, and the applicable standard registration period	X			X
k. where necessary, the validity period of successfully completed examinations, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to extend this period	X			
l. whether examinations are held in written, oral or another form, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to deviate from this in extraordinary cases	X			
m. the way in which students with a disability or chronic illness are given a reasonable opportunity to take examinations	X			
n. the public nature of oral examinations, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to deviate from this in extraordinary cases	X			
o. the term within which the results of examinations must be announced, and whether and how it is possible to deviate from this	X			
p. how and when those students who have completed a written examination may peruse their marked examination papers	X			
q. the way and the period during which interested parties can peruse the questions and assignments set within the framework of a written examination and the norms based on which the examination has been assessed	X			
r. the grounds on which the Board of Examiners may grant exemptions from one or more examinations on the basis of previously passed examinations or final assessments in higher education or knowledge and skills acquired outside the world of higher education	X			
s. where necessary, the fact that admission to examinations is subject to the successful completion of other examinations	X			
t. where necessary, the compulsory nature of practical exercises in order to gain admission to the relevant examination, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to grant exemption from this requirement, possibly with alternative requirements	X			X
u. study progress supervision and individual tutoring	X			
v. where necessary, the way in which students are selected for a specialization (as referred to in Article 7.9b) or for a degree programme or track as referred to in Article 7.3h *(pathway for outstanding students within a degree programme)*			X	
x. the actual design of teaching, which in any case includes the offer of pre-Master's programmes	X			X
all other topics covered by the OER but not specifically mentioned in Article 7.13 of the WHW, as referred to in clauses a to y.				X

The lettering corresponds to the lettering of Article 7.13.2 of the WHW

Abbreviations:

FR: Faculty Council
OC: Programme Committee
I: Right of consent
A: Right of consultation

Appendix 2: Year calendar

Below is an example of an administrative calendar for the OC, stating the various activities within the Faculty which the OC must be aware of or which it should actively pursue. It is recommended that OCs consider these when making their own year plan. In the example below, it should be borne in mind that the period for different subjects can differ from one Faculty to another. Therefore, coordinate with the FB and other Faculty bodies to find out when the various activities take place. Obviously, this list of activities is not exhaustive.

September	- Appointment of OC members in accordance with the Faculty Regulations - Helping new OC members to settle in - Discussing the evaluations of the second semester - Drawing up the OC's year plan and making decisions concerning: - the course units to be evaluated during the academic year and the evaluation procedure, and communicating this to relevant parties - other goals to be set in addition to these evaluations - the duties of the various members, e.g. external communication (Facebook, Brightspace, etc.), e-mail management, etc. - the number of meetings with the Faculty Board or its representatives
October	
November	Best Practice Award (organized by the OC in some Faculties)
December-January	Receipt of proposals for OER changes submitted by the FB or another body on behalf of the FB
February	Discussing the evaluations of the first semester
March	Submitting the OC's OER proposals and giving consent or making recommendations concerning proposed changes
April-May	Elections for the Faculty Council
June	Writing the transfer document/annual report
July	- Appointment of Faculty Board student member - Recruiting new OC members (students and staff) - Preparing for the election/appointment of OC members; finalizing the new OC's composition, preferably before 1 September

Appendix 3: Relevant articles from the WHW

Article 7.13 Teaching and Examination Regulations

1. The board of the institution approves a set of Teaching and Examination Regulations for each of the degree programmes or clusters of degree programmes taught at the institution. The Teaching and Examination Regulations contain clear and adequate information about the degree programme or cluster of degree programmes.
2. Without prejudice to any other provisions in this Act, the Teaching and Examination Regulations set out the applicable procedures and rights and obligations with regard to teaching and examinations for each degree programme or cluster of degree programmes. This includes at least the following:
    a. the content of the degree programme and its examinations,
    a1. the way in which the teaching in the relevant degree programme is evaluated,
    b. the content of the specializations/tracks within a degree programme,
    c. the competences in the fields of knowledge, understanding and skills that students must have acquired by the end of the degree programme,
    d. where necessary, the organization of practical exercises,
    e. the student workload of the degree programme and of each of its course units,
    f. further regulations as referred to in Article 7.8b.6 and Article 7.9.5,
    g. the degree programmes to which Article 7.5d applies,
    h. the number and order of examinations and when they can be taken,
    i. whether the degree programme is offered in full-time, part-time and/or dual variants,
    j. where necessary, the order in which, the periods in which – and the number of times per academic year that – the opportunity is offered to take the examinations and final assessments, as well as the way in which registration for these examinations takes place, and the applicable standard registration period
    k. where necessary, the validity period of successfully completed examinations, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to extend this period,
    l. whether examinations are held in written, oral or another form, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to deviate from this in extraordinary cases,
    m. the way in which students with a disability or chronic illness are given a reasonable opportunity to take examinations,
    n. the public nature of oral examinations, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to decide otherwise in extraordinary cases,
    o. the term within which the results of examinations must be announced, and whether and how it is possible to deviate from this,
    p. how and when those students who have completed a written examination may peruse their marked examination papers,
    q. the way and the period during which interested parties can peruse the questions and assignments set within the framework of a written examination and the norms based on which the examination has been assessed,
    r. the grounds on which the Board of Examiners may grant exemptions from one or more examinations on the basis of previously passed examinations or final

assessments in higher education or knowledge and skills acquired outside the world of higher education,

    s.   where necessary, a statement that admission to examinations is subject to the successful completion of other examinations,

    t.   where necessary, the compulsory nature of practical exercises in order to gain admission to the relevant examination, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to grant exemption from this requirement, possibly with alternative requirements,

    u.   study progress supervision and individual tutoring, and

    v.   where relevant, the student selection procedure for special tracks in the degree programme as referred to in Article 7.9b, and

    x.   the actual design of the curriculum, which in any case includes the offer of pre-Master's programmes.

3. The Teaching and Examination Regulations set out how people can use their right to proceed with their Bachelor's degree programme at a university of applied sciences as referred to in Article 7.8a.5 and which requirements they must satisfy to this end.

Article 9.18 Degree Programme Committees

1. Each degree programme or cluster of degree programmes has its own Programme Committee. It is the Committee's duty to give advice on how to improve and assure the quality of the degree programme. In addition, the Programme Committee has:

    a.   the right of consent with regard to the Teaching and Examination Regulations, as referred to in Article 7.13 of the Act, with the exception of the subjects referred to in 7.13.2 a, f, h up to and including u and x, and with the exception of the requirements referred to in article 7.28.4 and 7.28.5, and Article 7.30b.2,

    b.   the task of annually assessing how the Teaching and Examination Regulations are implemented,

    c.   right of consultation with regard to the Teaching and Examination Regulations, as referred to in Article 7.13, with the exception of subjects with regard to which the committee has the right of consent by virtue of 7.13a, and

    d.   the task of issuing solicited or unsolicited recommendations or proposals to the degree programme board as referred to in Article 9.17.1 and the Dean of the Faculty concerning any matters regarding the teaching within the relevant degree programme (or programmes).

    The Committee will send the recommendations and proposals referred to under (d) to the Faculty Council for information purposes.

2. Article 9.35 preamble and Article 9.35 b, c and d, apply mutatis mutandis to advice as referred to in Article 9.18.1.

3. If the Committee submits a proposal as referred to in Article 9.18.1, sub d, to the degree programme board or the Dean of Faculty, the board or the Dean of Faculty respectively will respond within two months of receiving the proposal.

4. Article 9.31.3 to 9.31.8 apply mutatis mutandis to the Programme Committee. In consultation between the degree programme board or the Dean of the Faculty and the Faculty Council, the Faculty Regulations may stipulate a different procedure for selecting members of the Programme Committee than by vote. It will be decided each year whether the new procedure for selecting members will be continued.

5. The Programme Committee is authorized to invite the degree programme board or the Dean of the Faculty at least twice a year to discuss proposed policies on the basis of an agenda drawn up by the Committee.
6. If a faculty only comprises one degree programme, the Faculty Regulations may stipulate that the duties and powers of the Programme Committee are exercised by the Faculty Council, as referred to in Article 9.37.

Article 9.31 University Council (articles 9.31.3 to 9.31.8 also apply to the OC, see Article 9.18.4 above)

3. Half of the members of the Council will be elected from and by the staff and half from and by the student body.
4. Members of the Board of the University, members of the Supervisory Board and deans of faculties may not be members of the Council.
5. Candidates for the elections of the staff members of the Council can be nominated by staff members and by organizations of staff members.
6. Council members will be elected by a secret written ballot. A ballot to elect members of a section of the Council will only take place if the number of candidate members for the section is greater than the number of seats available for that section.
7. The Council draws up regulations for matters of a domestic nature and also regulates the way in which the resources made available by the Board of the University to that Council and to any Faculty councils and committees, as referred to in Article 9.47, are distributed.
8. The Council will elect a Chair and one or more Deputy Chairs from among its members or from non-members. The Chair – or in the event of their absence, a Deputy Chair – represents the University Council in legal proceedings.

Article 9.35 Advice (Preamble and b, c and d apply mutatis mutandis, see Article 9.18.2)

If a decision to be taken by virtue of Article 9.33a or the University Council regulations, pursuant to Article 9.34.3 b, has to be submitted in advance to the Council for advice, the Board of the University or the Supervisory Board shall ensure that before:

b. the Council is given the opportunity to consult with them before advice is issued
c. the Council is informed as soon as possible in writing of the way in which the advice issued will be acted upon, and
d. if the Board of the University or the Supervisory Board do not wish to adopt the advice (either wholly or in part), the Council will be given the opportunity to consult with them before the decision is taken

Article 9.38. The **Faculty Council's right of consent** (included for information purposes)

The Dean of the Faculty requires the prior approval of the Faculty Council for any decision to be taken by themselves with regard to at least the adoption or amendment of:

a. the Faculty regulations, referred to in Article 9.14, and
b. the Teaching and Examination Regulations, as referred to in Article 7.13, with the exception of the subjects referred to in Article 7.13.2 a, up to and including

g and v, as well as 7.13.4, and with the exception of the requirements referred to in article 7.28.4 and 7.28.5, and Article 7.30b.2.

Article 9.40. Powers and procedure for the Consultative Participation Arbitration Board

1. The Arbitration Board, within the meaning of Article 9.39, will examine any disputes between a consultative participation body and the Board of the University or the Dean of the Faculty concerning:
   a. regarding the drafting, changes to or application of the consultative participation regulations as referred to in Article 9.34, and
   b. disputes arising from Articles 9.30a, 9.18, 9.32, 9.33, 9.33a.1, 9.33a.2 and 9.33a.3 b, 9.34, 9.35, 9.36, 9.38, and 9.38a.

2. In the event of a dispute between the person or body with decision-making powers and the organ established on the basis of the consultative participation regulations as referred to in the second stipulation of Article 9.30.3 or the University Council or the Faculty Council, the Board of the University will investigate whether an amicable settlement between the parties is possible. In cases where the Board of the University is the body with decision-making powers, the Supervisory Board will investigate whether an amicable settlement is possible. If an amicable settlement impossible, the consultative participation body as referred to in the first stipulation or the person or body with decision-making powers presents the dispute to the Arbitration Board.

3. If the dispute concerns a partial or full refusal to adopt the advice of a consultative participation body, the execution of the decision will be suspended for four weeks, unless the body concerned has no objections against immediate execution of the decision.

4. The Arbitration Board has the authority to achieve an amicable solution between the parties involved. If no amicable settlement is reached, the Arbitration Board will resolve the conflict by making a binding decision, for which it assesses whether:
   a. the Board of the University or the Dean of the Faculty has complied with the requirements of the law and with the regulations referred to in Article 9.34,
   b. the Board of the University or the Dean of the Faculty was able to formulate the proposal or make the decision on reasonable grounds after weighing up the interests involved, and
   c. the Board of the University or the Dean of the Faculty acted negligently towards the consultative participation body concerned

5. If the Board of the University or the Dean of the Faculty has not obtained the approval of the consultative participation body for the proposed decision, the Arbitration Board may, in contravention of the provisions in paragraph 4, request permission to take the decision. The Arbitration Board will only give consent if the decision of the consultative participation body to reject the proposal was unreasonable or if the proposed decision of the Board of the University or the Dean of Faculty is necessitated by important organizational, economic or social reasons.

6. In the case of decisions as referred to in Article 9.30a.2 or Article 9.33 a, b or d, the Arbitration Board shall, in deviation from paragraph 5, second stipulation, assess whether the Board of the University or another body when considering the interests involved could reasonably come to the decision.

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7. 7. The consultative participation body may adopt a Programme Committee's advisory authority in order to lodge a dispute, to the extent that this is in line with the advice of the Programme Committee.

Article 9.48. Facilities and training

1. The Board of the University allows the University Council to use any facilities that are available and that may reasonably be deemed necessary to fulfil its duties.
2. The Board of the University will give the members of the University Council the opportunity to follow training courses which the members need to fulfil their duties for a period to be jointly determined by the Faculty Board and the Programme Committee. University staff members will be allowed to follow such training courses during working hours and with full pay.
3. This Article also applies to Faculty Councils and Programme Committees, subject to the proviso that the Dean of the Faculty takes the place of the Board of the University.

Article 9.51 concerns the regulation that (the financial support of members of) Programme Committees must also be included in the Graduation Fund. At the University of Groningen, this has been determined as follows:

University of Groningen Graduation Fund, Chapter 6. Degree Programme Committees

Article 28.   Conditions
Students who are members of a Programme Committee during a given academic year are eligible for financial support if they meet the criteria set out in Article 2 or 2a of these Regulations.

Article 29.   Amount of financial support
The financial support consists of a remuneration of €39 per meeting for a maximum of twelve meetings. Extraordinary circumstances may lead to compensation for more than twelve meetings.

Article 30.   Request procedure
1. Requests for financial support for activities performed within the scope of Programme Committee membership must be submitted in writing to the relevant Faculty Board between 1 September and 1 February of the academic year following that in which the activities were performed.
2. Requests submitted after 1 February of the academic year following the year in which the activities were performed will not be processed unless the individual submitting the request can prove that the request was delayed due to force majeure.

Article 31.   Documentary evidence
Students must submit to their Faculty a declaration from the Chair of the Programme Committee, stating that they were a member of the committee during the academic year to which the request pertains.

Article 32.   Payment of financial support
Payment will take place once the academic year in which the membership occurred has ended.

Appendix 4: Example agenda for OC meetings

A standard agenda appears as follows:[1]

1) Opening: the Chair welcomes the participants at the appointed time. This marks the official start of the meeting.
2) Announcements: absence notifications and announcements relating to topics relevant to the meeting are read. If any of these require discussion, they may be moved to Any Other Business, added to the agenda as separate items or postponed until a future meeting.
3) Approving of the agenda: sometimes items are removed from or added to the agenda.
4) Minutes of the previous meeting: the minutes will have been included in the documents sent to the members before the meeting. Usually, the minutes will be discussed. Participants may submit proposals for emendation or ask questions to clarify matters. Questions should not result in debate. It is the Chair's duty to ensure that this does not happen. The Chair will also discuss the list of action points, a list at the end of the minutes stating the activities to be performed concerning items covered in the meeting – who does what, and when.
5) Documents received and sent out: relevant documents are mentioned by the Secretary.
6) Topics: the Chair or the person who placed the item on the agenda will given an explanation. How the item is dealt with will depend on its status, which depends on, for example, the difference between the right of consent and the right of consultation when discussing OER issues. To conclude, the Chair will summarize the outcome of the discussion and ensure that there is agreement on who will take what action, if the discussion warrant this. For example, who will draft the recommendations which the OC will submit to the FB. This will often be the Chair, if necessary with the help of the Secretary.
7) Any Other Business: items requiring extra attention during the meeting but which were not explicitly put on the agenda. If time is running out, these items will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.
8) Any other business: In the context of 'any other business', the Chair asks each participant whether he or she wants to add something to the meeting. This need not be a question, it may also be an announcement or comment.
9) Conclusion: the Chair makes a proposal for the date and time of the next meeting and closes the meeting.

Practical tips for effective meetings:

- A good decision is the result of a good discussion, which does not include personal attacks or repeating the same argument ad nauseam. Discussions need not be long, but they must be thorough. A good method is the BOB cycle: Visualization (*Beeldvorming*), Making judgements (*Oordeelsvorming*), and Decision-making

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[1] Based on an example of the LSVb's (Landelijke Studenten Vakbond; National Student Union) OC guide.

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(*Besluitvorming*). The first phase comprises brainstorming and collecting as much information as possible. In the second phase, the various points of view are listed and compared. Finally, a decision is made.

- Participants should not interrupt each other. Meetings may cause a lot of irritation if people feel that they are being cornered. If the debate becomes too heated, it may be wise to schedule a break.

The Chair may also consider the following to make meetings proceed as effectively as possible:

- Check whether the previous two recommendations are adhered to, and take participants to task in the event of infringement (during the meeting or, if this occurs regularly, outside meetings).
- Ensure that the most important items are at the top of the agenda, to prevent such items receiving too little attention or being postponed due to lack of time.
- Assign a specific time for the discussion of each item on the agenda. Although slight deviations from this schedule may be tolerated, people are inclined to formulate their thoughts more carefully and make decisions more quickly if there is a clear time line.
- If certain members often take centre stage, it may be an idea to explicitly ask the less outspoken members to give their opinions. This could also contribute to a better balance between the input of staff and students.

Appendix 5: Visibility of the OC

Introduction

The OC represents all of those involved in the degree programme, thus both students and staff. Of course, the student members of the OC represent all the students, and the staff members represent all the staff in the degree programme. It is therefore important to both staff and students to know what is happening in the degree programme, also outside their own personal scope. This means that if staff or students encounter a problem or have an idea which is relevant for the OC, they will have to be able to convey this to the OC. Therefore, the OC should be accessible, and both staff and students should know how to get in touch with it. A number of *best practices* have, therefore, been included below that can improve both this accessibility and the visibility of the OC. In large degree programmes, the OC's visibility among students is even more important because there it is obviously more likely that students who wish to report an issue to the OC will not know any OC members personally or may even be unaware that the problem concerned is something that needs to be drawn to the OC's attention. This makes it even more important that students are familiar with the OC. So, check which of the tips below your OC is already using, and which might still be started or could use an upgrade! It is easiest to promote these among students if they are first picked up by the students in the OC, but the OC as a whole is responsible for their accessibility and visibility within the degree programme (or programmes).

Best practices

o Make the OC visible online, by placing regular <u>updates on Brighspace</u>, for example, or creating a <u>Facebook</u> page. Ensure that each meeting has been placed on the agenda, so that all members can consider what should be published.

o Ensure that the OC has a <u>common email address</u>; this can then be forwarded to everyone or only to the Chair and Vice Chair, for example. Ensure that at least one staff member and one student member receive these messages, and that it is clear who will respond to certain messages and in which timeframe.

o The OC could also publish an <u>online newsletter</u> for distribution within the degree programme.

o By regularly carrying out <u>evaluations</u>, in a variety of ways, your OC can demonstrate that you are interested in what is going on in the degree programme and in what could be improved. After examinations, for example, an evaluation form to be completed after the exam could be alternated with an open request for evaluation sent out by email. Note, however, that evaluations should not be held too frequently, since this might discourage students.

o Make sure you provide <u>feedback</u>, via one or more of the communication channels, about what action was taken on the basis of the evaluations to keep students motivated to participate in evaluations.

o Ensure that the OC has contacts with the Faculty's <u>study association or associations</u>, which are also a source of information about the degree programme.

o In larger degree programmes, the <u>Year Representatives</u> also offer opportunities for better contacts with students.

o In the case of first-years in mentor classes or in similar first-year course units, student members of the OC can drop by to <u>introduce themselves and to talk about the work of the OC (in lectures)</u>. Another way of introducing first-year students to the OC is by
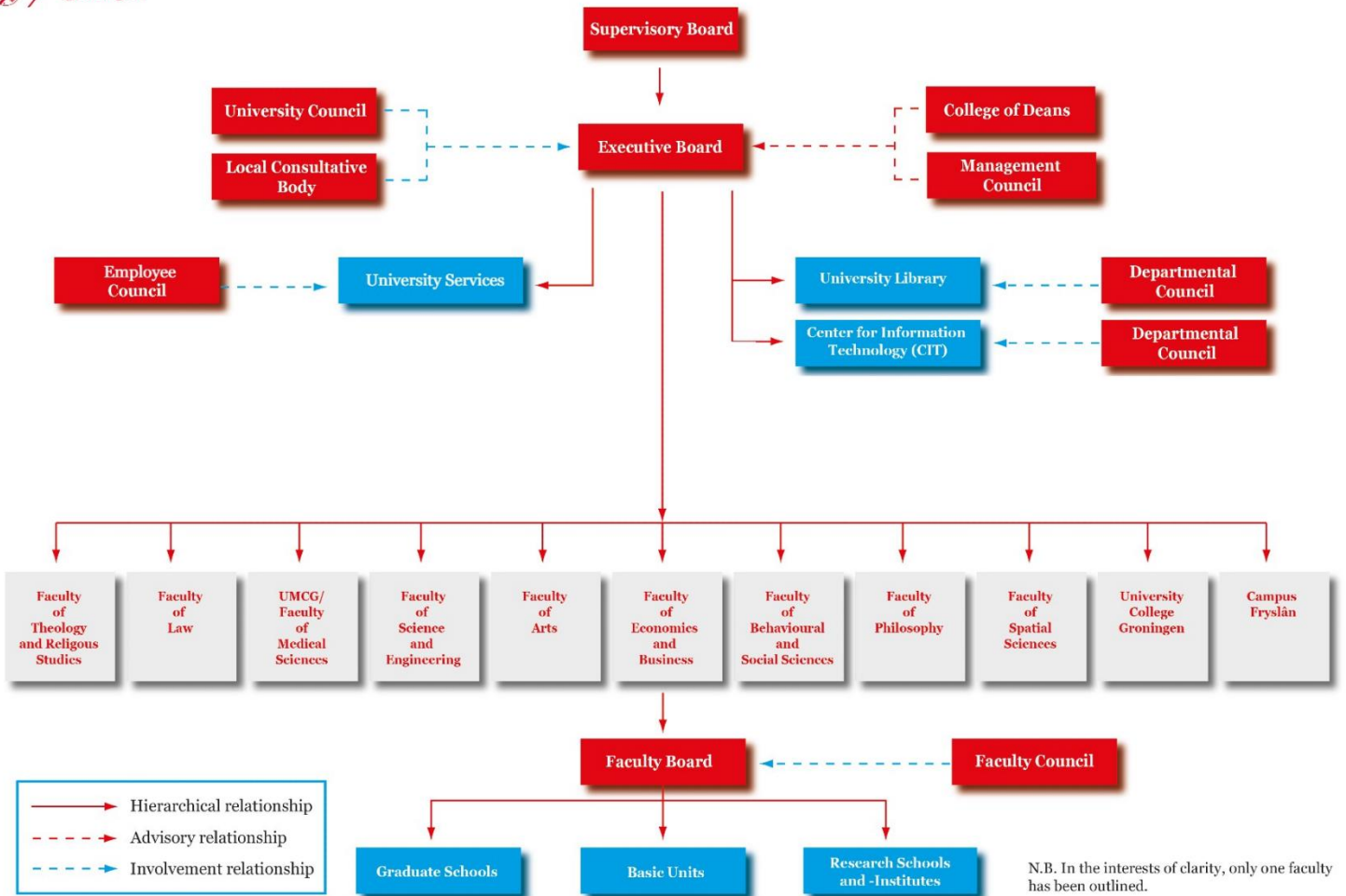
holding an event to familiarize the students with all organizations and bodies that may be relevant to them.

o Early in the academic year or around examination periods, for example, you could put up posters to notify students that they can submit questions or comments about the degree programme to the OC.

o Also introduce the OC online, for example on Brightspace, with one or more photographs and email addresses (the general OC email address can also be used for this). This could be posted on Brighspace, for example.

o In some Faculties, regular meetings are organized for the student members of the OC and the Faculty Council and the student assessor. This may increase this group's knowledge of affairs but also its visibility.

o Provide a mailbox for the OC, that students can use to give anonymous feedback to the OC, if they so wish.

Appendix 6: University of Groningen organization chart

Organizational chart University of Groningen

N.B. In the interests of clarity, only one faculty has been outlined.

Legend:
- Hierarchical relationship
- Advisory relationship
- Involvement relationship

University of Groningen Programme Committee Handbook 2023 ff.

Appendix 7: Annual Report

Below are several rules of thumb and tips that may be used when writing the annual report to be sent to the FB. Note that this report covers an academic year, and write it with a view to the PDCA cycle. The following, at least, must be included in the annual report:

1. Composition, scope and functioning of the Programme Committee
   List the composition of the Committee over the past academic year or provide a list members and changes in membership in an appendix. State the names of the Chair (and Vice-Chair) and the Secretary. Also, state which degree programme (or programmes) fall under the relevant study Programme Committee. Briefly discuss the way in which the OC operates.
2. Number of meetings and main agenda items
   State how times the Committee met and list the main items discussed. If a Programme Director, Director of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies, or Faculty Board representative attended one or more meetings, this should be also be noted.
3. OER recommendations issued and approved/not approved
   Briefly state the OC's responses to the OER changes proposed by the FB or the Programme Directorate, and whether the OC consented or not. Also list the recommendations issued. Briefly summarize how the FB (or the Programme Directorate) responded to these recommendations, and what action has been taken with regard to the OC's suggestions or proposals.
4. Advice given (solicited and unsolicited) and any resulting actions
   List the signals given by the OC regarding the quality of the teaching and state what actions were taken as a result. What persons or bodies have been addressed (outside the OC), also how has the Faculty Board, for example, responded to these signals and what have they communicated to the OC on this matter. This may include both advice requested from the OC and advice given of its own accord.
5. Review of last year's key points
   Review last year's annual report and discuss what action has been taken on the key points listed there during the past year.
6. General points for special attention
   List the key points that need (or may need) attention after the past academic year or that should remain open, for example, problematic course units.

Appendix 8: List of abbreviations and terms

BAC	Appointment Advisory Committee
UTQ	University Teaching Qualification
Professor	by special appointment

Full professor who has been appointed by an organization outside the University with the University's approval

BSA	Binding (negative) study advice: statement issued by the institution that a student may continue his or her studies or should withdraw from the degree programme (positive or negative BSA)
CBE	Board of Appeal for Examinations
CIT	Center for Information Technology
CvB	Board of the University: the executive board of the University of Groningen
CvD	Committee of Deans
Dean of Faculty	Head of a Faculty Board; not to be confused with student counsellors.
Dr	Doctor (person who has been awarded a PhD)
FB	Faculty Board
FdL	Faculty of Arts
FEB	Faculty of Economics and Business
FGG	Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies
FR	Faculty Council: consultative participation council at Faculty level, elected from and by staff and students of the Faculty concerned
FRG	Faculty of Law
FRW	Faculty of Spatial Sciences
FTE	Full-time equivalent (number of hours worked)
FSSC	Financial Shared Services Centre
FWB	Faculty of Philosophy
FSE	Faculty of Science and Engineering
GMW	Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences
Graduate school	Organizational structure for the support and supervision of PhD students who follow advanced courses and perform research
ISB	International Student Barometer: international survey among students studying at a university outside their native country
KNAW	Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences
NVAO	Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders
NWO	Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research
OBP	Support and management staff
OC	Programme Committee
OER	Teaching and Examination Regulations
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act (or Adjust)
Ph	Portfolio Manager
Prof.	Professor
RFF	Rosalind Franklin Fellowships: a prestigious programme of the University of Groningen aiming to attract talented women PhDs (Rosalind Franklin Fellows) who wish to become professor.
UG	University of Groningen
RvT	Supervisory Board
SKO	Senior Teaching Qualification
SODOLA	Organizational structure for regular consultation between the research school directors
ReMa	Research Master's
UB	University Library
UCF	University Campus Fryslân

UCG	University College Groningen
UD	Assistant Professor
UGCE	University of Groningen Centre of Entrepreneurship
UHD	Associate Professor
UMCG	University Medical Center Groningen
UNL	Universities of The Netherlands
UR/U-raad	University Council: consultative participation council at University level, elected from and by the staff and students of the Faculty in question.
VSNU	Association of Universities in the Netherlands
WHW	Higher Education and Research Act
WP	Academic personnel