



MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty Council (April 26, 2023)

From: Professor Daniel Posen
Chair, Undergraduate Assessment Committee

Date: April 25, 2023

Re: **Revision of Undergraduate Assessment Committee Manual**

Each standing committee is required to maintain a manual of operation which provides detail particular to its responsibilities and operations.

At its December 16, 2021 meeting, Faculty Council approved the recommendation in Report 3693 Revised that instead of Council approving each standing committee manual of operation (as was the case), each committee's terms of reference, domain and membership composition would be specified in the Council by-laws and reviewed at least every five years by the committee, with the bylaws updated as necessary.

It was also recommended that each standing committee review its manual of operation and update or re-affirm it without change, at least every five years or more frequently as needed. Any changes to the manuals of operation must be approved by the Speaker of Council, reported to Faculty Council for information and posted on the Faculty Council website.

The manual of the Undergraduate Assessment Committee (formerly Examinations Committee) was last revised in December 2010 and therefore required updating.

The attached revised manual was reviewed by the Secretary of Faculty Council, approved by the Undergraduate Assessment Committee and approved by the Speaker of Faculty Council.



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

**Manual for the
Undergraduate Assessment Committee**

A Standing Committee of Faculty Council

Approved by the Speaker of the Council of the
Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering: April 25, 2023



Manual for the Undergraduate Assessment Committee

Preamble

Each Standing Committee of Council and the Academic Appeals Board are to be operated within the guidelines provided by the *Procedures for Standing Committees of Council*.

Each Standing Committee is required to have an up-to-date manual of operation approved by the Speaker of Faculty Council which provides detail particular to the committee. The purpose of the manual is to promote clarity and consistency in committee responsibilities and operations.

1. Name of the Committee

Undergraduate Assessment Committee (UAC)

2. Terms of Reference

On behalf of Faculty Council, each Standing Committee, being comprised of representative of stakeholders within the domain of the committee and supported by subject matter experts and administrative staff, is responsible, with respect to the domain to:

1. Provide a forum for the full range of stakeholder voices to discuss present practice and new proposals;
2. Pursue best practice: investigate, study, report on and promote;
3. Review, periodically, policies and procedures;
4. Recommend, as appropriate, changes to policy and procedures;
5. Carry out specific, defined duties;
6. Report, regularly, to Council on its activities and intentions.

3. Domain

With respect to undergraduate programs or courses, the Undergraduate Assessment Committee is responsible for the domain including:

- a) Course-level grading practices and standards (including 500-level courses); (Note that instructors “recommend” course grades but the Committee determines final grades.)
- b) Academic standing including honours, promotion, and Dean’s List;
- c) Policy concerning final exams, e.g., schedule, duration, calculators, requests for regrading and exam viewing, and invigilation;
- d) Use of non-grade statements and symbols (e.g., EXT, INC, SDF);
- e) Petitions in final exams and for special consideration, e.g., grades, promotion; regulations, academic standing, late withdrawals, re-enrolment, awarding of degrees, and non-grade symbols and statements;
- f) Policies concerning term work petitions.

Exclusions (managed by):

- a) Academic offences (Departments or the Dean’s Office);
- b) Tuition and other financial matters (Registrar);
- c) Transfers between programs (Undergraduate Admissions Committee);
- d) Student awards and recognitions other than Honours Standing, Dean’s List, and Honours upon graduation (Undergraduate Scholarships & Awards Committee);
- e) Program load and full-time status (Undergraduate Curriculum Committee);
- f) Program-specific degree requirements (Undergraduate Curriculum Committee);
- g) Policy concerning curricular degree requirements such as the Practical Experience or English Proficiency Requirements (Undergraduate Curriculum Committee);
- h) Student workload associated with student assessment (Departments and Undergraduate Curriculum Committee);
- i) Petitions relating to personal circumstances from graduate students or students from other divisions enrolled in undergraduate FASE courses (student’s originating division);
- j) Petitions relating to course-policy issues from FASE undergraduate students in graduate or non-FASE courses (Graduate Division Academic Appeals Committee (GDAAC), or course division).

4. Membership

Constituent Group	Number	Length of Term	Notes
Teaching Staff: Representing Academic Units <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical Engineering & Applied Chemistry • Civil & Mineral Engineering • Electrical & Computer Engineering • Engineering Science • Institute for Studies in Transdisciplinary Engineering Education & Practice • Materials Science & Engineering • Mechanical & Industrial Engineering 	7	3 years	One from each listed unit
Undergraduate Students	2	1 year	Four appointed, two voting ¹
Non-academic Staff – Department Academic Advisor	1	1 year	See appendix for selection procedure
Ex-Officio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar • Vice-Dean, First Year • Vice-Dean, Undergraduate 	3	Ongoing	
Subject Matter Experts (non-voting) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Registrar, Student Services and Records 	1	Ongoing	

¹ Four undergraduate students will be voting members in order to share the considerable burden of the work of this committee among four rather than two students. At any given time, only two students will count towards quorum and only two students will be permitted to vote.

Constituent Group	Number	Length of Term	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department Undergraduate Academic Advisors (from the First-Year Office and from each undergraduate program) 	~10		Exact numbers fluctuate depending on how departments manage advising
Recording Secretary (non-voting)		Ongoing	

5. Duties

In carrying out its duties, the Undergraduate Assessment Committee aims to ensure integrity, consistency and fairness in assessment and promotion practices for students in undergraduate engineering academic programs and/or courses.

5.1. Policy Duties

The Undergraduate Assessment Committee shall review and, when appropriate, recommend to the Faculty Council amendments to the Faculty Grading Policies, student promotion regulations, handling of petitions, policies concerning the administration of final course examinations, and policies concerning any other areas within the Committee's domain.

5.2. Recurring Duties (Routine, Administrative)

The recurring/administrative duties of the Undergraduate Assessment Committee are to:

- a) Review proposed Composition of Final Marks for courses which deviate from Faculty Grading Policies and determine if the instructor must submit a request for permission for this deviation;
- b) Adjudicate instructor requests to deviate from Faculty Grading Policies. To assist the Committee, the Registrar's Office shall maintain a record of such approvals, including the duration for which the approval is granted (e.g., one semester; 10 years);
- c) Review final course grades recommended by instructors with the goal of maintaining consistent standards of student evaluation. The Committee has the final responsibility for assigning the official course grade. If grades fall outside the Faculty norms, the following steps should be taken (in priority order):
 - (i) Seek clarification/justification from the instructor;
 - (ii) If the Committee feels the justification is insufficient, either issue a warning or request that the instructor adjust the grades accordingly;
 - (iii) If the instructor is unavailable or unwilling to adjust their grades, undertake such adjustment directly. Where grades are adjusted by the Committee, the students as well as the instructor shall be informed. On request, the students or the instructor shall be given the reason for the adjustment of grades and a description of the methodology used to adjust the grades.
- d) Evaluate final course grades shortly after the end of exam period (generally within 10 working days) and ensure that students are notified in a timely manner of their pass/fail or probation status;
- e) Review and adjudicate all petitions falling under its domain in a timely, fair and consistent manner. To assist the Committee in maintaining consistency in its

decisions, the Committee will regularly review and update guidelines summarizing past deliberations and decisions;

- f) Review and adjudicate appeals and disputes regarding term work petitions. Authority to review and adjudicate validity of a term work petitions is otherwise delegated to the relevant undergraduate advisor in consultation with the department Associate Chair if needed; authority to decide on an appropriate accommodation for a term work petition is otherwise delegated to the course instructor;
- g) Ensure departments have procedures in place to verify that students who graduate have completed an approved program;
- h) Inform the relevant Department Chair in cases of faculty non-compliance with policies under the jurisdiction of the Undergraduate Assessment Committee and coordinate to achieve a resolution;
- i) Ensure that the Committee's manual of procedures is regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

5.3. Reporting and Coordinating Duties

Reporting duties of the Undergraduate Assessment Committee include:

- a) Reporting its actions and recommendations according to the Procedures for Committees of Council;
- b) Reporting annually a summary of the Committee's activities to Faculty Council for information;
- c) Periodically reporting to Faculty Council relevant trends in course grades and student petitions;
- d) Submitting the minutes of its meetings to the Secretary of Faculty Council for archiving.

The Committee shall be cognizant of a number of duties routinely performed by the Registrar's Office which relate to the Undergraduate Assessment Committee. Some of these include:

- a) Collecting information regarding Composition of Final Marks and final exam type for all undergraduate engineering courses;
- b) Administering instructor requests to deviate from Faculty Grading Policies;
- c) Collecting final examination papers within three working days prior to each examination;
- d) Ensuring that final exams are supervised, wherever possible, by the course instructor or an appropriate replacement from the academic staff;
- e) Collecting marks from course instructors within 10 calendar days after their examination;
- f) Ensuring that term work reports are collected from instructors whenever needed to assess students' performance in the term;
- g) Providing students with official course grades as soon as possible after the Committee holds its sessional meetings;
- h) Administering Committee decisions on petitions;
- i) Providing to the University, for each convocation period, a complete list of students who are eligible to graduate with either pass or honours standing.

6. Rules and Procedures Differing from the Procedures for Committees of Council

6.1. Deviations from Quorum Requirements

A quorum of 6 voting members (40%, rounded up) is normally required to carry out any of the Committee's recurring duties with the following exceptions.

- a) Where expectations from the Committee are clear due to recent precedent or explicit guidelines, the following decisions can be taken without quorum:
 - (i) Deviations from Faculty Grading Practices may be approved jointly by either the Committee Chair or Vice-Chair, in conjunction with the teaching staff member representing the department to which the course belongs. If one person occupies both roles, then an additional voting member should also be consulted;
 - (ii) Uncontentious petitions may be adjudicated by a majority of undergraduate advisors. If there is any doubt regarding how the Committee would rule, the petition must be referred either to the full Committee or a sub-Committee as defined below.

- b) At the discretion of the Undergraduate Assessment Committee Chair, petitions decisions may be delegated to one or more subcommittees. A valid subcommittee should include at least three voting members (or appropriate designates), including:
 - (i) One member of Committee leadership (Chair, Vice Chair or Vice Dean), who will serve as convener;
 - (ii) A teaching staff representative from the affected department;
 - (iii) A student representative.

One person may fill multiple roles (e.g., convener and department representative), provided there are still three distinct voting members. At the discretion of the convener, a subcommittee may proceed with a different combination of three or more voting members, provided that all constituent groups have been notified and there are no objections from the absent groups.

For a subcommittee decision to take effect, a supermajority of members present must support the decision, defined in the table below:

Voting members present	Minimum number of "Yay" votes	Maximum number of "Nay" votes
3	3	0
4	3	0
5	4	1
6 + (full Committee quorum)	Must outnumber the nay votes	N/A

6.2. Member Responsibilities

From the Procedures for Committees of Council

- A member is to act ethically and professionally.
- A member is to do their best to create a climate and culture free of bias, racism, harassment, or discrimination of any kind.
- A member is to be informed about, and give due consideration to, the issues at hand.
- A member is to vote in accordance with their good judgment and conscience.
- A Representative Member is expected to reflect what they believe are the views of their constituency.
- A Representative Member is to inform the Committee if they believe views are significantly different from those of their constituency.

Additional Committee-specific Member Responsibilities

- Teaching staff representing academic units are responsible for taking the lead on communication between the Undergraduate Assessment Committee and members of their constituency. This includes, for example:
 - Reviewing requests related to Composition of Marks and presenting such requests to Undergraduate Assessment Committee;
 - Reviewing course grades and communicating with the instructor about Undergraduate Assessment Committee concerns.
- A member is to treat all Committee discussions and information as strictly confidential which shall not be revealed to any persons outside of the Committee except as required to inform their constituencies or consult with other relevant stakeholder groups regarding policy development or general trends in Committee activities.
 - For potentially controversial policies that are still under development, permission should be sought from the Committee Chair prior to discussing the matter outside the Committee;
 - If doubt exists regarding the level of detail that may be shared outside the Committee, clarification must be sought from the Committee Chair.

6.3. Conflict of Interest

From the Procedures for Committees of Council

- A member is obliged to self-assess any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest;
- A member must declare any conflict of interest to the Chair of the committee, preferably as soon as possible;
- Where a conflict of interest exists, the member must abstain from participating in the discussion and from voting;
- If you have questions about what constitutes a conflict of interest you may direct your inquiry to the Registrar or the Secretary of Faculty Council.

Additional Committee-specific Guidance on Conflict of Interest

- For petitions regarding a student's personal circumstances:
 - Prior knowledge of the case (e.g., as a course instructor or academic advisor) will generally *not* constitute a conflict of interest;
 - For reasons of confidentiality, a student member of the Undergraduate Assessment Committee is generally expected to declare a conflict of interest if they have any personal relationship with the petitioner.
- Matters pertaining to approval of grades, instructor requests to deviate from Faculty Grading Policy, or petitions regarding course policy:
 - If the instructor is a member of Undergraduate Assessment Committee, they are permitted to present any relevant information to the Committee but should then recuse themselves from the discussion and voting.

6. Appendices

Committees may provide appendices to their manuals without requiring approval from the Speaker of Council, e.g., operating principles for decision making, details of procedure, lists of units involved, reference materials, etc.

Appendix 1 – Selection of Voting Representative from among Academic Advisors

Each academic year (July 1-June 30), a new academic advisor will be the responsible vote on the Undergraduate Assessment Committee. The vote will rotate via all programs as per how they are listed in the academic calendar, with the exception of first-year advisors, who will be included with Track One. A substitute advisor to the Committee (for when the main voting advisor is unavailable) will be the advisor who was the previous year's appointed voter.

If the department whose turn it is to provide an advisor is not able to do so, the advisor from the next department on the list will be selected.

Program	First Academic year
Track One and First year (rotate through the advisors available to be decided in the first year office)	2026-2027
Chemical Engineering and Applied Chemistry	2027-2028
Civil and Mineral Engineering	2021-2022
Electrical and Computer Engineering	2022-2023
Engineering Science (rotate through the advisors available to be decided in Engineering Science)	2023-2024
Materials Science and Engineering	2024-2025
Mechanical and Industrial Engineering	2025-2026

For further information:

- For policy and information items approved by Faculty Council, see the [Faculty Council webpage](#).
- For other items produced by the Committee regarding operations, etc., contact the Committee's Recording Secretary. Their contact information is available on the Faculty Council webpage.