



Principles for Board of Governors Delegation of Authority

Introduction

Governance is understood as the process through which an organization defines and achieves its mandate, which includes making decisions with regard to the structures, policies, and practices of decision-making; the exercise of authority; and the mechanisms of accountability. The Board of Governors has employed a structure that relies upon the delegation of its provincially-mandated authorities to its standing committees, the President or other members of Administration and other campus bodies. Delegation is essential to ensure timely and efficient decision-making in smaller forums with access to appropriate resource people, while allowing the Board to focus on substantive and strategic issues of broad relevance to the university community. The following offers guidance to this delegation structure and helps maintain accountability, transparency, and efficiency in board governance at the University of Alberta.

Retained Authority

The Board shall pursue major policy and strategic issues that include:

- strategic and institutionally significant policy issues related to the business affairs of the university;
- any matter involving the alteration of the mandate, terms of reference, membership, or structure of a Board standing committee; and
- those matters that a standing committee, body, or officer holding delegated authority from the Board considers to be of major strategic significance or long-term impact on the university.

Principles

1. Delegations of authority must be reasonable in scope and appropriate to the character and capacity of the body (e.g. board or committee) or officer receiving the delegated authority.
2. An officer or body acting with delegated authority is accountable to the body which delegated the authority and must report to that body in a timely and sufficiently detailed fashion on actions taken under the delegated authority.
3. An officer or body is responsible to be alert to situations where, for example, there is uncertainty as to whether an item falls within the intended delegation or the significance of an issue and the division of opinion on the issue suggest it is prudent to refer the issue or decision to the delegating body for consideration. When there is uncertainty as to whether an item falls within the intended delegated authority, or if there is clear division of opinion, the officer or body with delegated authority will refer the item to the body that delegated the authority along with a recommendation.
4. Delegations should be recorded in written form and curated in a transparent manner.



5. A body delegating authority may impose restrictions on that authority -- including restrictions on the authority to sub-delegate -- so long as the restrictions allow sufficient authority for the delegation to be meaningful.
6. All delegations of authority should be reviewed at regular intervals (ideally once every three years) to ensure they remain appropriate.
7. Withdrawal of delegated authority should be considered judiciously based on the best interest of the institution and cannot be done retroactively.
8. An officer or body is not compelled to exercise delegations. The fact that a delegation is held does not oblige the officer or body to exercise the delegation if, in the opinion of the delegate, some special or unusual circumstances are involved which make it sensible that the issue should receive consideration at a more senior level.

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Note: In determining how to develop a stand-alone Principles of Delegation for the Board of Governors, the working group reviewed the final report prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Governance Including Delegated Authority and determined that the Principles for GFC delegation that were endorsed by the academic body with slight modifications can apply to the Board of Governors as well. Given our bi-cameral governance model it also seemed appropriate that the two documents align and complement each other.