RED DEER COLLEGE
Committees
Guidebook

Application of the Committees Policy
Version 1.0
February 2018

RDC

Contents

OFFICIAL RDC COMMITTEE

An official RDC Committee is a group of individuals that meets on an ongoing basis and is accountable to either the President, Academic Council, Deans' Council, School Councils, or Service Council. A group of individuals that meets for a limited time to organize a specific task, project, or event or to focus on discussion or activity around a specific subject area is not an official RDC committee. These groups should be called working groups, task groups, project groups, or teams.

RATIONALE FOR COMMITTEES

1. In addition to fulfilling the requirements of legislation, collective agreements, contracts, or RDC policy, there are several basic reasons for establishing a Committee[1]:

    1.1. sharing responsibilities

    1.2. involving more members of the College community

    1.3. using the specialized skills of members

    1.4. providing a vehicle where matters can be examined in more detail

    1.5. enabling the parent body to complete its business more efficiently by delegating work to committees.

ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES

1. In deciding to establish a new Committee or amend, or disband an existing Committee. The following factors may be considered:

    1.1. Is the Committee's existence required by legislation, collective agreements, contracts, or RDC policy;

    1.2. Is this committee's mandate relevant;

    1.3. Is this committee's mandate achievable;

    1.4. Is this committee's mandate unique;

    1.5. Is this committee's mandate aligned with RDC's mission and goals;

    1.6. Does the committee have a clear mandate;

    1.7. Is the committee operating effectively;

    1.8. Is the committee adhering to its Terms of Reference; and

    1.9. Do sufficient resources exist to support the committee?

---

[1] The information in this section has been adapted from the following sources: The City of Waterloo, *Committee Policy*, 2007; The City of Oakville, *Creation, Amendment and Dissolution of Boards and Committees Procedure*, 2016; and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, *Effective Committees Factsheet*, 2009.

STEPS FOR ESTABLISHING, AMENDING, OR DISBANDING A COMMITTEE

1. To establish, amend or disband a Committee, the appropriate Senior Administration member makes a recommendation and provides a rationale to the relevant governing body: Academic Council, Deans' Council, School Councils, Service Council, or the President.

2. If a recommendation for Committee establishment or amendment is approved, the Senior Administration member then ensures that Terms of Reference (TOR) are developed according to the attached template (Appendix A).

   2.1. The Office of Strategic Planning and Analysis may be consulted on the development of new or changes to existing Terms of References.

3. The TOR are then brought before the relevant governing body for review and approval.

4. The Senior Administration member responsible should ensure that all Committees in existence before the adoption of the current Committees Policy develop TOR and have them approved by the appropriate governing body.

5. Once a governing body has approved the TOR of a new, existing or amended committee, the Senior Administration member asks the Office of Strategic Planning and Analysis to post them on the RDC web site.

6. When a governing body decides to disband an existing committee, the Senior Administration member asks the Office of Strategic Planning to remove its TOR from the web site.

7. Minor Edits to Terms of Reference do not require approval of the appropriate governing body or the President. They may be sent directly to the Office of Strategic Planning and Analysis for posting.

   7.1. Examples include correcting typographical errors; changes to department, school or division name; changes to position title where the position responsibilities and characteristics have not been substantially changed; changes to the names of related committees or committees reporting to; updated website links.

COMMITTEE ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

1. Committees are directly responsible and accountable to the governing bodies that create them. An important method of demonstrating accountability is through regular reporting.

2. At a minimum, this includes the submission of an annual report, the exact format and timing of which will be determined by the relevant governing body. See Appendix B for an Annual Report Template. At a minimum the information provided should include:

   2.1. Name of Committee

   2.2. Reporting Period

   2.3. Membership (names of members and Chair, identify constituency represented if appropriate)

2.4. Activities and Accomplishments (may include how often the committee met, activities and major accomplishments)

2.5. Any recommended amendments to committee mandate

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ESTABLISHING, AMENDING, AND DISBANDING COMMITTEES AND APPROVING TERMS OF REFERENCE

President

Responsible for: Deans' Council, Service Council, and President's Executive Committee

Academic Council

Responsible for: All committees and subcommittees of Academic Council

Deans' Council, School Councils, and Service Council

Responsible for: All other committees

Note: Some committees exist as a virtue of Collective Agreements and may have shared accountability with an Employee Group.

GOVERNING BODIES/PRESIDENT AND ASSOCIATED COMMITTEES

An official list of Committees and their Terms of Reference can be found here on the RDC Website: http://rdc.ab.ca/about/leadership/committee-terms-reference

LEVELS OF AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEE DECISION MAKING

The following levels of authority for decision-making should be used when describing a committee's mandate in the relevant section of the attached template (Appendix A). Regardless of the level of authority, all decisions are expected to be in compliance with College values, policies, and procedures.

Decision authority: The right to make a decision or create a policy without consultation with other individuals or groups.

Principal authority: The right to make a decision or create a policy with input and recommendations from other groups or individuals; such input may be accepted or rejected. Principal authority includes the right to make decisions and create policy which is forwarded to another body for action. Decisions or policies may be forwarded to another group or individual for approval where such approval would not be unreasonably denied. Principal authority also permits policy creation within the guidelines established by another group or individual. Finally, principal authority accommodates decision making or policy creation within the parameters set by another body.

Shared authority: Authority to make decisions or create policy that is delegated equally to two or more groups or individuals where all parties are required to approve the decision or policy.

Recommending authority: The right to make recommendations for approval by another group or individual, where the final decision may approve, reject, or amend the recommendations. Recommending authority specifies the requirement that the recommendations be received by the decision-making group or individual before a final decision is made.

Advising authority: The right to provide advice on a decision or policy created by another group or individual. The final decision may include or reject the advice provided. The group or individual making the decision in this case would be considered the principal authority.

APPENDIX A: COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE TEMPLATE

[NAME OF COMMITTEE]
TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE:

Describe the purpose of the committee. Answers to these questions could be included:

- Why was the committee formed?

- What will be accomplished by the committee?

- What is its initial role?

- What is its ongoing role?

- How does it relate to the college as a whole?

- What key words describe its function (for example: advisory, decision making, research, consultation, forum for input)?

- Is this a constituency-based committee?

- Who are the key stakeholders or representatives?

Since the details follow, this section should be limited to a few concise sentences.

MANDATE:

The mandate for a committee is usually established by an individual or a governance body. This should be specified in the opening paragraph of this section. Was the committee formed by an administrative officer? Was it formed by Deans' Council, Service Council, Academic Council, or a School Council? Was it formed to comply with legislation or a collective agreement?

The committee's level of authority for decision making should be specified in this section. The definitions of different levels of authority for decision making are contained in the box at the end of the template. This set of definitions must be included in the final document.

For clarity, the levels of authority should be grouped wherever possible. A committee could have several levels of authority delegated to it by the person or group that provided its mandate. Helpful groupings may include:

Planning
Coordination
Policy Formation
Communication
Program or Service Decisions
Forum for Input and Response

[Footer line: Approved by (Governing Body/President), day/month/year, followed by page number X of X]

Any other subtitle that groups different levels of authority and activity could be included. In each grouping, a mixture of levels of authority is possible.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COMMITTEES:

This section lists all the other committees that might have some interaction with this one and the specifics of that relationship. Do the other groups report to or receive reports from this one? Is there overlapping membership? Do the decisions of another group depend on input from this one or do the decisions of this group rely on input from other groups?

COMPOSITION:

Who is on the committee and how are they appointed? If this is a constituency-based committee, be clear regarding what constituencies are included.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Is this group accountable to a single person or to one or more governing bodies (for example, Board of Governors, Deans' Council, Service Council, Academic Council, School Council)? Accountability usually refers to the recipient of reports, recommendations, annual reports, minutes. The Chair of a committee is normally accountable to the group that established the mandate of the committee.

REPORTING:

This section specifies the frequency and nature of reporting. At a minimum, all committees submit annual reports to the body/bodies identified in "ACCOUNTABILITY" above, following the format below.

> **Name of Committee**
>
> **Reporting Period**
>
> **Membership** (names of members and Chair, identify constituency represented if appropriate)
>
> **Activities and Accomplishments** (may include how often the committee met, activities and major accomplishments)

RESPONSIBILITY:

This section specifies the officer or governing body that assures the appointment of the committee and its continued operation.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:

This section specifies the office that maintains the records of the committee, establishes meeting times, delivers agendas, and carries out other arrangements for the committee. Normally, an administrative office is charged with these responsibilities for the sake of continuity and consistency (for example, the Office of the Vice President Academic, the Office of Strategic Planning and Analysis, the Office of the Dean).

[Footer line: Approved by (Governing Body/President), day/month/year, followed by page number X of X]

OPERATING PROCEDURES:

The following must be included:

- Meeting frequency and minimum numbers of meetings per year.
- The types and sources of information that the committee may access.
- Who may be called upon for assistance or information.
- The committee's ability to strike sub committees or task groups and who may be appointed to these sub groups.
- Whether the meetings are open or closed (members only).
- How the chair is appointed (or elected).
- Who sets the agenda.
- Process for changing the Terms of Reference (how often are they reviewed, what governing body or officer approves the changes).
- The committee operates in compliance with the Committees Policy.

Levels of authority: The following text box must be included in all Terms of Reference.

Levels of Authority for Decision Making:

Decision authority: The right to make a decision or create a policy without consultation with other individuals or groups.

Principal authority: The right to make a decision or create a policy with input and recommendations from other groups or individuals; such input may be accepted or rejected. Principal authority allows for the right to make decisions and create policy which is forwarded to another body for action. Decisions or policies may be forwarded to another group or individual for approval where such approval would not be unreasonably denied. Principal authority also permits policy creation within the guidelines established by another group or individual. Finally, principal authority accommodates decision-making or policy creation within the parameters set by another body.

Shared authority: Authority to make decisions or create policy that is delegated equally to two or more groups or individuals where all parties are required to approve the decision or policy.

Recommending authority: The right to make recommendations for approval by another group or individual, where the final decision may approve, reject, or amend the recommendations. Recommending authority specifies the requirement that the recommendations be received by the decision making group or individual before a final decision is made.

Advising authority: The right to provide advice on a decision or policy created by another group or individual. The final decision may include or reject the advice provided. The group or individual making the decision in this case would be considered the principal authority.

[Footer line: Approved by (Governing Body/President), day/month/year, followed by page number X of X]

APPENDIX B: ANNUAL REPORT TEMPLATE

[NAME OF COMMITTEE]
Annual Report

RDC

REPORTING PERIOD (the exact format and timing of the Annual Report is determined by the relevant governing body)

1. MEMBERSHIP (names of members and Chair, identify constituency represented if appropriate)

2. ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS (may include how often the committee met, activities and major accomplishments)

3. ANY RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS TO COMMITTEE MANDATE

4. OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION (as determined by the Committee)

[Footer line: day/month/year, followed by page number X of X]