Department of History

Faculty of Arts

Department Council Bylaws

Approved by the Department: March 31, 2026

Approved by Senate: November 3, 2026

1. Department Council

1.1 Mandate

Students, faculty, and staff are partners in the functioning of the Department of History (hereafter Department). The Department Council (hereafter Council) is the principal mechanism for bringing together these constituencies to identify, discuss, and resolve matters of mutual concern. The specific mandate of the Council is:

1.1.1 To develop and recommend policies relevant to the Department within the context of general University policies.

1.1.2 To contribute actively to the operation and long-term planning of the Department through the creation of committees, working groups and other mechanisms as deemed appropriate.

1.1.3 To provide a forum for debate, discussion, and the dissemination of information on matters pertinent to the Department.

1.2 Authority of Council

In keeping with Toronto Metropolitan University's constitutional provisions for Department/School Councils (Senate Policy #45), the authority of Council is as follows:

1.2.1 The Council may initiate policy recommendations on any matter pertaining to the operation of the Department. If such policies have significance and effect only within the Department, approval by Council, and by the Chair of the Department and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, will provide authority for action. Such action will be reported by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts to Senate for its information.

1.2.2 If such policies have extra-Departmental ramifications, they shall be transmitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts for discussion with the Dean's Council of Chairs. If there are no ramifications beyond the Faculty, the matter may be settled there with the approval of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and shall be reported to Senate by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts for its information. If there are broader ramifications, the recommendation shall be brought to Senate for action.

1.2.3 In the event of a disagreement between Council and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, or between Council and the Chair of the Department and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, the disagreement will be referred by the disputants to the Provost and Vice-President, Academic. In the event of continuing disagreements, the matter shall be reported to the President for action. Should such a matter have bearing on the academic policy of the University as a whole, the matter shall be reported to Senate upon its resolution.

1.2.4 Without prejudice to the above protocols, the authority of Council embraces <u>three</u> additional principles:

1.2.4.1 The Council will not enter into debate or take action on any matter that would jeopardize customary expectations of confidentiality in respect to students, faculty, or staff, or on matters of an explicitly contractual nature.

1.2.4.2 The Council does not have the authority to override decisions made by Departmental committees that do not formally report to it, for example the Department Evaluation Committee (DEC) and Department Hiring Committee (DHC). Council does, however, have the authority to discuss such decisions and to provide advice, save in cases precluded by considerations of confidentiality and/or contractual requirements, as specified above. The determination of such restrictions is the responsibility of the Chair of the Department.

1.2.4.3 In carrying out its mandate and exercising its authority, the Council is committed to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Council shall strive to foster a respectful, inclusive, and accessible departmental environment; to consider the differential impacts of its policies, practices, and decisions on members of the Department; and to support initiatives that promote equity and inclusion in teaching, learning, research, and service, consistent with applicable University policies.

1.3 Membership

Voting membership on Department Council shall be comprised of the following:

1.3.1 All TFA members of the Department.

1.3.2 Up to two Contract Lecturers Unit 1 in the Department, to be elected by and from Contract Lecturers (Unit 1) every September.

1.3.3 The Departmental Administrator and the Undergraduate Program Administrator.

1.3.4 Students to be elected from and by each year of any undergraduate degree program housed in the Department of History. The number will normally be one student from each year of study, provided the resulting ratio is not less than one-fourth and not more than one-third of the total TFA Council membership. If adjustments are required, the order of precedence of representation shall be from fourth year to first year. Student representatives shall be reported to the Department Chair by the end of the third week of classes in each Fall semester.

In addition to the voting membership stated above, meetings of the Council are open to all History faculty, instructors, staff and students to attend.

1.4 Voting

1.4.1. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting.

1.4.2 The Chair of Council shall vote only to break a tie.

1.5. Chair of Council

The Chair of Council will be elected by, TFA, Contract Lecturers (Unit 1) and staff Council members, normally at the first Fall semester meeting of Council. The Chair of the Department or his/her designate shall convene the meeting.

1.5.1. The Chair of Council is responsible for:

1.5.1.1. Calling and conducting meetings.

1.5.1.2. Setting agendas.

1.5.1.3. Maintaining a written record of Council decisions, actions, and recommendations, and ensuring that a copy of these records is filed with the Departmental Administrator.

1.5.1.4. Monitoring follow-up to Council actions.

1.5.2. The Chair of the Department and Chair of Council are *ex-officio* members of all Council committees and sub-committees.

1.5.3. The Chair of Council may request another Council member to act in his or her stead on an interim basis.

1.5.4. There is no limit on the number of terms that may be served by a Chair of Council, provided that an election is held each year.

1.6. Council Procedures

1.6.1. Meetings will normally be held twice a year, once in each of the Fall and Winter semesters. There will in any event be no fewer than two meetings per year. Additional meetings may be held at the call of the Chair of Council or at the request of at least three Council members.

1.6.2. Notices of meetings will normally be distributed at least five days in advance in electronic form or hard copy.

1.6.3. Quorum is 50% of Council's full voting membership. TFA members must constitute a majority of the members present.

1.6.4. Voting matters are normally decided by a simple majority of voting members present at a meeting. Decisions may be taken outside meetings through ballots distributed electronically or in physical form to all members.

1.6.5. A decision to amend the Bylaw of the Department Council requires a two-thirds majority of voting members to be present at a meeting, and can be taken only after written notice (including the text of the proposed amendment) has been provided to all voting members at least three business days in advance of the meeting.

1.7. Committee Structure, Mandates, and Composition

1.7.1. The standing committees of the Council are as follows:

1.7.1.1. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

1.7.2. The Department Council or the Department Chair may establish and determine the structure and operating procedures of any additional standing or *ad hoc* committee.

1.7.3. Membership of all committees and sub-committees is on a volunteer basis and is approved by Council.

1.7.4. The term of office of members of any committee or sub-committee is normally one year, beginning on July 1st and ending on June 30th.

1.7.5. There is no limit on the number of terms that may be served by a member of any committee or sub-committee, provided that the member is re-elected or appointed by the Department Chair every year.

1.7.6. **The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee**

1.7.6.1. Mandate: The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) exists to provide support for the Undergraduate Program Director who is appointed by the Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs, upon recommendations of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and of the Chair of the Department. The UCC considers and advises the Undergraduate Program Director and the Department Chair on all aspects of undergraduate curriculum.

1.7.6.2. Composition: The Department Chair, the Undergraduate Program Director, the Chang School of Continuing Education Academic Coordinator for History, and the Undergraduate Program Administrator are all *ex-officio* voting members of the UCC. Two additional TFA members of the department will also be appointed by the Department Chair and shall be voting members of the UCC.

1.7.6.3. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee will:

- monitor the program curriculum on an ongoing basis to determine whether it satisfies the program objectives;
- recommend to Council any reviews and/or revisions that it may deem necessary; to co-ordinate such reviews and revisions; and in respect to proposed revisions, assist the Chair of the Department to deal with the University's approvals process;
- work with the Undergraduate Program Director and Chair of the Department to co-ordinate the Department's response to Toronto Metropolitan University's Periodic Program Review procedures, and;
- respond to queries, requests, or proposals from any constituency within the Department or the University when these bear upon program curriculum.