

**Graduate Program Executive-Council Bylaws**  
**Joint MA and PhD Programs in Communication and Culture at**  
**Ryerson University and York University**

Approved by Ryerson YSGS Council

17/04/2014

Approved by York FGS Council

dd/mm/yyyy

Approved by Dean, Ryerson YSGS

17/04/2014

Approved by Dean, York FGS

dd/mm/yyyy

Approved by Ryerson Senate

dd/mm/yyyy

Approved by York Senate

dd/mm/yyyy

## **0. Pre-Amble on the Joint Character of the Document**

The following document is composed to simultaneously and jointly address the dual academic governance structures applicable to the Joint Program in Communication and Culture at both Ryerson University and at York University. The document primarily re-states Graduate Program governance previously addressed through the Memorandum of Understanding on the Administration of the Joint MA/PhD Program between Ryerson University and York University, which was revised in 2012 for the period 2010-2016.

While no section of the document directly contradicts the Memorandum of Understanding, the following document supersedes the vocabulary and phrasing of the Memorandum for the purposes of internal governance.

As a result, where the dual internal governance structures are similar with respect to the Joint Program, the following document employs a hybrid set of definitions devised to jointly apply to the distinct and separate bodies at each University.

The occasion precipitating the writing of this document is the 2013 institution at Ryerson of Policy 45, formally stipulating the constitution of Graduate Program Councils and Bylaws for the administration of Graduate Studies. Previously, the Joint Program had tended to use existing nomenclature specific to York University, whereas this document clarifies commonality but distinct nomenclature where relevant, and divergent policy where applicable.

### **1. Definitions, unless specifically noted otherwise:**

**University / Senate**: Ryerson or York University and the Senate of each, insofar as each shares a similar governance relation to the Joint Program.

**Graduate Studies**: the Ryerson Yeates School of Graduate Studies or the York Faculty of Graduate Studies, insofar as each shares a similar governance relation to the Joint Program.

**Dean**: the Ryerson or York Dean of Graduate Studies, insofar as each shares a similar governance relation to the Joint Program.

**Graduate Council**: the Graduate Council of Graduate Studies at Ryerson YSGS or York FGS, insofar as each shares a similar governance relation to the Joint Program.

**Graduate Program**: the Joint Program, insofar as the Ryerson Program and the York Program maintain a jointly-determined curricular and policy structure.

**Executive-Council**: a single body jointly serving as the Program's Ryerson Graduate Program Council and the Program's York Graduate Program Executive.

**Graduate Program Director**: the Ryerson Director or the York Director, insofar as each maintains a similar role in each campus' governance relation to the Program.

**Chair**: Chair of Executive-Council, unless specifically noted otherwise; *at any time, Council-Executive meetings are chaired by one and only one of the Graduate Program Directors*, as stipulated in the Memorandum.

**Faculty**: a Full or Emeritus graduate faculty member affiliated to the Program at Ryerson, or a Full, Associate, or Emeritus graduate faculty member affiliated to the Program at York.

**Student**: a student registered in the Joint Program at either Ryerson or York, who is advised or supervised or co-supervised by a faculty member of the Joint Program.

## 2. Mandate

Students and faculty are partners in ensuring the successful functioning of graduate programs at the University. The Graduate Program Executive-Council is the principle mechanism for bringing together these two constituencies to identify, discuss and address matters relating to that Graduate Program. The specific mandate of the Executive-Council is:

- 2.1. To develop and recommend policies relevant to the Graduate Program within the context of general University policies, especially those of Graduate Studies.
- 2.2. To contribute actively to the operation and long-term planning of the Graduate Program and Graduate Studies through the creation of committees, working groups and other mechanisms as deemed appropriate.
- 2.3. To ensure the Graduate Program remains professionally and academically current and relevant by recommending changes to the current curriculum and methods of delivery, as well as procedures and standards for masters and doctoral requirements such as dissertations, theses, projects and comprehensive examinations.
- 2.4. To provide an arena for the debate, discussion, and dissemination of information on matters pertaining to the Graduate Program and Graduate Studies.

## 3. Authority

The Executive-Council will operate in the spirit of policy adopted by the Senates of Ryerson and York Universities, respectively, in particular, Ryerson Policy #45: *Constitutional Provisions for Department/School Councils*.

- 3.1. The Executive-Council is responsible for academic policy and procedure recommendations pertaining to graduate education and graduate offerings specific to this Graduate Program. The Executive-Council will collaborate in a transparent manner with related Department Councils, Chairs, affected Faculty Deans or designates, and the Deans and Councils of Graduate Studies and standing committees.
- 3.2. The Executive-Council may **approve** policy and procedures with significance and effect only in the Program. The Executive-Council must consult with the Graduate Program Director, affected Faculty Deans or designates, and the Dean of Graduate Studies before implementing any policy or procedure. The Dean of Graduate Studies shall ensure that all consultations have occurred before endorsing the implementation of any policy or procedure.
- 3.3. The Executive-Council may **recommend and communicate** policies and procedures with implications beyond the program. Affected Faculty Deans, and/or designates and/or the Dean of Record must endorse recommended policies and procedures before they are submitted to the Deans and Councils of Graduate Studies. Graduate Studies Council makes recommendations for approval to Senate.

- 3.4. The Executive-Council may report directly to Graduate Studies Council on issues specific to the respective program, and/or matters of general interest.
- 3.5. Input to committees:
  - 3.5.1. Executive-Council and committees will review all matters pertaining to their mandates on their own initiative.
  - 3.5.2. Executive-Council may also request that committees review any particular matter.

Without prejudice to any policy of the Senate, the authority of the Executive-Council will embrace these additional principles:

- 3.6. The Executive-Council will not enter into debate or take action on any matter that would violate any policy of Senate.
- 3.7. The Executive-Council will not enter into debate or take action on any matter that would violate the University's and/or statutory confidentiality requirements in respect to students, faculty or staff, or on matters of a contractual nature.
- 3.8. The Executive-Council will not enter into debate or take action on any matter that would violate the Memorandum of Understanding on the Administration of the Joint MA and PhD Programs in Communication and Culture between Ryerson University and York University.
- 3.9. The Executive-Council does not have the authority to override decisions made by other Department or School Committees that do not report to it. The Executive-Council does, however, have the authority to discuss such decisions and to provide advice, except in cases precluded by considerations of confidentiality and/or contractual requirements, as specified above. The determination of such restrictions is the responsibility of the Departmental Chair. The Executive-Council is advisory to the Department Chair on matters that are contractually the responsibility of the Chair.
- 3.10. In the event of a disagreement between the Executive-Council and the Dean of Graduate Studies, the disagreement will be referred by the disputants to the Vice-President, Academic. In the event of continuing disagreements, the matter shall be reported to the President for action.

## **4. Executive-Council Membership**

In accordance with University policy and respecting the established guidelines of the Joint Program Memorandum (2010-2016), Executive-Council Membership includes the following:

- 4.1. The two Graduate Program Directors (GPDs) from Ryerson and York.
- 4.2. Three faculty members from each of Ryerson and York who are teaching regularly in, supervising students of, or active in the administration of the graduate program.

Members will be elected by and from faculty by way of a fair and transparent method. Normally, the faculty members shall represent the diversity of the curricular Areas of Specialization, one from each University representing each of Media & Culture, Politics & Policy, and Technology in Practice.

- 4.3. Four Graduate Student representatives, two from each of Ryerson and York elected by and from graduate students in the Program. Normally, the Student members shall represent Masters and Doctoral students equally.
- 4.4. Up to three faculty from each of Ryerson and York will be non-voting Executive-Council members representing Faculties, Departments, and Schools that have direct and substantial involvement with the Program.
- 4.5. The Graduate Program Administrators from both Ryerson and York will be non-voting members of Executive-Council.
- 4.6. The term of voting Executive-Council membership will be 2 years for faculty, and 1 year for students. All members may stand for re-election.

## **5. Chair**

- 5.1. In accordance with the stipulation of the Joint Program Memorandum (2010-2016), one of the two Graduate Program Directors from either Ryerson or York will chair the Executive-Council at any one time, on a rotating basis.
- 5.2. The Executive-Council Chair is responsible for conducting, or ensuring that the following are conducted:
  - 5.2.1. Calling and conducting meetings, setting agendas, and confirming quorum.
  - 5.2.2. Reviewing a written record of Executive-Council decisions, actions, and recommendations, and ensuring that a copy of these records is filed with both Graduate Program Administrators.
  - 5.2.3. Monitoring follow up to Executive-Council actions.
  - 5.2.4. Submitting relevant agenda items to applicable Graduate Studies committees or to the Graduate Studies Councils.
- 5.3. The Executive-Council Chair is an ex-officio member of all Executive-Council committees and sub-committees.
- 5.4. The Executive-Council Chair may request another member to act as Chair on an interim basis.

## **6. Executive-Council Procedures**

- 6.1. Executive-Council will normally meet four times per year, at least once in each of the Fall and Winter semesters. Meetings will be scheduled to permit sufficient time for submissions to be made, for information or approval where applicable, to other committees and councils. Additional meetings may be held at the call of the Executive-Council Chair or at the request of Executive-Council members.
- 6.2. Notices of meetings will normally be distributed at least 5 days in advance.
- 6.3. Quorum is 50% of the Executive-Council's voting membership, and the majority of the voting members present must be faculty members.
- 6.4. Voting matters are decided by a simple majority of voting members present at a meeting.
- 6.5. Decisions may be taken outside meetings through ballots distributed electronically or physically to all members (except as in 6.7 below).
- 6.6. All Executive-Council members are expected to attend Executive-Council meetings and, where relevant, committee and sub-committee meetings. If members are unable to attend they are to inform the Chair of the Executive-Council in advance of the meeting, and another faculty or student, respectively, may take their place on an interim basis.
- 6.7. A decision to amend Executive-Council Bylaws requires a two-thirds majority of voting members present at the meeting, and can be taken only after written notice has been provided to all Executive-Council members at least 5 days in advance of the meeting. Executive-Council members, or their interim replacements, must be in attendance at an Executive-Council meeting to vote on amendments to Bylaws.

## **7. Standing Committees**

Executive-Council sub-committees (which may be Committees of the Whole) may be established, with mandate and authority specified at the time of the creation. Where decision-making power is delegated to such sub-committees, their responsibilities and composition must be specified in these bylaws. Any sub-committee's membership may draw from beyond Executive-Council membership as deemed necessary.

- 7.1. Additional committees, coordinators, and working groups can be established at any time with the approval of the Executive-Council.
- 7.2. Membership of all committees and sub-committees is on a volunteer basis and should be approved by the Executive-Council.
- 7.3. The term of office of members of any committee or sub-committee is 1 year from September 1 to August 31. There is no limit to the number of terms committee and sub-committee members may serve, provided that the member is re-elected every year.

The Standing Committees of the EXECUTIVE-COUNCIL are as follows:

#### **7.4. Admissions**

Decisions over admissions to the Program may be handled jointly or separately between the Ryerson and York Programs. Masters and Doctoral decisions over admissions may be handled by separate sub-committees.

Beyond the confidential deliberations over applications for admission to the Program, the Committee shall be conducted as follows:

7.4.1. Mandate: the Admissions Committee may make recommendations to the Executive-Council, or relevant sub-committee, regarding the following:

- 7.4.1.1. Recruitment mechanisms;
- 7.4.1.2. Procedures, practices and standards for admissions into graduate programs, including academic and non-academic qualifications;
- 7.4.1.3. Curriculum advising and approval guidelines.

7.4.2. Committee Composition:

7.4.2.1. To be composed at the start of each school year. The composition of the Admissions Committee each year will depend upon whether Masters and Doctoral applications, Ryerson and York applications, are considered jointly or separately that year. Any application for admission must be evaluated by at least one Graduate Program Director, and at least two other faculty members of the Program.

7.4.3. Procedures:

7.4.3.1. The Admissions Committee(s) shall relay its recommendations to the respective GPD, who shall strive to achieve the recommendation in consultation with Graduate Studies and others at the respective institutions and beyond.

#### **7.5. Scholarships and Awards**

Unless otherwise stipulated by a funding source, the Ryerson and York Grad Programs shall conduct separate Scholarships and Awards Committees.

Beyond the confidential deliberations to rank applicants and select recipients of awards, each of Ryerson's and York's Scholarships and Awards Committee shall be conducted as follows:

7.5.1. Mandate:

7.5.1.1. To Recommend policies and practices for graduate student funding, such as minimum levels and length of commitment for both full-time and part-time;

7.5.1.2. To Recommend sources of graduate student funding, such as internal scholarships, research assistantships, course instruction, and supervisory stipends;

7.5.1.3. To Recommend award selection criteria and procedures.

7.5.2. Committee Composition:

7.5.2.1. For each of Ryerson and York, to be composed at the start of each school year, and to consist of at least three persons: the GPD and at least two other faculty members of the Program.

7.5.3. Procedures:

7.5.3.1. The Scholarships and Awards Committees shall relay their recommendations for funding policies to the respective GPD, who shall strive to achieve the recommendation in consultation with Graduate Studies and others at the respective institutions and beyond.

## 7.6. Program Membership Committee

Faculty members of the Joint Program may supervise students from either University; Students in the Joint Program may be supervised by faculty members from either University. Therefore, to establish consistency and diminish discrepancies between Membership categories and policies at Ryerson and York, decisions over Membership to the Program shall be handled jointly between the Ryerson and York Programs.

7.6.1. Mandate:

7.6.1.1. To develop program-specific criteria and procedures for Graduate Studies membership and supervisory responsibilities, which must be consistent with both Ryerson and York Graduate Studies requirements;

7.6.1.2. To review membership applications at the program level in light of the rationale established for membership, and to submit its recommendations to Graduate Studies;

7.6.1.3. To review the Program's Graduate Studies membership list on an annual basis.

7.6.2. Committee Composition:

7.6.2.1. To be composed at the start of each school year, and to consist of at least six persons: the two Graduate Program Directors, at least one other faculty from each University, and one student from each University;

7.6.2.2. If the Membership Committee is unformed by October 15, the Executive-Council shall serve as the Committee until its formation;

7.6.3. Procedures:

- 7.6.3.1. The Committee shall review applications for Graduate Program membership and Graduate Studies membership, or both simultaneously where relevant;
- 7.6.3.2. Committee recommendations shall normally be approved by the Executive-Council before being submitted to the respective Dean of Graduate Studies for final approval.
- 7.6.3.3. On an annual basis the GPD shall send an updated list of Graduate Program membership to the Dean of Graduate Studies;

**7.7. Ad Hoc Committees**

- 7.7.1. The Executive-Council may constitute ad-hoc committees to address specific topics.
- 7.7.2. Membership of ad-hoc committees will be determined at the time the committee is constituted.
- 7.7.3. Members will hold office until the report of the committee has been submitted to, and accepted by, the Executive-Council, or until such time as the ad-hoc committee has been dissolved.