



**CONSTITUTION OF THE
GRADUATE CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (TST)
& BY-LAWS OF THE GRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL**

2015-2016
Updated: 2024
Approved by Academic Council: 2 December 2024

**A. CONSTITUTION OF THE
GRADUATE CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

1. PREAMBLE

The Academic Council is the chief instrument of TST's academic governance. It delegates some of its authority for the administration and governance of all graduate programs to either the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies (hereafter referred to as "GCTS") or the Graduate Studies Council (hereafter referred to as "GSC"), subject to the following:

The Academic Council has authority over all conjoint degree programs identified in Schedule "B" of the TST/UofT Memorandum of Agreement and two non-conjoint programs (the M.A. and Ph.D.). The Academic Council reserves to itself authority in all matters relating to TST's conjoint degree programs and legacy non-conjoint programs which it does not specifically delegate to its committees, including TST's authority in creating and terminating degree programs, setting standards for admission and graduation, and establishing general academic policies.

The various graduate degree handbooks continue to have authority. Revisions at the level of educational outcomes, admissions requirements, graduation requirements, and standards are now in the jurisdiction of the Academic Council. Revisions in procedure and procedural policies including policies for deadlines and extensions may be made by the Associate Director, Graduate Programs (ADGP) after consultation with the Graduate Studies Council, and must be reported to the Academic Council at its next following meeting.

Through the ADGP, the Academic Council recommends to the GSC policies and regulations affecting the administration and operation of graduate studies, curriculum proposals, and general admission and program requirements for all graduate programs and engages in academic planning and quality assurance. The Academic Council advises the ADGP on course offerings, procedures of academic administration, student and supervisory issues, and the like.

2. GRADUATE CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

The Graduate Centre for Theological Studies replaces the Advanced Degree Division, and the office of ADGP replaces the office of Director of Advanced Degree Programs. The GCTS is composed of the Graduate Studies Council and various standing committees, as noted below.



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A. DIRECTOR, GRADUATE CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

The ADGP is appointed by the TST Board of Trustees after a formal search process and by the principles of TST's *Policies Regarding Academic Administrators* (Oct. 29, 2012).

The ADGP is the Chief Academic Officer of TST's graduate programs and has general responsibility and authority for the administration of the GCTS and quality assurance of its graduate programs, consistent with the policies, procedures, and standards of the Academic Council. The ADGP represents TST in respect of its graduate programs to the University of Toronto and provides a vision for excellence and leadership in the research, teaching, and study of theological subjects at a graduate level.

In particular, the ADGP:

- Has primary responsibility for TST's graduate programs, the GCTS Office and its staff, and the GCTS Coordinator.
- Ensures the effective operation of the GCTS Office according to the policies, standards, and procedures established by the Academic Council.
- Reports to the TST Executive Director and the Academic Council in respect of TST's graduate programs, identifying agenda items for meetings, proposes policy review and development as appropriate, and provides documentation and data as directed by the Academic Council to support its deliberations.
- Authorizes the publication of graduate program handbooks, with approved program requirements and policies.
- Has general oversight of course offerings for TST's graduate programs, and has shared oversight, with the college dean/principal, of required courses for the graduate degree programs.
- Coordinates administrative operations with the GCTS Office and college Graduate Directors, as required, and builds collegiality among them.
- Oversees the administration of the application and admissions processes.
- Oversees provincial and federal scholarship application and adjudication processes.
- Assures the appropriate administration of appeals of grades and adjudication of academic offences for TST's graduate students.
- Administers the quality assurance of graduate programs, ensuring compliance with civil laws, accrediting standards of the Association of Theological Schools, and UofT's Quality Assurance requirements.
- Represents TST's graduate programs to external persons, schools, and organizations, as directed



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by the TST Executive Director.

- Represents TST in respect of its graduate programs to the University of Toronto and maintains close communication with the School of Graduate Studies, and, in matters of quality assurance, with the offices of the Provost and Vice-Provosts, as directed by the TST Executive Director.
- Reviews the standards, policies, vocabulary, and procedures of TST's graduate degree programs for congruity with the standards, policies, vocabulary, and procedures of the School of Graduate Studies.
- Promotes good pedagogical practices among GCTS faculty and provides a vision for excellence in research, teaching, and study of theological subjects at the graduate level.
- Supports graduate students, ensuring excellence in graduate supervision and student experience

B. GRADUATE COORDINATOR, GRADUATE CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES*

The Graduate Coordinator's primary responsibility is the general oversight of graduate students in their progress through their programs, from their application for admission through to their graduation. The Graduate Coordinator also assists in curriculum planning, program development and GCTS policy. The Graduate Coordinator is appointed by the ADGP with the approval of the Graduate Coordinator's college dean, principal or president, and reports to the ADGP.

The Graduate Coordinator:

- Assists the ADGP, in recruitment, assessing admission dossiers; identifies prospective faculty supervisors for applicants; and participates in admissions decisions.
- Participates in the adjudication and ranking of provincial, federal & TST Board scholarships.
- Oversees the appointment of faculty supervisors for graduate students at admission and ensures that students have an appropriate supervision in all stages of their programs.
- Monitors progress toward the completion of degree requirements and recommends and approves program extensions and leave of absences, where delegated by the GSC.
- Ensures that all graduate students are making good academic progress.
- Assists the ADGP in on-going program assessment for ATS and UTQAP.
- Liaises with students at Orientation and TGSA events.
- Collaborates in areas of curricular planning and program policy development, in consultation with the ADGP, and under direction from the Academic Council.
- Provides leadership in the professional development of students.

* In the event that there is no Graduate Coordinator, the Associate Director, Graduate Programs will be responsible for reassigning the duties as they deem appropriate.



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C. GRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL

The Graduate Studies Council (GSC) is an advisory and coordinating group, and has responsibilities delegated to it by the Academic Council. It replaces the Advanced Degree Council (ADC). By-Laws of the GSC are described in Sec. B (below).

The GSC shall be composed of the following members:

Voting members:

- i. Associate Director, Graduate Programs (Chair)
- ii. TST Executive Director (ex officio)
- iii. Six College Graduate Directors and up to one additional faculty member per college.
- iv. Up to two GCTS Faculty elected by the Faculty Assembly
- v. One SGS-UofT representatives (Appointed by the Provost's Office)
- vi. Two graduate student members (appointed by the Associate Director on recommendation by the TST Graduate Students' Association)
- vii. Any chair of GSC Standing Committee

Non-voting members:

GCTS Staff (Secretary)

Note: In item iii above, if there are two representatives from one college, one should be responsible for the research and teaching graduate degrees and the other for the professional graduate degrees. Each college may cast only one vote.

D. STANDING COMMITTEES, GCTS

a. Petitions Committee

The Petitions Committee shall be composed of the following three (3) members:

Voting members:

- i. ADGP
- ii^[MA1]. Two GSC faculty members

The GCTS Petitions Committee is responsible for student requests and petitions and other tasks as delegated to it by the GSC. The faculty members are elected from the members of the GSC, typically for a term of 2 years.



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b. Admissions and Fellowships Committee

The Admissions and Fellowships Committee shall be composed of the following:

Voting members:

- i. ADGP
- ii. GCTS Graduate Coordinator
- iii. Six College Graduate Directors
- iv. At the discretion of the ADGP, up to two graduate faculty members to assist with scholarship adjudication when necessary.

Non-voting members:

- iv. GCTS Staff (Secretary).

The committee reviews applications for admission to the graduate programs, extends offers of admission, allocates admissions-related financial awards within its jurisdiction and adjudicates provincial and federal scholarship or fellowship applications.

B. BY-LAWS OF THE GRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL

Chair of the GSC

The ADGP shall be Chair of the Graduate Studies Council (GSC). Otherwise, in the absence of the ADGP the GSC may elect a Chair *pro tempore* from among the members present at the meeting.

Regular meetings

Regular meetings of Council should be held monthly and are scheduled prior to the start of each academic year. The GSC must meet at least twice in each academic year. Due notice, of at least five (5) working days shall be given in advance of any changes or cancellations of such meetings.

Discretion of the Director to hold meetings

The ADGP may cancel a meeting at their discretion.

Special meetings

The ADGP shall call a special meeting of the GSC when requested to do so by the Executive Director of TST; the Academic Council; or, by written request signed by not fewer than 3 members of the GSC. Due notice, of at least five (5) working days shall be given in advance of any such meetings.

Votes of members



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Each voting member present, including the Chair, is entitled to one vote, and only the members present may vote on any question.

Questions decided by majority vote

All questions that come before Council shall be decided by a simple majority of the members present and voting unless otherwise expressly provided herein. In the case of an equality of votes, the question shall be deemed to be decided in the negative.

Reconsider, 2/3 majority

No matter decided by Council may be considered again within one calendar year of the date of the meeting at which the matter was decided unless a motion for consideration is carried by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

Motions & decisions

The decisions of the Council upon any matter coming before it shall be made by resolution, duly seconded, and shall be recorded in the minutes of Council.

Quorum

The quorum required for the transaction of business by Council shall be not less than half of the number of voting members.

Public Meetings

Meetings of the Council shall be open to the TST faculty, librarians, staff and students, except that the GSC may at any time, by majority vote, move into closed session. Only members of the GSC, and guests invited by the Chair, shall be present in the closed session.

Confidentiality

The proceedings of any meeting or part of a meeting of Council, which is conducted in closed session, including the minutes of and other records concerning any such meeting or part thereof, shall be kept in confidence by every member and officer of Council and by any other person invited or permitted to attend any such meeting or part thereof.

Non-Members of the GSC (Guests)

Guests may only participate in the GSC's deliberations if invited by the Chair.

Chair to rule on points of order

The Chair shall rule on all points of order. The Chair's ruling may be appealed by any member, and in



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such case the meeting decides by the majority of the members present and voting, but without amendment and without debate, save that the member making the appeal shall state briefly the grounds.

Agenda

The agenda for each regular meeting shall be prepared by the ADGP in consultation with the Secretary and shall set forth the items of business to be discussed at that meeting.

Vary order of business

A motion to vary the order in which the items on the agenda are to be taken up shall be in order at any time except when another motion is being debated or voted upon. The mover shall briefly indicate reasons why the order should be varied, but otherwise the motion shall not be debatable.

Add to agenda, 2/3 majority

A substantive matter not on the agenda may not be introduced at a regular meeting unless the introduction is agreed to by two thirds of the members present and voting. The mover shall briefly indicate reasons why the matter should be introduced, but otherwise the motion shall not be debatable.

Notice of motion

At any meeting of the GSC a member may give notice of a motion to be presented at a subsequent meeting of GSC. A motion of which notice is given shall be considered at the next regular meeting.

Member to be recognized

Any member desiring to speak during a meeting shall signify such intention to the Chair. No member shall speak until he or she has been recognized by the Chair, and when so recognized the member shall address the Chair. A member shall be permitted to speak no more than twice on each motion. Further addresses may be made at the discretion of the chair. The length of each address should be no more than five minutes, unless otherwise agreed to by a majority of those present.

Motions to be seconded

All motions, except those for adjournment of the meeting or of a debate, shall be seconded before being debated or put by the Chair. The Chair, at his or her discretion, may require that a motion be put in writing before being debated or put by the Chair. Prior to debate on the motion, the chair may ask members to ask questions regarding the motion.



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Procedural Motions

When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received by the Chair except for one of the following purposes, and the order of precedence of these motions shall be as follows:

Not debatable

- to adjourn the meeting,
- to extend the time of adjournment,
- to adjourn the debate,
- to put the question,
- to withdraw the motion,
- to divide.

Debatable

- to refer or commit,
- to amend.

Adjourn meeting

A motion to adjourn the meeting shall always be in order and shall be decided without amendment and without debate.

Extend time of adjournment

A motion to extend the time of adjournment shall not be debatable.

Adjourn debate

A motion to adjourn the debate shall always be in order and shall be decided without amendment and without debate. The item so adjourned shall appear as of course on the agenda for the next regular meeting.

Calling the question

A motion to put the question shall be decided without amendment and without debate. If the motion to put the question is resolved in the affirmative, the question under debate shall be put forward without further amendment and without further debate. If the motion to put the question is not carried, debate on the question shall continue.

Withdraw

When a motion has been made and seconded, it shall be disposed of unless, at the request of the mover, it is allowed to be withdrawn. In such case, consent shall be understood if no objection is



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made to the motion being withdrawn, but if objection is made, the Chair shall put the question "that this motion be withdrawn," which shall be decided without debate. A motion so withdrawn may be placed on the agenda for another meeting of the GSC before a calendar year has expired.

Amendments to motions

No motion to amend further shall be in order until one of the amendments has been disposed of. When no further amendments remain to be disposed of, the motion (as amended if amendments be passed) shall be put.

Minutes

Minutes of GSC meetings shall be distributed to members of GSC, TST college deans and principals, and registrars. The GCTS office shall keep a record of meetings and minutes.

Amendment to by-laws

Notice of any motion to enact, amend, or repeal bylaws of the GSC shall be given for a regular meeting of the GSC at which the motion is to be presented and shall be carried by a two-thirds affirmative vote of voting members of the GSC present at the meeting. Notice of the proposed amendment should be provided at the previous regular meeting. Changes to the by-laws then require approval by the Academic Council.

Rules of Order

In cases of rules of order not specified in the above *Robert's Rules of Order* shall apply.

Entry into force

The by-laws of the GSC enter into force when enacted by the GSC and receive final approval by the Academic Council. This by-law of the GSC was first created on and approved by the GSC on May 5, 2015. It was further approved by the TST's Academic Council on May 25, 2015. Up-dates were recommended by GSC and approved by Academic Council October 2018 and Dec 2024