

Guidelines on Attendance at Meetings

The *University of Toronto Act, 1971*, as amended, requires that meetings of the Governing Council be open to the public. It makes provision, too, for circumstances in which a Governing Council meeting or any part of a meeting is to be held *in camera*.

By-law Number 2 makes provision for circumstances in which a meeting of a Board or Committee is to be held *in camera* or in closed session. Further, the Terms of Reference of each Board and Committee indicate whether the meetings are normally held in open or closed session. The parameters of open, closed and *in camera* are defined below:

Open:

Open meetings are open to members of the University, the public, and the press, up to the capacity of the room to seat guests. The Governing Council, the three Boards, the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, the Planning and Budget Committee and the Elections Committee normally meet in open session.

Regular meetings of the Governing Council are broadcast on the web. Video broadcasting and recording are not permitted.

All discussions at open meetings may be disclosed publicly inside and beyond the University.

Closed:

Closed meetings or sessions are restricted to members of the Board or Committee, members of the Governing Council who are not members of the Board or Committee, members of a Board to which the Committee reports and other individuals whose presence is considered by the Board or Committee to be necessary to facilitate its work.

A meeting of a Board or Committee may be held in closed session (or *in camera*, see below) where ‘intimate financial or personal matters of any person may be disclosed,’ or ‘where matters may be disclosed at the meeting of such a nature ...that the desirability of avoiding open discussion thereof outweighs the desirability of adhering to the principle that meeting be open to the public,’¹ for example, where confidentiality is required to avoid harm to the University’s negotiating position. Where it is proposed that an item be considered in closed session (or *in camera*), the Board or Committee will meet *in camera* to determine whether the item will be so considered. Committees and Boards normally utilize the closed meeting procedure in preference to the *in camera* session

The proceedings at a closed meeting of a Committee or Board should not be discussed beyond the persons entitled to be in attendance at that meeting (see above).

The decisions made at a closed meeting will not be made public until

- (a) the Chair of the Committee or Board so advises; or
- (b) the report of the particular meeting, containing the decision, is released.

¹ Section 33 of *By-law Number 2*

In camera:

A meeting, or part of a meeting, of the Governing Council may be held *in camera* where ‘intimate financial or personal matters of any person may be disclosed.’¹ The Executive Committee or the Governing Council itself may determine that the Council meet *in camera*.

A meeting of a Board or Committee may be held *in camera* where ‘intimate financial or personal matters of any person may be disclosed’ or ‘where matters may be disclosed at the meeting of such a nature ...that the desirability of avoiding open discussion thereof outweighs the desirability of adhering to the principle that meeting be open to the public,’² for example, where confidentiality is required to avoid harm to the University’s negotiating position.

In the case of Governing Council meetings, only members of the Governing Council, staff from the Office of the Governing Council, and other individuals whose presence is considered to be necessary by the Executive Committee or the Council to facilitate the Council’s work, may attend. All others will be asked to withdraw from the meeting. In the case of Boards and Committees, only members of the Board or Committee, staff from the Office of the Governing Council, and other individuals whose presence is considered by the board or committee to be necessary to facilitate its work, may be present.

The proceedings at an *in camera* meeting of the Governing Council or a Board or Committee should not be discussed beyond the persons entitled to be in attendance at that meeting (see above).

The proceedings of *in camera* sessions must be kept in confidence. Minutes or reports of *in camera* sessions do not form part of the regular minutes or reports but are kept separately by the Secretary.³ Where appropriate, decisions made *in camera* will be made public by the Chair or the senior administrative officer responsible for the matter.

Members of the Governing Council who are not members of a particular Board or Committee are always welcome to attend – as guests – any Board or Committee meetings except, as noted above, those held *in camera*. Similarly, members of a parent Board may attend meetings of the Board’s Committees. However, respecting the right of duly elected and appointed members, guests, including members of the Governing Council, may participate in debate and/or sit at the table only at the invitation of the Board or Committee Chair.

¹ Section 38 - 44 of *By-law Number 2*

² Section 33 of *By-law Number 2*

³ Section 46 (c) and (d) of *By-law Number 2*.