

Originally Adopted 11/13/86, revised April, 1998 and May, 2020

ORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EARTH SCIENCES

Preamble:

This document describes a framework for how the Department aims to operate. Rather than a rigid set of rules, it should be interpreted as guidelines for the Department Chair in making decisions. Initially developed in the 1980s and revised in 1998, this is the first major revision in over 20 years.

I. Purpose:

1. The purpose of the organization of the Department of Earth Sciences is to provide an orderly, efficient and representative system to carry out the aims of the Department, in a manner that can use but not overtax the abilities and academic responsibilities of individual Department members.
2. The aims of the Department are to develop and maintain survey courses and undergraduate- and graduate-degree programs in the earth sciences, to conduct research in those earth-science fields appropriate to Hawaii and in the national interest, render service to the University, and advise the public and various State and local government agencies within areas of faculty competence.

II. Components:

1. The Department is organized on the basis of its Faculty, a Department Chair, Standing Committees, Ad Hoc Committees, and Graduate Study-Area Groups.

III. Faculty:

1. Faculty members of the Department of Earth Sciences are appointed by the University to the Department Faculty, to the Graduate Faculty (including Affiliate Graduate Faculty), or to both.
2. Members of the Department Faculty are those persons holding an appointment in this Department, excluding any visiting appointees. Department Faculty have the following responsibilities and rights:
 - (a) Responsible for routinely teaching Departmental courses, maintaining specialized facilities, advising students, and serving on standing and ad hoc Department committees, commensurate with their appointment.

(b) Eligible to vote on all Department matters; each faculty member has one vote regardless of their FTE fraction. In matters where a faculty member may be in conflict of interest, as determined by the Department Chair, that faculty member will not vote.

(c) Eligible to serve as Department Chair and Chair of any standing or ad hoc department committee.

3. The Department Graduate Faculty are those members of the Graduate Faculty and Affiliate Graduate Faculty of the University who are associated with this Department. Department Graduate Faculty have the following responsibilities and rights (Note: Graduate Faculty who are also Department Faculty have the additional responsibilities and rights of Department Faculty):

(a) Responsible for advising students and serving on standing and ad hoc department committees.

(b) Eligible to vote on all Department matters except personnel matters involving Department Faculty. **In matters where a faculty member may be in conflict of interest, as determined by the Department Chair, that faculty member will not vote.**

(c) Eligible to serve as members or chairpersons of thesis and dissertation committees and any standing and ad hoc committees.

4. Review and develop recommendations for renewal or removal of each member of the Department Graduate Faculty will be biennially.

IV. Departmental Policy and Meetings

1. Departmental policy will be decided in departmental meetings, which normally will be held monthly during the academic year.

2. Each Department Faculty (including Emeritus Faculty) and Graduate Faculty member has one vote, with the exception that Graduate Faculty without an appointment in the Department may not vote on personnel matters involving Department Faculty. Votes on personnel matters involving Department Faculty are also not allowed for student representatives, affiliate graduate faculty, invited observers, and others.

3. The Department Chair will preside at Department meetings. In the Chair's absence, an acting chair will preside.

4. A quorum at Department meetings will be one-half the Department excluding Faculty on sabbatical or other approved to be absent from campus. Proxies may be used for voting and for establishing a quorum. Passage of a motion involving departmental policy will require a majority vote of the Department Faculty not authorized to be absent from campus.

5. The Department Chair will distribute agenda prior to departmental meetings, as will reports by the chairs of the standing committees. Individuals wanting to add an item to the agenda will inform the Department Chair for inclusion on the agenda.

V. Department Chair

1. The Department Chair is a departmental member recommended via a vote by faculty of the Department and appointed by the Dean of SOEST.

2. The Department Chair is responsible to the Dean of SOEST for functions as listed in the University Faculty Handbook. Much of that work may be allocated to standing committees, as specifically listed below. The Department Chair represents the Department when asked for comment or contribution ex officio by the University Administration, or other bodies outside the Department.

3. The Department Chair is normally also the Graduate Chair unless this role is delegated to another faculty member. The Department Chair appoints an Associate Chair who is acting Chair when the Department Chair is absent.

VI. Standing Committees

1. The standing committees are Graduate Admissions Committee, Graduate Studies Committee, Departmental Operations Committee, Curriculum Committee, Public Relations and Honors Committee, Undergraduate Studies Committee, and Personnel and Planning Committee.

2. Each Departmental Faculty member will actively participate on two standing committees each semester, except when on sabbatical or other approved leave or as Chair on one standing committee. Standing committee appointments will be on a staggered, rotating basis, with an effort to distribute the membership of each among the ranks and disciplines of the Faculty. Vacancies will be filled promptly. Reviews of faculty (for tenure, for retention on the Graduate Faculty, for salary adjustment, etc.) will take into account service on standing and ad hoc committees.

3. The Chair of each standing committee is appointed by the Department Chair who also sets the committees agenda for each year. Each committee is expected to meet monthly or as needed. The responsibilities of each committee are listed on the following pages. Students on standing committees other than the Graduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Admissions Committees may vote, except in personnel matters, and are invited to Department meetings.

VII. Graduate Admissions Committee

1. The Graduate Admissions Committee is composed of at least four members of the Graduate Faculty, representing each of the Department's three research divisions, as well as HIGP. The Department Graduate Chair selects these members. The Department Administrator managing graduate admissions is an ex officio member.

2. The Graduate Admissions Committee (GAC) is responsible for matters pertaining to graduate student admissions. The GAC prepares advertisement material about our program; recruits students; circulates and evaluates applications; helps identify potential advisors for applicants; facilitates communications between applicants and potential advisors; ranks candidates for Departmental Fellowships, which are formally offered by the Department Graduate Chair; and assists in preparing admission letters, which are sent by the Department Graduate Chair.

VIII. Graduate Studies Committee

1. The Graduate Studies Committee is composed of at least four members of the Graduate Faculty, selected by the Department Graduate Chair. The Department Administrator monitoring graduate student progress is an ex officio member.

2. The Graduate Studies Committee is responsible for assisting, monitoring, and evaluating Earth Science graduate students. It establishes required plans of study for the M.S. and Ph.D. programs, based on Department policy, University regulations, and recommendations from the areas of graduate study; prepares and periodically revises an information booklet for graduate students ("Survival Manual"); evaluates yearly the progress of students and based on the evaluation, recommends students for awards. It presents concerns of the graduate students to the Department Chair.

IX. Departmental Operations Committee

1. The Departmental Operations Committee is composed of four members of the Department and Graduate Faculty and one graduate student,

selected by the Department Chair. The Department Chair is an ex officio member of this committee.

2. The Departmental Operations Committee organizes and runs the Friday TGIF seminar series, including the recruitment of speakers from outside the department and helps the Chair manage speaker funds.

3. The Departmental Operations Committee organizes and runs Tech seminars.

4. The Departmental Operations Committee advises the Department Chair on non-routine aspects of department operations when needed.

X. Curriculum Committee

1. The Curriculum Committee is composed of members of the Department and Graduate Faculty, appointed by the Chair.

2. The Curriculum Committee is responsible for the undergraduate and graduate course offerings by the Department. It evaluates and recommends changes in the curricula of the various undergraduate and graduate programs. It periodically evaluates the description of course offerings presented in the university Course Catalog. It responds annually to additional tasks set forth by the Department Chair.

XI. Undergraduate Studies Committee

1. The Undergraduate Studies Committee is composed of members of the Department and Graduate Faculty and one graduate student, appointed by the Chair.

2. The Undergraduate Studies Committee is responsible for matters, excluding curriculum, affecting undergraduate students enrolled in Department courses. It advises the Chair in general matters involving undergraduate majors and other undergraduate students taking our courses. It cooperates with the SOEST Student Academic Services to organize meeting and events that inform undergraduates about career and graduate school opportunities. It works to inform prospective undergraduate majors about our degree pathways and associated undergraduate research opportunities.

XII. Relations and Honors Committee

1. The Relations and Honors Committee is composed of four members of the Department and Graduate Faculty and one graduate student, selected by the Department Chair.

2. The Relations and Honors Committee is responsible for developing and maintaining relations between the Department and the public, especially alumni. It coordinates social and other affairs between the Department and Alumni. It supports an alumni directory and web pages specifically intended to inform the public and alumni of department events. It publishes an annual comprehensively updated department newsletter. It maintains a speaker register consisting of Department Faculty and Students willing to give public lectures, and ensuring that all reasonable requests for speakers are met.

3. The Relations and Honors Committee promotes and encourages the nomination of Faculty and staff members and students for University and external awards and honors. It is also responsible for organizing publicity of these honors and awards.

XIII. Personnel and Planning Committee

1. The Personnel and Planning Committee is composed of four members of the Department Faculty and one graduate student. The Department Chair appoints Faculty and they are normally selected to provide breadth of coverage; graduate students elect the graduate student member of this Committee. The Chair of the Personnel and Planning Committee also serves as the Chair of the Department Personnel Committee.

2. The main purpose of this committee is perform annual performance evaluations and make recommendations for contract renewal of probationary faculty and faculty on limited-term appointments. It evaluates instruction, research, and service, in particular to recommend for or against probationary contract renewals, Graduate Faculty renewals, and merit and salary inequities adjustments (in any of this, when a member of the committee is the subject of discussion that member must leave the area of discussion). This committee is also responsible for periodic review of tenured faculty.

3. The committee may also plan for and oversee the long-range development and direction of the Department. The committee may coordinate and present its recommendations to the Department for policy decisions, and because the direction of a Department is embodied in its personnel, the committee is responsible for matters pertaining to the faculty and staff of the Department except as regards to formal promotion and tenure. It receives or generates, and evaluates, proposals for the future direction of the Department. It recommends to the Department and Chair the areas of recruitment for vacant faculty positions.

XIV. Department Personnel Committee

1. The Department Personnel Committee consists of all tenured Department Faculty. The Chair of the Department Personnel Committee is the Chair of the Personnel and Planning Committee. For individual cases, only those members of the Department Personnel Committee of higher rank than the person being considered are involved in the decision-making process.

2. The Department Personnel Committee is responsible for recommending for or against tenure, promotion and contract renewal of Department Faculty. It receives and evaluates information assembled by the candidates and from other sources. In the cases of promotion and/or tenure, it ensures the timely submittal of at least 5 letters of reference (see Procedures for Promotion, Tenure and Contract Renewal for procedures). It convenes a meeting at which candidate dossiers are discussed and voted upon by secret ballot, either for or against promotion, tenure, or contract renewal. It transmits in writing to the Department Chair, the results of the ballot, along with a statement of strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.

XV. Ad Hoc Committees

1. Graduate Assistantships Committee. Awards of teaching assistantships for the following year are recommended to the Department Chair by an ad hoc committee consisting of the Chairs of the Graduate Admissions Committee (information on rankings and abilities of prospective students), Graduate Work Committee (rankings and needs of existing students), and Curriculum Committee (teaching needs).

2. Search Committees. After the Department and Chair (and Institute Director for joint appointments) agree on an area of recruitment to a vacant position, the Chair (and Director) on the advice of the Personnel and Planning Committee appoints an ad hoc search committee and its Chair. The committee will include persons concerned with the overall teaching and research goals of the organization, in addition to persons more directly in the area of recruitment. The ad hoc search committee will recruit, through national ads, supplemented as necessary by letters asking nominees to respond to ads; evaluate, commencing with the application letter and vita, and for those with promise, by requesting letters of recommendation; and rank and recommend a short list of applicants to the Chair (and Director).

3. Other ad hoc committees may be formed or dissolved as the need arises.

XVI. Areas of Graduate Study

1. The basis of the graduate-student instruction and research in this Department is our set of active research programs. These programs are identified by such characteristics as a common area of faculty interests; research opportunities; strengths of curricula, individual courses, and facilities; and student, scientific, and governmental desires. Any single member of the Graduate Faculty contributes to one or more of these programs (at least in part of his/her efforts or interests) and may assign himself/herself to any one or more of them.

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