



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

2015-2016
Updated: September 26, 2018
Approved by Academic Council: October 29, 2018

**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 (advanced degree) 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 (AD) *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 GCTS Director after consultation with the Graduate Studies Council, and must be reported to the Academic Council at its next following meeting.

Through the GCTS Director, 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 (AD) programs, and engages in academic planning and quality assurance. The Academic Council advises the GCTS Director 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 Director, GCTS 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 Director, GCTS, 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 Director is the Chief Academic Officer of TST's graduate (AD) 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; 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 Director of the GCTS:

- 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 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.
- Publishes graduate program handbooks, with approved program requirements and policies.
- Oversees the appointment of faculty members of the GCTS, and in agreement with such faculty members and the heads of their colleges, and advises colleges on graduate faculty appointments.
- Monitors graduate faculty members in respect of their TST graduate teaching and supervision.
- Maintains annually updated CV's of TST's graduate faculty members.
- 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 AD 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.



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- 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 by the TST 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 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 Director, GCTS, and with the approval of the Graduate Coordinator's college dean, principal or president, and reports to the Director, GCTS.

The Graduate Coordinator:

- Assists the Director, GCTS, 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 GCTS Director in on-going program assessment for ATS and UTQAP.
- Liaises with students at Orientation and ADSA events.



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- Collaborates in areas of curricular planning and program policy development, in consultation with the Director, GCTS, and under direction from the Academic Council.
- Provides leadership in the professional development of students.

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 twelve (16) members:

Voting members:

- i. GCTS Director (Chair)
- ii. TST Director (ex officio)
- iii. GCTS Graduate Coordinator
- iv. Six College Graduate Directors
- v. Three GCTS Faculty elected by the Faculty Assembly
- vi. Two SGS-UofT representatives (Appointed by the Provost's Office)
- vii. Two graduate (AD) student members (appointed by the Graduate Coordinator on recommendation by the TST Graduate Students' Association)

Non-voting members:

GCTS Graduate Administrator (Secretary)

D. STANDING COMMITTEES, GCTS

a. Petitions Committee

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

Voting members:

- i. GCTS Director
- ii. GCTS Graduate Coordinator
- iii. One GSC faculty member

The GCTS Petitions Committee is responsible for student requests and petitions and other tasks as delegated to it by the GSC. The GCTS faculty member is 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. GCTS Director
- ii. GCTS Graduate Coordinator
- iii. Six College Graduate Directors

Non-voting members:

- iv. GCTS Graduate Administrator (Secretary).

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

c. Academic Appeals Committee

The GSC Appeals Committee is responsible for all academic appeals for TST's graduate programs. The GCTS Director will recommend the voting members of the GSC Academic Appeals Committee to the GSC for approval. The GSC Academic Appeals Committee consists of the following members:

Voting members

- i. One faculty member of the GSC
- ii. One UofT faculty member (for conjoint degrees – appointed by UofT) or a USMC faculty member (for non-conjoint degrees)
- iii. A graduate student

Non-Voting Members

- iv. TST Registrar (Secretary)

The GSC faculty member will serve as chair of the Academic Appeals Committee. The GSC should identify at least one alternate member for each voting member on the committee. Alternate members may be appointed by the GCTS Director, or designate, in situations where a conflict of interest has been identified or where a regular member is unable to serve. In the case of an appeal initiated by a non-conjoint MA or Ph.D. student, the faculty member from St. Michael's will replace the member from UofT. The Student member and an alternate are identified in consultation with the TST Graduate Students' Association. The TST Registrar is a non-voting member who serves as Secretary. The Appeals Committee's decisions are made by a simple majority of three voting members of the committee (with the chair having a right to vote).



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B. BY-LAWS OF THE GRADUATE STUDIES COUNCIL

Chair of the GSC

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

Regular meetings

Regular meetings of Council shall 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 Director, GCTS, at his or her discretion, may cancel a meeting.

Special meetings

The Director shall call a special meeting of the GSC when requested to do so by the 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

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 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



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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 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 Director 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



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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.

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.



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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 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



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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.