

Creating and Amending University Legislation

(all University [statutes](#) and [regulations](#))

Before you start to write

- [Tell the GPC Secretariat your plans for creating or amending legislation](#). They will be able to advise you on process and timing, and give feedback on your first draft. This initial time investment should expedite the proposed legislative change. If you wish to explore amendments to Trusts legislation (this can relate both to Council regulations 24 and 25 of 2002), please contact the Trusts management Team through trusts@admin.ox.ac.uk.)
- [Decide if changes are really needed](#). If changes are very minor and not time-sensitive, could they be made opportunistically in the future in the case of there being more pressing changes; or swept into a report requesting small changes to a number of related regulations? The GPC Secretariat can advise on this;
- [Sense check that content is suitable for regulation](#), for example, is it more suitable for a policy or procedural document, which allows for more flexibility to make future changes? The GPC Secretariat can advise on this;
- [Understand which bodies need to approve changes](#) You can find out which bodies need to approve changes (at the level of GPC and above) [here](#).
- [Decide when you want the changes to take effect](#), then calculate which committee meetings it would need to be received at and any other stakeholders that you might need to consult with. Factor in some contingency to your plans, especially if you anticipate that the approval process might not be straight forward. The majority of changes can usually be made within three months, as long as they are received by a meeting of GPC in Michaelmas or Hilary term (there is a break in meetings of Congregation and publication of the Gazette over the long vacation). An exception to this is for King-in-Council regulations, as Privy Council approval is likely to take an additional four to eight months.
- [Decide how comprehensive amendments should be](#). A common approach is to make minimal changes but it should be noted that legislation that is added to reiteratively over time will benefit from periodic, thorough review to ensure it is well structured and clear;
- [Make sure that you are using the GPC legislation report template](#) (rebadged for another committee as needed) and that you have familiarised yourself with the notes of guidance;
- [Decide how you will phrase the 'Explanatory note'](#) in the report (which will be published in the Gazette). It can be helpful to capture the rationale for the changes succinctly via this note, before going on to write the report or create the legislation/changes;
- [Consider whether a longer explanation in the Gazette or extra communications are needed](#). Where changes might be perceived as controversial, it may be useful to seek advice from PAD at an early stage.
- [Make sure you know which teams or individuals are stakeholders for the legislation](#) and that you consult with them;
- [Check for any cross references](#) from the legislation to other legislative content (and in reverse) and make sure that any resulting changes to other legislation are included in your report. Check if it is possible to 'future-proof' any cross references to minimise the need for further updates, for example, by referring to the name of legislation and powers within it as opposed to individual section numbers;
- [Consider whether consultation in addition to the usual committee route would be helpful](#), for example, if the legislation is cross-cutting or has potentially controversial aspects, it might assist the approval to put in place townhall meetings or to socialise changes via a Bulletin article. Remember that any legislative change is published in the Gazette and is subject to opposition by members of Congregation;

- Consider existing approaches to writing legislation on a particular topic, either internally or externally and whether it would be beneficial to borrow from these;
- Recruit others to review your draft legislation for accuracy and clarity: at least one colleague and some stakeholders since it is very easy to miss errors or ambiguity in your own writing.

When writing

- Allow as much time as you can for drafting, including time to step away from your draft and revisit it as it can be hard to be objective about what you have just written;
- Please note that the principle sub-divisions of statutes called 'sections' and the principle sub-divisions of regulations are called 'regulations'. Further detail on how to structure legislation that is being created is attached as Appendix A: Format/style of University legislation. This is an extract of instructions created when legislation was restructured in 2002.
- Where helpful, set out the scope of the legislation and to whom it is applicable;
- Write purposefully and choose words carefully to convey your intended meaning. For example, think about how differently the words "shall" or "may" could be construed;
- Write in short numbered paragraphs so that each main point is separate from the last. This allows each point to be numbered individually and referenced easily;
- Familiarise yourself with University of Oxford Style Guide (updated Hilary term 2016).pdf. These standards are applied by the Gazette Editors for the publication of the draft legislative content in the Gazette.
- Write with your intended audience in mind e.g. if that includes students, are there any special terms that could be hard to understand and could alternative language be found?
- Avoid jargon, acronyms and legalistic words, and always explain any technical terms you have to use;
- Use short words and plain English whenever possible;
- Use neutral pronouns: 'they/them/their', not 'he/she' or 'his/her';
- Ensure consistency of style: in approach to capitalisation;
- Write all numbers in figures rather than words: 1, 2, 3;
- Use a semicolon at the end of each list item and a full stop after the final item;
- Do not include hyperlinks.

Marking up changes

Where legislation has been substantially rewritten, it may sometimes be appropriate to include both the existing and the rewritten versions in the report and to describe changes rather than to mark them up. Before taking this approach, please consult with the GPC secretariat. If this approach is agreed, make sure that the report describes in sufficient detail the changes made.

Unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed, writers should use the same approach as the Gazette, i.e. additions in blue and underlined, deletions in ~~red struckthrough~~. Please note that the underlining and striking through should also apply to any spaces that have been added or removed. It is helpful to get this right when you are drafting, as it is time consuming to correct. Please do not use tracked changes in any documents submitted to GPC.

Please see the following example:

2.1. The ~~Allen & Overy~~ Professor of Corporate Law shall undertake research, lecture and give instruction in Corporate Law.

The striking through of 'Allen & Overy' starts immediately after 'The' because a space is being removed. The underlining of 'undertake research' starts immediately after 'shall' because a space is being added. The additional number '1' immediately follows the struck through '2' as no space is being created.

Further information

Other information on University legislation, including guidance on timing, is published here: [Information on Legislation | Governance and Planning](#) .

Louise Hasler, May 2025

Format/Style of University Legislation Created November 2002

1. **Statutes**

- Statutes are centre-headed in large capitals and have roman numerals.

STATUTE I, II, etc.

- The subject-matter of the statute is stated underneath in capitals.

STATUTE II

MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNIVERSITY

- The principal sub-divisions of Statutes are sections, numbered in arabic.
- Sections may be divided into sub-sections, numbered in brackets in arabic.
- Sub-sections may be divided into paragraphs, lettered in lower-case italics in brackets.

6. (1)

(2)

(3) (a)

(b)

(c)

Sub-headings in bold lower case may be used as an informal guide to the subject-matter which follows.

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14.

15.

etc.

- A statute may be more formally divided into Parts lettered in capitals followed by a brief description in small capitals of the subject-matter of the Part.

STATUTE XI

UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINE

PART A: DEFINITIONS AND CODE OF DISCIPLINE

- Where a statute is divided into Parts the numbered sequence of sections continues through the Parts, and does not start again at the beginning of each Part.
- Cross-references to other provisions within the same statute are made as follows:

'Part C of this statute'

'section 6 above/below'

'sub-section (3) above/below'

'sub-section (3) of section 6 above/below'

'paragraph (b) above/below'

'paragraph (b) of section 6 (3) above/below'.

- The words 'of this statute' may be substituted for 'above/below'.
- Cross-references to provisions of other statutes are made as follows:
 'section 5/Part C of Statute XII', etc.

2. **Regulations**

- Regulations are headed in lower-case bold in the top left-hand corner with:
 - the name of the body or person making them;
 - a number indicating their place in the sequence of regulations made in the calendar year by the body or person who made them;
 - the year in which they were made.

Congregation Regulations 2 of 2002

or

Vice-Chancellor's Regulations 1 of 2002

etc.

- The regulations are given a concise heading in capitals briefly stating their subject-matter.

REGULATIONS RELATING TO CONDUCT IN EXAMINATIONS

- Regulations of Congregation are described as such in the heading.

REGULATIONS OF CONGREGATION FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF CONGREGATION

- The body or person by whom and the date when the regulations were published is printed in lower-case italics below the heading.

Made by Council on 20 March 2002

- The date of publication of any subsequent amendments is shown underneath the date on which the regulations were originally made.

Amended on 6 June and 31 October 2002

- The principal sub-divisions of Regulations are regulations, numbered in arabic.
- Individual regulations may be divided into paragraphs, numbered in brackets in arabic.
- Paragraphs may be divided into sub-paragraphs, lettered in lower-case italics in brackets.

7. (1)

(2)

(3) (a)

(b)

(c)

- Regulations may be more formally divided into numbered Parts printed in bold, followed by a brief description of the subject-matter of the Part.

Part 2

Definitions and Abbreviations

- Where regulations are divided into Parts, each Part has its own internal, decimally numbered sequence.

Part 2

Definitions and Abbreviations

2.1.

2.2.

2.3.

etc.

- Within that framework, side-headings, which can be in bold lower case or italic lower case (or bold italic lower case), may be used as an informal guide to the subject-matter which follows.

Composition (within the Regulations for Divisions)

or

Audit Committee (within Part 2 of the Regulations for Committees reporting directly to Council or one of its Main Committees)

or

Conflict of Interest (within the Financial Regulations)

- Cross-references to other regulations within the same regulations are made as follows:

‘Part 2 of these regulations’

‘regulation 6 above/below’

‘paragraph (3) above/below’

‘paragraph (3) of regulation 6 above/below’

‘(b) above/below’

‘Paragraph (3) (b) of regulation 6 above/below’.

- The words ‘of these regulations’ may be substituted for ‘above/below’.

- Cross-references to provisions of other regulations are made as follows:

‘regulation 5 of the Regulations Relating to the Conduct of Examinations’.