

Complete Policy Title:  
**Department Chairs in the Faculty of  
Health Sciences -Terms of Reference**

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Responsible Executive :  
**Dean and Vice-President (Health  
Sciences)**

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### **Terms of Reference for Department Chairs in the Faculty of Health Sciences**

The role of a Chair is an important one in the governance of the University. The Chair is at a central point in the administration, representing the Department in Faculty and University affairs, and leading and managing the affairs of the Department.

The Chair of a Department is chosen for qualities of intellectual and administrative leadership and academic distinction. An *ad hoc* selection committee (see [Procedures for Selecting Department Chairs and Directors of Schools](#) - approved by Senate May 12, 1975, revised 1994 and 2002) nominates the candidate to the Senate Committee on Appointments. The recommendation is forwarded to the Senate for approval and then to the Board of Governors for final ratification. The Chair will serve for a term of five years, renewable for a second term of up to five years. In extraordinary circumstances the Chair may be appointed for a third consecutive term, or for a term of less than five years.

The Chair is the chief executive officer of the Department and is responsible to the Dean of the Faculty. The Chair or a delegate represents the Department in any matters dealing with Departmental, Faculty or University policy, curriculum, appointments, and nominations to committees. The Chair is responsible for the management of the Department's physical, financial and human resources, ensuring that they are utilized as effectively as possible to meet both the short-term and long-term objectives of the Department, the Faculty and the University.

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In essence, the duties of a Chair are to foster a healthy climate within the Department for the conduct of scholarship, teaching, and service, a climate that is inclusive, in which Department members receive equitable treatment and support, and in which procedures are open and visible. Many of the responsibilities of a Chair are carried out through delegating duties to members of the Department and to support staff. However, final responsibility for the performance of these duties rests with the Chair of the Department, and it is he/she who must provide the necessary leadership, guidance and initiative.

The Chair's responsibilities include:

### **General Administration**

- developing long range and strategic plans and directions which support the mission of the faculty and the University;
- ensuring that all University and Faculty policies are followed within the Department and that all the members of the Department are familiar with those policies;
- establishing an administrative and committee structure for sharing administrative activities with Department faculty and support staff;
- representing Departmental interests at other levels, including government, affiliated teaching hospitals, research institutes and centres, granting agencies, regulatory colleges, professional associations and other university departments;
- participating, as a member of Faculty Executive and Faculty Council, in the development of new policies, in the revision of existing ones, and in monitoring the effectiveness with which these Faculty policies are executed;
- conducting regularly scheduled business meetings in order to communicate and interact effectively with members of the Department.

### **Personnel**

- overseeing the career progress of faculty members, fostering and encouraging their teaching and research programs, and participation (where appropriate) in the development of health service programs of the Faculty, affiliated teaching hospitals and research institutes and centres;
- assisting faculty members in the maintenance of a Curriculum Vitae in accord with the requirements of the Faculty, to include clinical, research, education and administrative contributions, and a dossier of evaluations relating to such activities;
- establishing a Departmental tenure and promotion committee and ensuring that it carries out its duties as specified in clauses 22(a) to 34(c) in Section III, *McMaster University Revised Policy and Regulations With Respect to Academic Appointment, Tenure and Promotion* (1998);
- submitting to the Faculty Dean, when required, reports outlining the activities of members, including consulting and outside professional activities;
- recommending to the Faculty Dean research leaves and leaves of absence without pay;
- recommending to the Faculty Dean merit salary increases;

- participating in the recruitment and orientation of new staff members in accordance with Faculty and University policies and procedures;
- supervising the non-academic staff, ensuring that career development guidance is available to them and maintaining overall departmental responsibility for Human Resources management. The Chair may delegate responsibility for this function to the department manager.

### **Education**

- determining, in cooperation with the appropriate Assistant and Associate Deans of educational programs, which faculty members will teach the courses, give the tutorials and laboratories offered by the Department, supervise graduate students and post-doctoral research fellows in the Department, and assume additional education roles as required by the Faculty;
- providing leadership in relation to curriculum planning, development, and innovation at the undergraduate, graduate, post graduate and continuing education levels;
- ensuring that administrative matters in connection with the Department's / Faculty's graduate, postgraduate and undergraduate education programs are carried out, that the Faculty and University deadlines for the submission of examination copy and curricula revisions and for evaluations of students are met, etc.;
- ensuring, in co-operation with the appropriate Dean, that the teaching and related responsibilities (e.g. safe laboratory procedures) of the Department are carried out and that all educational offerings are carefully planned and effectively taught;
- in collaboration with the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, overseeing the training of graduate student teaching assistants and the definition of the role(s) they are expected to fulfill in the context of the Department's educational objectives;
- ensuring that students are properly advised and counseled;
- general oversight of staff and student relations within the department, and when necessary, participation in the resolution of grievances and disciplinary problems.

### **Budget and Resource Allocation**

- preparing annually, or as requested, a Departmental budget proposal for consideration by the Faculty Dean/Vice-President and the Faculty Finance Committee, for faculty and non-academic positions, as well as other items, and monitoring the spending of the funds allocated;
- ensuring, in collaboration with the Faculty administration, that optimum use is made of the available physical and human resources.

### **Research**

- encouraging a curiosity-driven research environment with the goals of knowledge creation, knowledge transfer, capacity building and the training, mentorship and career progression of graduate students, post graduate students, post doctoral fellows and young investigators;

- fostering and developing research programs in basic and applied science, translational research, health outcomes research, research on determinants of health, incidence and prevalence of disease and/or evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system;
- in collaboration with the Associate Dean Research, supporting the application for and administration of peer reviewed research grants and industry sponsored research contracts;
- overseeing the safe and efficient conduct of research by faculty members within the Department.

### **Additional Responsibilities Specific to Chairs of Clinical Departments**

The responsibilities of the Department and its officers and members and of an Affiliated Teaching Hospital and its officers and Medical Staff are prescribed primarily in three sets of documents: the Faculty Policies and Procedures (particularly those for Tenure and Promotion and for Appointments), the Affiliation Agreement, and the Hospital Medical Staff Bylaws.

The clinical departments include Anaesthesia, Family Medicine, Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Pathology and Molecular Medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, Radiology and Surgery.

The affiliated teaching hospitals have primary responsibility for the provision of clinical care. Physicians providing patient care services in the affiliated teaching hospitals are self-employed, independent contractors for their patient care activities. The accountability for the quality of care rendered by the physicians in the Hospital (who may also hold faculty appointments) is through the Chief of the Hospital Department.

The Chair of a clinical department will assume additional responsibilities to the previously stated duties of a University Department Chair. These include:

1. involvement in the selection of Heads of Section or Chiefs of Departments in the affiliated Teaching Hospitals in accordance with existing affiliation agreements;
2. participation, through the provision of leadership and support at the strategic level, in the establishment of a regional approach to the delivery of health services;
3. provision of advice to the Chiefs of Hospital Departments regarding:
  - i) the Physician Resources Plan for that Hospital in their respective discipline(s);
  - ii) impact analysis;
  - iii) the resources required for the provision of care to patients; and
  - iv) standards of practice within the discipline;
4. participation, in collaboration with the Chief of a Hospital Department, in the recruitment, credentialing and initial appointment of jointly appointed physicians as per

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- the procedures contained in the by-laws of the teaching hospitals and the University Senate regulations;
5. participation, in collaboration with the Chief of a Hospital Department, in the discipline, suspension or and/or termination of jointly appointed physicians as per the procedures contained in the by-laws of the teaching hospitals and the University Senate regulations;
  6. establishment of the mutually agreed academic and clinical responsibilities for individual faculty physicians. These mutually agreed responsibilities are established through a tripartite process involving the Chair of the University Department, the Chief of the Hospital Department, and the individual physician. The Chair's primary role is to define the research and educational responsibilities of the faculty member along with any associated academic and administrative functions. As per the hospital affiliation agreements, the hospital medical staff by-laws and University Senate regulations, these responsibilities shall be reviewed from time to time and may be changed subject to agreement of the Chief of the relevant Hospital Clinical Department, the Chair of the relevant University academic department and the individual physician;
  7. participation, in collaboration with the Chief of a Hospital Department, in the reappointment of Medical Staff in accordance with the relevant Hospital policies;
  8. participation, in collaboration with the Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee, in the reappointment, tenure and promotion of jointly appointed physicians in accordance with the relevant University and Faculty regulations, bylaws and policies;
  9. functioning as Chief Executive Officer for the academic Department and for the clinical practice plan of the Department;
  10. establishment and maintenance of activity-based compensation plans for clinical faculty members;
  11. consulting with the affiliated teaching hospitals regarding University plans, educational programs and services that might reasonably be expected to involve the Hospital, and provide advice to the Hospital on matters concerning Hospital plans, clinical programs and services that might involve the University;
  12. in conjunction with the relevant Assistant Deans, MD Undergraduate and Post Graduate (residency) Education, establishing, maintaining and setting standards for the training of residents, interns, fellows, clinical clerks, psychology interns and other learners in the affiliated teaching hospitals.

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### **Combined Chief/Chair Position**

On an individual, non-precedent setting basis, with prior approval of the Faculty of Health Sciences, an incumbent Chair of the University Department may be recommended to be the Chief of the Hospital Department.

On an individual, non-precedent setting basis, with prior approval of the Hospital, an incumbent Chief of the Hospital Department may be recommended, by the Faculty of Health Sciences, to be Chair of the University Department.

With the mutual agreement of both the University and the Hospital, the position of Chief of a Hospital Department may be combined with the position of Chair of a University Department. In this situation, a simultaneous joint search for the combined position will be conducted by the University and the Hospital. Subsequently, the successful candidate will be recommended to the University for appointment as Chair of the University Department and to the Hospital as Chief of the Hospital Department.

Where a single incumbent holds a combined Chief/Chair position, the incumbent will perform the duties of a Hospital Department Chief and as such, be accountable to the Hospital for this role. The incumbent will also perform the duties of a University Department Chair and additional responsibilities specific to chairs of clinical departments and be accountable to the University for this role.