

Physics Department Standing Committees

11/30/2022

The Department Chair appoints the members of each standing committee and selects a committee chair. Changes to the descriptions of the standing committees are considered by vote of the DAC or department voting faculty as needed. In addition, the Chair may create ad hoc committees as required to address specific issues.

1. Technical Operations Committee

- a) The Technical Operations Committee (TOC) sets general policy concerning the operation of the support facilities for experimental research, and the manner of their use by members of the department.
- b) The responsibility of this committee is to make sure that these facilities provide services of the variety and quality required by the various experimental groups.
- c) The TOC liaises with the supervisors of the various facilities. These supervisors may be asked to attend meetings as required.

2. Space and Safety Committee

- a) The Space and Safety Committee (SSC) supervises allocation and maintenance of the space assigned to the members of the Department of Physics.
- b) The Department Chair consults with the SSC on any negotiations with other departments or University entities concerning the allocation of space to the Department of Physics.
- c) The SSC liaises with the Department's technical staff and Physical Plant concerning building-related safety issues.

3. Computer Committee

- a) The Computer Committee oversees departmental computer policies, including the purchase of departmental servers, printers and other hardware.
- b) The Computer Committee includes the Director of Computing.

4. Graduate Students' Affairs Committee

- a) The Graduate Student Affairs Committee (GSAC) oversees the graduate program inside the Department of Physics.
- b) The GSAC is chaired by the Graduate Coordinator. The committee comprises several faculty members together with a student representative who is elected by the graduate students. The student representative takes part in those discussions that involve policies, but not those that involve individual students.
- c) The GSAC administers and interprets the Department's policies on graduate students. This includes ensuring that students perform satisfactorily in the graduate core courses and take their preliminary oral examinations in a timely manner. The GSAC

advises the Department Chair on matters concerning the financial support of graduate students.

- d) The GSAC also oversees the graduate curriculum. This includes arranging for proper course sequencing, studying and making recommendations concerning new courses, and coordinating textbook adoption with the aid of the assigned instructors.

5. Preliminary Exam Committee

- a) The Preliminary Exam Committee is responsible for setting and grading the Department's graduate preliminary examination, and issuing a recommendation to the faculty as to whether each candidate passes or fails the exam. The final decision concerning all passes and fails is made by vote at a faculty meeting.
- b) Complete rules governing the administration of the preliminary exam are posted on the Department's website as part of the graduate student information.

6. Graduate Recruitment and Admissions Committee

- a) The Graduate Recruitment and Admissions Committee (GRAC) makes recommendations to the Department Chair on the selection and initial support of the incoming class of graduate students.
- b) The GRAC handles the Department's publications informing potential applicants about the graduate program and admissions procedures.

7. Advisory Committee on Teaching

- a) The Advisory Committee on Teaching (ACT) advises the Department Chair on the teaching assignments given to faculty.
- b) Every Spring, the ACT polls faculty members as to their teaching preferences, and produces a plan of assignments for the following academic year.
- c) The membership of the ACT includes both the Undergraduate Coordinator and the Graduate Coordinator.

8. Undergraduate Affairs Committee

- a) The Undergraduate Affairs Committee (UAC) oversees the undergraduate degree program.
- b) The UAC is chaired by the Undergraduate Coordinator.
- c) The UAC is responsible for arranging for proper course sequencing, studying and making recommendations concerning new courses, and coordinating textbook adoption with the aid of the assigned instructors.
- d) The UAC is also responsible for communicating to students the Department requirements for undergraduate programs, including degree requirements.

9. Peer Evaluation of Teaching Committee

- a) The Peer Evaluation of Teaching Committee (PETC) acts for the Department Chair in evaluating the teaching performance of faculty in the Department.
- b) At the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters, the PETC works with the Department Chair to compile a list of faculty whose teaching is to be peer-evaluated during the semester. This compilation takes into consideration the tenure status of each faculty member, the period of time since the last peer evaluation, and the likelihood that the faculty member will be a candidate for a promotion or award in the near future. The list also includes any faculty member who specifically requests a peer evaluation.
- c) Each evaluation normally includes observation by two members of the PETC, who visit classes taught by the teacher. The teacher may suggest appropriate or preferred dates and times for these visits. The PETC notifies the teacher of the planned visitation dates and times, in accordance with university rules and guidelines.
- d) Following the classroom visits, the PETC members produce a written report summarizing their observations and giving their assessment of other aspects of the teacher's performance related to the course. These aspects may include (but are not limited to) the syllabus, website, textbook, assignments, office hours, and availability.
- e) The PETC provides its report to the faculty member within two weeks of the final classroom visit. The faculty member then has seven days to review and discuss the report and, if desired, prepare a written reply. The written report and any reply are delivered to the Chair, who adds these documents to the faculty member's evaluation file.
- f) Notwithstanding paragraphs a), c), and d) above, if the Chair has information that generates immediate concern about the conduct of a class, the Chair or members of the PETC may visit and observe the class at any time. A written report of the visit is generated as in paragraphs e) and f) above.