Department of History and Philosophy of Science Departmental Bylaws

These by-laws were amended by the HPS faculty on October 30 2026 and now constitute the full by-laws of the HPS Department, superseding all previous documents.

1. Introduction

This document comprises the by-laws for the department of History and Philosophy of Science within the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh.

In this document, 'Pitt' refers to the University of Pittsburgh, 'DSAS' refers to the Dietrich School of Arts and Science within Pitt, 'the Department' refers to the Department of History and Philosophy of Science within DSAS, 'the Chair' or 'the HPS Chair' refers to the Chair of that department, and 'HPS' refers to History and Philosophy of Science. 'Faculty' shall be interpreted to mean the primary faculty of HPS unless explicitly stated otherwise.

No version of this document shall have effect until approved by and deposited with DSAS and if there is any unclarity as to the current version of this document, the latest version thus approved and deposited shall be authoritative.

Notwithstanding any other statement in this document, the business of the Department shall at all times be conducted in accordance with the by-laws of DSAS and of Pitt, and with applicable local, state, and federal law.

2. Mission Statement

2.1 Preamble

While science represents our best means of gaining knowledge about the world, its foundational methods, standards, and content have changed over time, sometimes profoundly. Interdisciplinary integration of philosophical and historical analysis that is deeply engaged with scientific ideas and practices is crucial for understanding the changing character of science and its role in society.

2.2 Mission

The Mission of the History and Philosophy of Science Department is to create and communicate greater understanding of science as an intellectual and social enterprise through critical philosophical and historical reflection, with a priority on methodologies that integrate philosophy, history and a deep engagement with scientific ideas and practices.

2.3 Means

The Department accomplishes this mission through several means:

For undergraduate students, we offer a major and certificate program that provides a unique array of interdisciplinary courses that place science in philosophical and historical perspective. We also offer students who are pursuing STEM careers critical and contextual perspectives on the sciences they study.

For graduate students, we offer a doctoral program that rigorously trains scholars in an integrated approach to history and philosophy of science, allowing them to become leaders in defining the questions and methods that structure disciplinary and interdisciplinary investigations of science.

Our department undertakes multidisciplinary engagement at the highest standards of research, integrating history, philosophy, and science, which enables our faculty to produce consistently high-quality research with international impact.

Members of the HPS Department offer a critical perspective on science, technology and medicine for various communities, including scholarly and scientific communities and the general public, by engaging with others across the academy and beyond.

3. Primary Faculty

3.1 Definitions

Primary faculty members are persons with primary (tenured or tenure stream and appointment stream) full-time continuing appointments in History and Philosophy of Science. Part-time and visiting faculty in the Department are not primary faculty members and do not vote on faculty decisions but may be invited to participate in faculty discussions at the discretion of the Chair.

3.2 Hiring of Primary Faculty

Recommendations for the hiring of tenured or tenure-stream faculty shall be made on the basis of a vote of all tenured or tenure-stream faculty. Tenured or tenure-stream faculty members unable to attend meetings to discuss possible hirings shall nonetheless be permitted to vote. Appointment stream faculty and graduate students shall be consulted as to any such recommendation but shall not receive a vote.

Recommendations for the hiring of appointment stream faculty shall be made on the basis of a vote of all faculty. Faculty members unable to attend meetings to discuss possible hirings shall nonetheless be permitted to vote. Graduate students shall be consulted as to any such recommendation but shall not receive a vote.

Any decisions by the faculty to consider longlists or shortlists of possible applicants shall be made on the same voting basis as final hiring recommendations, i.e., for tenure / tenure-stream hires, the final decision is made by the tenured/tenure-stream faculty, and for appointment-stream hires, the final decision is made by the full faculty.

Ahead of any proposed consideration of new primary faculty hires, the department shall formulate or update a policy (see section 5) on the processes by which non-voting members of the department shall be consulted and votes shall be aggregated.

4. Secondary and Adjunct Faculty

4.1 Secondary Faculty

Secondary faculty members are persons with primary appointments in other Pitt departments who by training and inclination are primarily philosophers or historians of science and who are fully qualified for primary membership in this department.

Secondary faculty members are expected:

- to play an active role in the life of the department (such as by participating in faculty colloquia, faculty social events, and the life of the Center for Philosophy of Science);
- to periodically teach classes that would be of interest to HPS undergraduate or graduate students (whether or not formally listed or cross-listed);
- if they are graduate faculty, to work from time to time with HPS graduate students, such as by acting as a member of a dissertation or prospectus committee. In this capacity secondary faculty members

are treated as if they were primary faculty members for the purposes of constituting a dissertation committee, except that they cannot be the sole chair of a dissertation committee; they can, however, co-chair a dissertation committee jointly with a primary faculty member.

The Chair shall consult secondary faculty on hiring decisions and other department business where they have appropriate expertise, but they shall have no formal decision-making power in the department.

4.2 Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct faculty members are persons whose primary employment is outside a Pitt academic unit but who are qualified for membership in the department, and who perform on a part-time or irregular basis duties that would normally be carried out by primary or secondary members of the department.

Adjunct faculty members are expected to play an active role in the life of the department (such as by participating in faculty colloquia, faculty social events, and the life of the Center for Philosophy of Science).

The chair shall consult adjunct faculty on hiring decisions and other department business where they have appropriate expertise, but they shall have no formal decision-making power in the department.

4.3 Appointment of secondary and adjunct faculty

Any qualified person can be nominated for secondary or adjunct membership by any two primary faculty members. Any such nomination shall be circulated to the primary faculty along with any relevant supporting information, and the nomination is then discussed and voted upon at a faculty meeting. That meeting must be held at least one week after this circulation unless there is unanimous agreement by those present that it can be held sooner.

Any nomination is approved by a simple majority of votes cast (including absentee votes cast by eligible faculty members). Where a nomination is approved, the Chair shall then follow the appointment process for secondary or adjunct faculty specified by Pitt and DSAS.

Secondary and adjunct faculty membership is normally for three years but can be shorter if the faculty wishes. Secondary and adjunct faculty membership can be renewed any number of times; the procedure for faculty decisions on renewal is the same as for initial appointments.

5. Policies

5.1 Policy Framework

The Department will from time to time adopt policies that govern its business. These policies are enacted by meetings of the faculty as described in section 7 and will govern the business of the department except insofar as they contradict these Bylaws or the Bylaws of Pitt or DSAS. Where a policy exclusively concerns graduate education, policies are instead determined by the Graduate Committee (section 8). Conflicts between policies will be resolved by the Chair in the first instance, pending adjustment of policies to remove the conflict.

The Chair will maintain a list of policies and ensure that they are made available to all faculty members. In case of unclarity, the latest policy held by the Chair shall be taken to be the official policy, except where DSAS or Pitt requires the policy to be held at a higher level, in which case the latest policy thus held shall be taken to be the official policy.

5.2 Required Policies

The Department will at all times have in place policies concerning the following matters:

- Tenure and promotion
- The review of faculty and graduate teaching

- Faculty workload
- Provision of mentorship to faculty and graduate students

5.3 The Graduate Handbook

The department will adopt and maintain a list of policies governing graduate study (the 'graduate handbook'). This will be reviewed and updated by the Graduate Committee and is treated as any other policy. The Graduate Handbook will be the complete statement of binding policies governing graduate study (within the broader framework of Pitt and DSAS policy) and no other policy will be adopted that purports to bind graduate students.

5.4 University rules for policies

Where it is a DSAS or Pitt requirement that a policy concerning a given matter is approved at a level above the Department, the Chair shall present any agreed policy for approval and it shall not govern Department business until it is approved.

6. Faculty Meetings

6.1 Logistics

Faculty meetings are held at least once per term, and are arranged by the Chair; at least seven days notice must be given for any faculty meeting.

All primary faculty members are invited to attend faculty meetings. The graduate representative (see section 8.7) is normally invited to faculty meetings, but the chair may designate some parts of faculty meetings (e.g., those requiring discussion of individuals) as reserved business. Other persons may be invited to attend parts of a faculty meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

The agenda for faculty meetings is determined by the Chair. Any primary faculty member may require a matter to be included on the agenda, provided that they so inform the Chair at least 1 week before the meeting. Any secondary or adjunct faculty member, graduate student, staff member, or other member of the Department may request that the Chair include an item on the agenda.

Faculty who are unable to attend a faculty meeting may communicate their views on any matter to the Chair, who shall communicate these views to those present at the meeting.

6.2 Quorum and Voting

There must be a quorum present at the Department Meeting in order to pass resolutions. A quorum is defined as the majority of the active primary faculty eligible to vote in that meeting plus one, where 'active primary faculty' are those primary faculty not on sabbatical leave or otherwise fully relieved of service responsibilities during this term.

Amendments to these Bylaws require the approval of a majority of the active primary faculty of the Department. All other resolutions of the faculty, including adoption of faculty policies, requires a majority of those faculty members present to approve. In general, substantive matters to be voted on should be communicated to the primary faculty at least one week prior to the faculty meeting; the Chair shall resolve ambiguous cases.

In general, votes are taken by a simple show of hands during a meeting. For final hiring decisions, for the appointment of the Chair, and for any decision where at least one primary faculty member requests it, votes are instead taken by anonymous written ballot subsequent to the meeting.

In all cases, absentee votes from faculty members unable to attend a meeting will be accepted so long as they are submitted in writing to the Chair prior to the deadline for the vote, or prior to the meeting if a vote is to be taken at the meeting.

6.3 Minutes

The Chair will take minutes of each faculty meeting, or arrange that they are taken.

At the discretion of the Chair, some parts of the minutes may be declared confidential. These minutes will not be circulated, but the Chair will arrange for them to be viewed by any primary faculty member who requests it, provided that the faculty member was at that time entitled to attend the meeting.

With the exception of those parts declared confidential, the minutes will be circulated to all primary faculty within one week of a meeting, and will be deemed approved one week after circulation unless any concerns are raised.

7. The Chair

7.1 Responsibilities

The Chair is responsible for the management of the primary faculty, the Department, the educational programs of the Department, and the Department's operating budget and other discretionary funds, doing so in concert with the faculty and in accordance with the principles of unit governance established by DSAS and Pitt.

The specific responsibilities of the Chair shall include:

- In consultation with the primary faculty, assigning teaching to primary faculty members.
- In consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Graduate Studies, assigning teaching to graduate teaching fellows, graduate teaching assistants, and any other persons teaching for the Department.
- Assigning administrative roles, mentorships, committee memberships and other service tasks to the primary faculty, in accordance with the workload policy.
- Administering the tenure and promotion process for all primary faculty members (except that in case the Chair is ineligible to vote in a given tenure or promotion process, the Chair shall designate an eligible Faculty member to administer the appropriate part of the process).
- Overseeing the work of graduate students in their capacity as undergraduate teachers and Pitt employees.
- Preparing the annual reports of each primary faculty member, with the exception of Distinguished faculty members and others whose reporting line is not to the Chair.
- Overseeing the operating budget and other discretionary funds of the Department.
- Overseeing the allocation and maintenance of the physical plant and resources of the department, including office space and office equipment.
- Ensuring that the department operates in accordance with Pitt and DSAS requirements and applicable law.
- Any other tasks required by the DSAS statement of the Chair's responsibilities.

7.2 Appointment

During the Spring term preceding the Chair's final year of office, or as soon as possible in the event of the Chair ending their term unexpectedly, one faculty member shall be selected by the Chair to consult the Department about candidates for a chair. That faculty member should individually canvass the views of all primary faculty as to who would be a suitable candidate for Chair, and should arrange a process by which other members of the Department can provide input into their views on possible candidates. Candidates for Chair should normally be tenured members of the primary faculty.

Once potential candidates for Chair are identified, the faculty member should communicate with those candidates to determine their willingness to stand, and should then convey this information to the outgoing

Chair in good time for a discussion in a faculty meeting during the Spring term preceding the Chair's final year of office, or as soon as feasible in the event of the Chair ending their term unexpectedly.

The outgoing Chair shall schedule a discussion and vote of the faculty on candidates for Chair. Candidates shall recuse themselves from the discussion and vote; if the outgoing Chair is a candidate, they shall nominate another faculty member to chair the discussion. The vote shall be carried by anonymous written ballot.

As per University policy, the outgoing Chair shall communicate the results of the faculty vote, along with their own recommendation for the new Chair, to the Dean of DSAS, who has final authority to appoint the new Chair.

The Chair normally serves a 3 year term though in special circumstances the appointment could be for a shorter period. A person can serve any number of times as Chair; a proposed reappointment is treated as a new candidacy.

8. Other Officers

8.1 General

Appointments of faculty officers, with the exception of the Graduate Representative, are made by the Chair prior to the beginning of each academic year, after consultation with the faculty members concerned. The faculty officers shall include at least those identified below; the Chair may create other faculty offices on a one-off or indefinite basis where necessary, but shall where possible consult the primary faculty before doing so.

Officers are appointed for a 1-year period unless otherwise noted, and can be renewed any number of times. Where an office is normally held for longer than one year, the Chair may nonetheless reallocate that office prior to the end of the officer's term, where they deem it necessary for the proper conduct of Faculty business.

8.2 Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)

The DGS, in consultation with the Chair and as per DSAS and Pitt regulations, is responsible for the administration of the department's graduate education program.

The DGS acts as advisor to all graduate students who have not formed their dissertation committees, and in that capacity meets with each advised student at least once per term to discuss their progress.

The DGS administers and chairs an annual meeting of the Graduate Committee at which each graduate student's progress is evaluated and discussed, and on the basis of that evaluation prepares an annual letter to each advised student; these letters are reviewed and co-signed by the Chair prior to issuing them to each student.

The DGS administers any other assessments required of graduate student prior to the defense of their prospectus, or arranges for those assessments to be administered by others.

The DGS is not responsible for the supervision of graduate students in their capacity as employees of Pitt (that responsibility lies with the Chair).

The DGS normally serves for a 3-year term.

8.3 Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS)

The DUGS, in consultation with the Chair and as per DSAS and Pitt regulations, is responsible for the administration of the department's undergraduate education program. In consultation with the Chair, the DUGS will determine the agenda for meetings of the Undergraduate Committee (section 9.2) and take responsibility for the implementation of its decisions. The DUGS also has overall responsibility for the scheduling of teaching. The DUGS normally serves for a 3-year term.

8.4 Admissions Director

The Admissions Director, in consultation with the Chair and in accordance with the department's agreed admissions policy, oversees the process for admission of graduate students to the department. The Admissions Director is responsible for communicating with Pitt staff and with applicants themselves about any relevant aspects of the admissions process and for arranging the process by which department faculty consult and decide on admissions decisions. The Admissions Director also answers any communications from potential applicants, or arranges for them to be answered by others.

The Admissions Director normally serves for a 3-year term.

8.5 Career Outcomes Director (CoD)

The CoD is responsible for administering the department's career outcome policy, as specified in the Graduate Handbook and any other statements of departmental policy. In particular, the CoD, in consultation with the completing student's dissertation director, should assist the completing student in all phases of preparation for the job market. This will normally include communicating with candidates about suitable job openings, reviewing candidates' job application materials and supporting letters from faculty, and organizing practice job interviews and talks.

8.6 Practicum Director

The Practicum Director is responsible for organizing and running instructional sessions during the academic year for new teaching assistants and independent instructors to prepare them specifically for teaching in HPS, in accordance with any agreed departmental policies.

8.7 Graduate Representative

The Graduate Representative shall be a graduate student in the department in good academic standing. Selection of the graduate representative shall be made by the graduate students through whatever collective process they decide upon. In the event of ambiguity as to this process, the Chair shall select the Graduate Representative with a view towards best reflecting the collective preferences of the graduate students.

9. Departmental Committees

9.1 General

The membership of departmental committees is determined by the Chair. Departmental committees shall include at least those mentioned below, and their membership shall conform to the statements below except where in the Chair's judgement this is administratively infeasible. The Chair may create other committees on a year-by-year basis, but should where feasible consult with the faculty before doing so.

The Chair shall designate one faculty member on each committee to act as chair of that committee. If there is ambiguity as to the chair of a committee, this priority order shall be followed: the Chair, if they are a member of the committee, is assumed to be the chair of the committee; otherwise, the committee chair is determined by seniority (that is, with full Professors more senior than Associate Professors and Associate Professors more senior than Assistant Professors, with ties broken by time In the department).

The schedule for meetings of the committee is the responsibility of the committee chair, subject to any requirements below as to how frequently the committee should meet.

The chair of the committee is responsible for taking minutes of that committee (or arranging for them to be taken by someone else), for communicating them to the members of the committee to check that they are a true record, and for communicating the agreed minutes to the Chair, who will ensure that they are available to all faculty members.

The Chair may also create informal working groups on a year-by-year basis; these need not take formal minutes, but have no decision-making power and can only report their deliberations to the Faculty.

For those circumstances where a departmental committee is empowered to make decisions (and not just to make recommendations to the full faculty) the committee must be quorate to do so; a committee is quorate if half of its active members plus one are present, where 'active member' is defined as for full Faculty meetings (section 6.2).

9.2 Undergraduate Committee

The Undergraduate Committee shall comprise:

- The Chair and the Director of Undergraduate Studies, *ex officio*
- At least two appointment-stream faculty members
- At least two tenured or tenure-stream faculty members

The Undergraduate Committee is responsible for

- Making decisions about the creation of new courses
- Making decisions about minor adjustments to the rules for the department's certificates and majors
- Making recommendations to the faculty about larger changes to the undergraduate program
- Advising the Chair and the DUGS on any other issues arising with the undergraduate program, and assisting them in addressing those issues

The Undergraduate Committee is not responsible for any issues that arise involving individual students or individual instructors; these shall be handled by the Chair in consultation with other relevant persons.

The Undergraduate Committee shall meet at least once per term.

9.3 Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee shall comprise

- all tenured and tenure-stream faculty members.
- The Chair *ex officio* in the exceptional circumstance where they are not a tenured or tenure-stream faculty member

The Graduate Committee is responsible for the graduate program and for the progress of individual graduate students. It has full decision-making power on any matter exclusively concerning the graduate program, and on any issue arising for individual graduate students in their studies, within the overall framework of departmental, DSAS, and Pitt policy.

The Graduate Committee shall meet at least once per term, and shall meet yearly to individually review the process of all current graduate students. The Graduate Representative will be invited to attend meetings of the Graduate Committee where unreserved business is discussed, but is not a formal member of the committee.

9.4 Admissions Committee

The Admissions Committee shall comprise:

- the Admissions Director and Chair, *ex officio*
- one other member of the tenured/tenure-stream faculty

It does not normally have formal meetings and exists to advise the Admissions Director on any issues that arise during the graduate admissions process.

9.5 Planning and Budget Committee

The Planning and Budget Committee shall comprise all primary faculty members, along with the Chair in the exceptional circumstance where they are not a primary faculty member. It has responsibility for major planning and budgetary decisions. Since the committee comprises the whole faculty, it does not normally meet separately, and conducts its business as part of normal Faculty meetings.

9.6 Climate Committee

The Climate Committee shall comprise:

- at least three faculty members, to include where possible tenured, tenure-stream, and appointment-stream faculty.
- The Graduate Representative, or another graduate student designated by them, *ex officio*

The chair of the Climate Committee may choose to invite other persons (e.g. staff members) to attend meetings of the Committee. The Chair should not normally be a member of the Committee, but the Committee might choose to invite the Chair to some of their meetings.

The Climate Committee is charged with making recommendations towards the goal of making the department an inclusive, welcoming environment for all its members, including faculty of all categories, graduate and undergraduate students, and staff. Any member of the department may suggest items to be discussed at meetings of the Committee to its chair.

The Climate Committee, in consultation with the department Chair, shall arrange for all members of the department to be surveyed at least annually to evaluate the departmental culture and climate. The committee should meet, or be consulted informally by its chair, at least once per year to decide on the format for that survey, and should meet after the survey is conducted to discuss its findings and any recommendations to the faculty or to the Chair.

9.7 Workload Committee

The Workload Committee shall comprise:

- The Chair, *ex officio*
- At least three faculty members, to include where possible both tenured/tenure-stream faculty and appointment-stream faculty

The Workload Committee is responsible for reviewing the department's workload policy and making any recommendations for changes to the faculty (it is not empowered to enact changes unilaterally). The committee meets as required by the Chair or on the request of any Committee member.