

Responsibilities of Academic Departmental Leaders at Dalhousie

Adopted by Deans Council, January 29, 2013

The Chair, Head or Director (“Chair”) is the academic leader and chief administrator of the Department or School (“Department”). The Chair is responsible for departmental planning, development and functioning including ensuring high quality research, teaching and administration. The Chair plays a critical role in the University mission.

The work of the Chair must always be carried out collegially and in a manner that is consistent with the goals of the Faculty and Dalhousie University (‘University’).

The Chair reports to the Dean of the Faculty. The Chair represents the unit in all relations with the Faculty, the University, and the external community.

The Chair should access support as needed from within the Faculty and the University. A list of University resources can be found on the Leaders’ Toolkit site.

The Chair’s responsibilities are outlined below under the headings ‘Academic Leadership’ and ‘Administrative Leadership.’

Academic Leadership

Strong academic leadership is critically important to the University’s excellence. As the academic leader of the Department, the Chair:

1. Communicates and promotes the values of the University, Faculty and Department.
2. Remains active in teaching and fosters excellence in teaching at the departmental level through:
 - a. Curriculum planning and development,
 - b. Mentorship, and
 - c. Ensuring that the teaching responsibilities of the academic unit are planned and evaluated.
3. Remains active in research, scholarly, artistic and/or professional activity as appropriate to the discipline and fosters excellence at the departmental level through:
 - a. Facilitating the creative activities of all academic staff,

- b. Mentorship, and
 - c. Maintaining appropriate balance in workload assignment to recognize faculty colleagues' creative activity.
4. Works collaboratively with the Dean's office and other offices of the University.
 5. Remains current with the external environment to ensure curricula and research programs remain relevant.
 6. Represents the Department within the Faculty and the University, and maintains relationships with appropriate external stakeholders (e.g. alumni, professional bodies, funding agencies, governmental supports, etc.).
 7. Supports the career development of departmental colleagues, particularly as relates to reappointment, tenure, promotion, and successful transition to retirement.
 8. Seeks to engage faculty colleagues in the activities of the Department, Faculty and University.
 9. Models and promotes collegial relationships within the unit and manages interpersonal conflict where it arises.
 10. Ensures that members have appropriate opportunity to provide input into academic decisions affecting the Department.
 11. Leads the Department in Student Engagement including:
 - a. Creating a learning environment that helps to retain students,
 - b. Ensuring appropriate academic advising, and
 - c. Collaborating with the Registrar's Office and other University colleagues to support student recruitment.

IF NECESSARY FOR ACCREDITATION:

12. Ensures compliance with accreditation policies and procedures and leads planning and preparation for accreditation processes.

Administrative Leadership

The effective functioning of the Department requires strong administrative leadership. As the chief administrator of the department, the Chair:

Organizational Management

1. Prepares the Department's strategic plan, working with Department colleagues, in line with the strategic plans of the Faculty and University.

2. Chairs regular departmental meetings in a manner that respects the principle of collegiality.
3. Regarding existing University, Faculty and Departmental policies and practices as well as applicable laws and regulations (e.g. Copyright Act) the Chair must:
 - a. Remain current on their existence and application,
 - b. Communicate and encourage compliance within the Department , and
 - c. Advocate for changes when needed.
4. Leads succession planning by identifying and preparing individuals who have the potential to serve in leadership positions.

Human Resource Management

1. Becomes and remains familiar with all employee handbooks and Collective Agreements (staff and faculty) that have application to employees in the Department.
2. Subject to applicable employee handbooks and Collective Agreements, manages staff and faculty in the Department including:
 - a. Workforce planning
 - b. Recruitment and hiring management
 - c. Academic workload assignments
 - d. Leave management
 - e. Orientation for new academic employees
 - f. Career advising and professional development
 - g. Performance management
3. Liaises with the University supports for advice when necessary.

Financial & Resource Management

1. Prepares the Departmental budget in collaboration with the Dean.
2. Ensures the efficient and equitable uses of Departmental financial resources.
3. Allocates space and administrative support for Departmental use.
4. Ensures that employees have the tools required to perform their work.
5. Ensures that the proper procedures are followed to provide a safe working environment.