

RTÉ Audience Council

Standing Orders

The Council adopted the following revised Standing Orders on 15 December 2011

1. Composition and Structure of the Audience Council

- 1.1 In accordance with Section 96 (6) of the Broadcasting Act 2009, the corporation shall appoint a member of its Audience Council to be Chairperson of it. The Chairperson may at any time resign his/her position by letters sent to the chairperson of the RTÉ Board, and the resignation shall take effect at the commencement of the next meeting of the Council, after the Council has been informed by the chairperson of the RTÉ Board.
- 1.2 RTÉ will provide a designated Secretary to the Council.
- 1.3 In accordance with Section 96(8) of the Broadcasting Act 2009, a member of the Council may at any time, by notice in writing to the corporation, resign his or her membership.

2. Meetings of the Audience Council

- 2.1 The Council shall hold not less than five meetings in each year.
- 2.2 The Chairperson shall determine the beginning and end time, venue and agenda for such meetings, and the order in which each item of business on the agenda is dealt with at any particular meeting. If the Chairperson is not present or if the office of Chairperson is vacant, the members of the Council who are present shall choose one of their number to be chairperson of the meeting.
- 2.3 The quorum for Council meetings shall be 8 members.
- 2.4 Council members who miss 3 meetings of the Council in any one year or three consecutive meetings spread over two years shall automatically cease to be members of the Council, unless their non-attendance may be judged to have been due to exceptional extenuating circumstances. The Council will determine, in the first instance, the case for admitting such exceptional circumstances; but the RTÉ Board shall be the final arbiter of all such cases.

- 2.5 When a permanent vacancy arises amongst the membership of the Council the RTÉ Board may appoint a new member to fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the Council's term of office.
- 2.6 The Council may establish Sub-Committees to deal with particular matters or issues where the Council may consider that the assistance of such sub-committees would benefit the workings of the Council.
- 2.7 At least 9 calendar days before a Council meeting a notice shall be sent to members by post or e-mail to the designated address provided by the member.
- 2.8 The notice shall normally contain the Communiqué of the previous meeting, details of time and venue of the meeting, and an agenda stating the business to be transacted at the meeting.
- 2.9 Copies of all reports and other documents referred to or to be read with the agenda will normally be circulated to members via post or e-mail.
- 2.10 All documents, excluding Communiqués, relating to the Council business shall be confidential to members of the Council, the RTÉ Board and RTÉ staff, save as provided for by the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act.
- 2.11 Notice of a member's request to have an item included in the agenda for a meeting shall reach the Secretary by post, email, or telephone 15 days prior to the date of the meeting.
- 2.12 An item on the agenda as sent to the members may not be removed without the consent of the Chairperson.
- 2.13 In exceptional circumstances, fundamental to the core relationship between RTÉ and its audience, an extraordinary meeting of the Council may be convened, on condition that such a meeting be formally requested by not fewer than eight members of the Council.

3. Decisions of the Audience Council

- 3.1 The normal practice shall be to record only the decisions in the Communiqués.
- 3.2 Council members' names shall not be recorded in the Communiqués unless by special request. Council members' names shall be on the attendance and shall be recorded should there be a formal vote.
- 3.3 The normal practice of the Council shall be to reach decisions by consensus.

- 3.4 Where a decision has been taken, and a member wishes to have that decision reversed at a subsequent meeting, a 2/3 majority of those present shall be necessary to reverse the decision.
- 3.5 The Communiqués of the Council meetings shall be posted on the Council's web section on www.RTE.ie and be archived by the Secretary and available via post or e-mail for inspection or consultation by Council members at all reasonable times.
- 3.6 At the beginning of each meeting, the Communiqué will be taken as read, considered and approved by that meeting, with or without amendment. Until approved, no discussion shall be allowed on the Communiqué except as to their accuracy. The Communiqué so approved shall then be deemed to be a true record of the proceedings to which they relate, and will be signed by the Chairperson.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 3.6, the Chairperson may at his or her discretion ask the Council to approve a Communiqué at the same meeting at which a decision is taken.

- 3.7 Except as agreed otherwise, the Council shall normally communicate its decisions to interested parties via the Secretary to the Council. The formal Council position on any matter may be disclosed to the media only by the Chairperson or Secretary of the Council, or a member of the Council or RTÉ staff so authorised by either of them (save as provided for by the Freedom of Information Act).

4. Attendance of RTÉ staff at the Audience Council

- 4.1 The Secretary to the Council shall normally attend all meetings of the Council.
- 4.2 The Chairperson may request members of RTÉ staff to attend Council meetings to give specialist information or advice, or to participate in the discussion.
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