Academic Board Terms of Reference

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose

(1) The Academic Board is the primary decision-making body in Hibernia College for all academic matters.

Status of the Academic Board

(2) The Academic Board fulfils the regulatory requirement to establish an appropriate academic governance model. It is essential to the effective functioning of the College, and its existence and effectiveness is essential to maintain the College's approval to provide programmes of higher education leading to awards of the Irish State.

Section 2 - Composition and Membership

(3) The composition and membership of the Academic Board is as follows:

a. Ex officio members

    i. Academic Dean
    ii. Programme Directors
    iii. Head of Digital Learning
    iv. Lecturer of Research
    v. Head of Student Affairs
    vi. Digital Learning Manager
    vii. Registrar
    viii. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager

b. Chairperson

    i. The Academic Dean is the ex officio Chairperson.

c. Vice Chairperson

    i. The Academic Board elects a Vice Chairperson from amongst its members who shall act as vice Chairperson for a two-year period.

d. External members/appointed members

    i. There are no external members.

e. Nominated members

    i. There are no nominated members.

f. Elected members

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i. Two student representatives per programme, elected by registered students on that programme

ii. One research representative elected by research-active Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and doctoral candidates

iii. Two Faculty representatives elected by Faculty

iv. Four Adjunct Faculty representatives elected by Adjunct Faculty

v. One Staff representative elected by administrative staff and managers (excluding all ex officio members and Faculty)

g. Co-opted members

i. The Chairperson may, with the support of the majority of the members of the Board meeting at an ordinary meeting of the Board, co-opt a member of the College or an external party to the Board for a period of one year, where such a co-option assists in the discharge of the responsibilities of the Board.

ii. Normally, a maximum of two persons may be co-opted to the Board at any one point in time.

h. In attendance - by invitation

i. The Chairperson may invite an external party deemed relevant to the business of a meeting.

i. In attendance – secretarial

i. Normally, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager or a senior member of the Department of the Registrar, acts as ex officio secretary to the Academic Board.

Section 3 - Terms of Reference

Part A - Functions and Responsibilities of the Academic Board

(4) The Academic Board carries out the following responsibilities:

a. Academic Management, Governance and Quality Assurance

i. Establishes the principles underpinning quality in Hibernia and approves the Quality Framework

ii. Ensures that a fit-for-purpose academic administration system is in place and applied consistently to the entire student experience and lifecycle

iii. Considers the development, management and enhancement of all academic affairs and advises the Executive Management Team (EMT) of their resource requirements

iv. Approves the academic management and governance and quality assurance arrangements in any Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement established by the College

b. Academic Programmes

i. Approves and periodically reviews programmes and maintains oversight of all stages of their development and provision

ii. Ensures that appropriate academic standards are consistently adopted, applied and maintained in academic programmes, partnerships and all educational arrangements, and, where relevant, effectively incorporates professional standards and codes of practice

iii. Maintains oversight of, and ensures effective implementation of, due diligence processes associated with partnerships and joint programmes

c. Assessment and Board of Examiners

i. Has overall responsibility for summative assessment as delegated to the Board of Examiners. Where the need arises, the Academic Board may fulfil the role of the Board of Examiners to make summative assessment decisions.

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ii. Approves the appointment and removal of External Examiners

d. Sub-Committees

    i. Approves the establishment of ad hoc committees and panels (and their terms of reference) to deal with specific academic issues e.g. reviews, appeals and disciplinary matters

    ii. Establishes and approves the terms of reference of various subcommittees including their decision-making powers

    iii. May delegate some decision-making authority and responsibility to its subcommittees, or other appropriate bodies within the College. In these instances, the Academic Board will consider periodic reports and referrals from the relevant body.

    iv. May establish other committees to oversee areas of academic import, including the creation of various bodies to which decision-making powers may be delegated in respect of the management and governance of academic programmes

e. External Quality Assurance

    i. Monitors compliance with and approves applications and reports for accrediting bodies

    ii. Approves implementation plans following regulatory events and quality assurance engagement and monitors progress towards their implementation

f. Reporting

    i. Provides annual reports to the Board of Directors and the EMT, which include updates on developments and issues in scholarship, teaching, research and programmes

    ii. Requests reports from any College departments or the Board's subcommittees reports relating to any aspect of academic activity

    iii. Approves a public-facing Annual Report, which includes reports of its subcommittees

Part B - Meetings

Nature of Meetings

(5) Committee meetings are held face-to face, by telephone, videoconference or other electronic means.

(6) Committee members are required to fully prepare for each meeting, read the documentation in advance and make every reasonable effort to attend each meeting.

Frequency of Meetings

(7) Committee meetings are held at least four times per year - normally once per quarter before a meeting of the Board of Directors.

(8) The Committee determines its meeting schedule annually in advance and meets as scheduled.

Quorum

(9) The quorum for a committee meeting is 50% of the membership, plus one.

(10) Every reasonable effort should be made to ensure the quorum includes at least one representative of the student body.

(11) Where a loss of quorum is identified, the meeting may be adjourned until a time the Chairperson determines.

Decisions

(12) Decisions are normally made by consensus but in the absence of consensus, by open vote.

(13) Where there is a tied vote, the Chairperson has the casting vote.

(14) Decisions may be made at a duly called and constituted meeting or by a resolution in writing to all members which is approved in writing by at least a quorum of members.

(15) Any matters for decision considered when the meeting is inquorate must be subsequently ratified at the next Committee meeting before those decisions can be actioned.

(16) All decisions must be formally recorded. In the absence of a formal record, any apparent decision shall be deemed null and void.

Part C - Ensuring Effective Practice

Agenda and Minutes

(17) Agendas and associated documentation are distributed at least five working days before the meeting.

(18) Members are notified of the location and availability of material.

(19) Only with the Chairperson's permission are late papers or the tabling of papers accepted.

(20) All papers must be submitted to the secretary by the specified submission deadline.

(21) Board records shall be retained by the secretary.

(22) Minutes are to be prepared of each meeting.

(23) The Chairperson reviews the draft minutes and matters arising, after which the secretary circulates the documents to all committee members and includes them in the agenda papers for the next meeting.

Annual Work Plan

(24) An annual work plan is drawn up and agreed.

Access to Resources

(25) All members, both internal and external, are given access to all resources and artefacts needed to fulfil their duties as members.

Part D - Evaluation and Review

Self-Assessment

(26) The Academic Board undertakes a self-assessment of its performance against these terms of reference every three years.

(27) Information arising from that review is provided to a nominated person who is external to the College along with any information the nominee requests to facilitate its review of the Board's performance and its membership.

Review of the Terms of Reference

(28) The Chairperson reviews these terms of reference every two years, in conjunction with the Academic Board and amends as appropriate.

(29) Any amendments are included in the annual report.

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Part E - Subcommittees of the Academic Board

External Representatives

(30) All subcommittees of the Academic Board (including ad hoc committees) have a minimum of one external representative as a member.

Terms of Reference

(31) All subcommittees shall have a terms of reference approved by the Academic Board.

(32) There shall be clear allocation of authority, delegated or otherwise, and associated responsibilities.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	2nd November 2020
Review Date	29th September 2023
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	23rd September 2020
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Enquiries Contact	Quality Assurance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Programme" - A programme of education and training refers to any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence. It includes courses of study or instruction, apprenticeships, training and employment. A programme offers learners the learning opportunities by which they may attain educational goals (expressed as the intended programme learning outcome) by learning activities in a learning environment. A programme is normally comprised of modules. A programme leading to a major award will normally require a 'cohesion generating' process which integrates constituent modules so that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are supported. The cohesion generating process should establish the epistemological and cultural identity of the programme. It should also coordinate alignment of activities with the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and introduce learners to the broader community of practice to which they aspire. (QQI (2013) Assessment and Standards Revised)

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