

# Academic Board Terms of Reference

## Section 1 - Introduction

### Purpose

(1) The Academic Board is the academic primary decision-making body in Hibernia College and is responsible for the formulation of strategy and policy to meet the College's education and research objectives.

### Status of the Academic Board

(2) The Academic Board fulfils the regulatory requirement set out by QQI to establish an appropriate academic governance work. It is essential to the effective functioning of the College, and it 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 who serves as Chairperson
  - ii. Programme Directors
  - iii. Head of Digital Learning
  - iv. Head of Student Affairs
  - v. Digital Learning Manager
  - vi. Registrar
  - vii. Quality, Enhancement and Registrations Manager
  - viii. The Chairpersons of all Academic Board Subcommittees
- b. External members/appointed members
  - i. There are no external members.
- c. Nominated members
  - i. There are no nominated members.
- d. Elected members
  - i. Two student representatives per programme, elected by registered students on that programme for a period of corresponding to the length of their programme.
  - ii. Three Faculty representatives elected by Faculty for a period of three years.
  - iii. Four Adjunct Faculty representatives elected by Adjunct Faculty for a period of three years.
  - iv. One Staff representative elected by administrative staff and managers (excluding all ex officio members and Faculty) for a period of three years.
  - v. A Vice Chairperson should be elected from the membership of the Academic Board for a period of two years
  - vi. Elections for Academic Board are held as required but prior to, beginning November through to

December, the commencement of the next Academic Board term, January.

e. 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.

f. In attendance - by invitation

- i. The Chairperson may invite any party deemed relevant to the business of a meeting.

g. In attendance – secretarial

- i. Normally, the Quality, Enhancement and Registrations 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. Oversight Function

- i. Establishes the principles underpinning quality in Hibernia College 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 irrespective of mode of delivery
- 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
- v. Monitors compliance with and approves applications and reports for accrediting bodies
- vi. Approves implementation plans following regulatory events and quality assurance engagement and monitors progress towards their implementation
- vii. Provides annual reports to the Board of Directors and the EMT, which include updates on developments and issues in scholarship, teaching, research and programmes
- viii. Requests reports from any College departments or the Board's subcommittees reports relating to any aspect of academic activity
- ix. Approves a public-facing Annual Report, which includes reports of its subcommittees

b. Strategic Function

- i. Approves new and periodically reviews established 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, and also with respect to programmes that are delivered fully online pays particular attention to any cultural differences or sensitivities that may arise.

c. Executive Function

- 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.

- ii. Approves/Renews/ Removes External Examiners for programmes of study
- d. Delegation of Authority: The Board may establish sub-committees to enable it to fulfil its remit
- 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

## **Part B - Meetings**

### **Nature of Meetings**

(5) Committee meetings are held face-to face, videoconference or other electronic means. Maximal representation of all student representatives, including online students, will be facilitated through 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.

(7) Where attendance is not possible committee members are asked to inform the secretary in advance, upon circulation of the meeting agenda.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

(8) Committee meetings are held at least six times per year, to coincide with the frequency of the meetings of the Board of Directors.

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

### **Quorum**

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

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

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

(13) For a meeting to proceed either the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson must be in attendance.

### **Decisions**

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

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

(16) 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.

(17) 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.

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

## **Part C - Ensuring Effective Practice**

### **Agenda and Minutes**

(19) Agendas and associated documentation are distributed at least five working days before the meeting and made available to all members.

(20) Items for inclusion on the agenda are set by the workplan for the Board. In addition a call for agenda items will be made to Board members, by the secretary, two weeks in advance of the next meeting. Only with the Chairperson's permission are late items accepted.

(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) At the commencement of every year an annual work plan is drawn up the Chair, Vice Chair, Registrar and Secretary and subsequently agreed by members of Academic Board.

### **Access to Resources**

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

### **Conflict of Interest**

(26) Where a member has a conflict of interest, either real or perceived, in relation to an item of business and/or a student they must notify the Chairperson.

(27) Where the Chairperson acknowledges such as conflict of interest the affected individual is recused from the meeting and all decision making related to the item of business and/or student.

## **Part D - Evaluation and Review**

### **Self-Assessment**

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

(29) 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**

(30) The Chairperson reviews these terms of reference every three years, in conjunction with the Academic Board and

amends as appropriate; doing so as part of the self-assessment review.

(31) Any amendments are included in the annual report to the Board of Directors.

## **Part E - Subcommittees of the Academic Board**

### **External Representatives**

(32) The inclusion of external members on subcommittees of the Academic Board is specified within the Terms of Reference of each subcommittee.

### **Terms of Reference**

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

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

(35) All subcommittees shall provide at the end of the year an annual report to Academic Board.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	5th March 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	5th March 2028
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Quality Assurance Officer
<b>Approval Date</b>	5th March 2025
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Eoin Crossen Quality Assurance Administrator <hr/> Quality Assurance