Programme Board Terms of Reference

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose

(1) A Programme Board is established for every academic programme to monitor and review the provision of the programme, ensuring academic and professional standards are maintained and that learners receive fair and effective opportunities to learn in a stimulating and supportive learning environment.

Status of the Programme Board

(2) Each Programme Board is a subcommittee of the Academic Board.

Section 2 - Composition and Membership

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

a. Ex Officio Members
   i. Programme Director
   ii. All Faculty involved in teaching, learning, assessment and research on the programme
   iii. All Adjunct Faculty involved in teaching, learning, assessment and research on the programme. Where the volume of Adjunct Faculty on a programme prohibits effective committee management, a representative sample of Adjunct Faculty will be invited by the committee chairperson.
   iv. Digital Learning Manager
   v. All External Examiners for the programme being considered

b. Chairperson
   i. The Programme Director is the ex officio chairperson.

c. Vice Chairperson
   i. The Programme Board appoints a vice chairperson from amongst its members who will act as vice chairperson for a two-year period.

d. External Members/Appointed Members
   i. External Examiners fulfil the role of external members on the Programme Board.
   ii. There are no appointed members.

e. Nominated Members
   i. The Programme Board may nominate additional persons to the Programme Board at their discretion.

f. Elected Members
   i. All student elected representatives. Where the volume of student representatives on a programme prohibits effective committee management, a minimum of one student representative per cohort will be invited by the committee chairperson.

g. Co-opted Members

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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 will assist 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.

ii. Normally, Staff in the following roles are invited to the Programme Board:

- Registrar
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager
- Student Support Officer
- Faculty Manager

i. In Attendance – Secretarial

i. Normally, a senior member of the Programme Administration team acts as ex officio Secretary to Programme Boards.

ii. Programme Administrators may be in attendance to support the Programme Board.

Section 3 - Terms of Reference

Part A - Functions and Responsibilities of Programme Boards

(4) The Programme Board carries out the following functions and responsibilities:

a. Annual Work Plan

i. The Programme Board prepares an annual plan of the work of the Board in line with the functions and responsibilities of Programme Boards.

b. Approved Programme Schedule

i. Review the Approved Programme Schedule at each Programme Board.

ii. Monitor the implementation, and ensure compliance, of programmes of study as defined in the Programme document and Approved Programme Schedule.

c. Annual Review

i. Annually review the structure, content, entry requirements, curriculum and assessment strategies of the programme to ensure:

- The maintenance of academic and professional standards for the programmes/disciplines concerned, ensuring they conform to benchmarks and sectoral conventions determined by QQI and the criteria contained in the National Framework of Qualifications
- That all proposed changes to Programmes are submitted to and approved by the Academic Board and, thereafter, by QQI and any relevant professional body

ii. Review the effectiveness of the programme in:

- Fulfilling its aims and objectives
- Providing a suitable student experience
- Considering issues affecting the programme and taking appropriate actions to resolve them, including bringing matters to the attention of any relevant authority

d. The External Environment

i. Consider/respond to the recommendations from all external review and monitoring activities relating to the programme and implement where and as appropriate.

ii. Consider policy, procedure and regulations specific to the programme and any public-facing information derived from these.

e. Issues Arising

i. Consider any issues relating to the student experience and management of the programme and take appropriate action, liaising with the Academic Board and/or College management as appropriate.

ii. Monitor the impact of teaching, learning and assessment activities on student engagement and performance.

f. Feedback and Monitoring

i. Collect anonymised information about student performance and engagement, and collect student feedback to support the continuous improvement of the programme.

ii. Seek feedback from Faculty, in particular Adjunct Faculty, and provide responses to it, including changes to the programme or practices, as appropriate.

g. Annual Reporting

i. Prepare an annual report of the work of the Board and its findings for presentation to the Academic Board for consideration.

ii. The report should include quantitative and qualitative data and provide commentary on:

- Programme design, content and organisation for an online/blended learning programme
- Teaching, learning and assessment
- Student progression and achievement
- Student support and guidance
- Learning resources
- Quality management and enhancement
- Student feedback, Faculty feedback, Adjunct Faculty feedback and Staff feedback

Part B - Meetings

Duties of the Chairperson

(5) The Chairperson:

a. Convenes and chairs meetings of the Programme Board

b. Is fully conversant with the remit and Terms of Reference for the Board to ensure that the Board fulfils its remit

c. Ensures that the Board effectively monitors programme implementation and student progress

d. Liaises with the Academic Dean and the Department of the Registrar at appropriate times in terms of provision of documentation referred to in the Terms of Reference for the Board

e. Makes such recommendations on the requirements for staffing and other resources to the Executive Management Team (EMT) through the Academic Dean as are required for the proper conduct of the programme

f. Prepares, in a timely fashion, the annual report for presentation to the Academic Board

Nature of Meetings

(6) Board meetings may take place face-to-face, by telephone, videoconference or other electronic means.

(7) Board members are required to fully prepare for each meeting, read the documentation in advance and make

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every reasonable effort to attend each meeting.

Frequency of Meetings

(8) Board meetings shall be held at least twice a year.

(9) Board meetings are normally aligned with meetings of the Board of Examiners.

(10) The Board shall determine its meeting schedule annually, in advance, and meet as scheduled.

Quorum

(11) In the event that a member is absent from a meeting, Programme Boards may conduct business provided that the Programme Director is satisfied that both the members present and the reports collected are sufficient to conduct business properly.

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

Decisions

(13) Decisions are normally made by consensus. In the absence of consensus, decisions are made by open vote.

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

(15) Decisions may be made either 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.

(16) Any matters for decision considered when the meeting is deemed inquorate by the Programme Director must be subsequently ratified at the next Programme Board meeting before those decisions can be actioned.

(17) Where any voting member could be perceived to have a conflict of interest in relation to the matter being considered, they will be recused from the decision-making process.

(18) 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

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

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

(21) Only with the Chairperson's permission may late papers or the tabling of papers be accepted.

(22) All papers must be submitted to the Secretary by the specified submission deadline.

(23) Board records shall be retained by the Secretary.

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

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

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Annual Work Plan

(26) The annual work plan for the Programme Board is prepared and agreed by the Board in advance.

Access to Resources

(27) 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

Review by the Academic Board

(28) The Programme Board is reviewed by the Academic Board on its performance against these Terms of Reference every three years.

Review of the Terms of Reference

(29) The Chairperson reviews these Terms of Reference every two years, in conjunction with the Academic Board and amends as appropriate.

(30) Any amendments are subject to ratification by the Academic Board.

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Status and Details

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

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Blended Learning" - QQI adopted a Garrison and Kanuka (2004) definition of blended learning, which defines it as 'the integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences'. Hibernia College complements this broad definition by an understanding that blended learning should be characterised as falling along a continuum as proposed by Jones (2006). Such a conception can accommodate a range of blended learning approaches.

"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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