

Hibernia College Quality Framework

Terms of Reference for the Academic Board



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

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

1.2 Status of the Academic Board

The Academic Board fulfils the regulatory requirement to establish 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.

2 Composition and Membership

a. *Ex Officio Members*

- i. Academic Dean.
- ii. Director of Continuing Professional Development.
- iii. Directors of Discipline.
- iv. Director of Online Learning.
- v. Director of Research.
- vi. Director of Student and Alumni Support and Services.
- vii. Registrar.

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:*

- 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 Officer services the Academic Board.

3 Terms of Reference

3.1 Functions and Responsibilities of the Academic Board

a. The Academic Board:

- 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. Approves and periodically review programmes and maintain oversight of all stages of their development and provision.
- iv. Ensure that appropriate academic standards are consistently adopted, applied and maintained in academic programmes, partnerships and all educational arrangements, and, where relevant effectively incorporate professional standards and codes of practice.
- v. Maintains oversight of, and ensure effective implementation of due diligence processes associated with partnerships and joint programmes.
- vi. Provides annual reports to the Board of Directors and the EMT, which include updates on developments and issues in scholarship, teaching, research and programmes.
- vii. Approve the academic management and governance and quality assurance arrangements in any Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement established by the College.
- viii. Establishes and approve the terms of reference of various subcommittees including their decision-making powers.
- ix. Approves the appointment and removal of external examiners.
- x. Approves the establishment of ad hoc committees and panels (and their terms of reference) to deal with specific academic issues (reviews, appeals and disciplinary matters for example).
- xi. Monitors compliance with, and approve applications and reports for accrediting bodies
- xii. Approves implementation plans following regulatory events and quality assurance engagement and monitors progress towards their implementation.

- xiii. Considers the development, management and enhancement of all academic affairs and advise the EMT of their resource requirements.
- xiv. Requests reports from any College departments or the Board's subcommittees reports relating to any aspect of academic activity.
- xv. Approves a public-facing Annual Report which includes reports of its subcommittees.
- xvi. 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 require periodic reports and referrals from the relevant body.

3.2 Subcommittees of the Academic Board

a. *External representatives*

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

b. *Terms of Reference*

- i. All subcommittees shall have a terms of reference approved by the Academic Board.
- ii. There shall be clear allocation of authority, delegated or otherwise and associated responsibilities.

3.3 Meetings

a. *Nature of meetings*

- i. Committee meetings are held face-to face, by telephone, videoconference, or other electronic means.
- ii. Committee members are required to fully prepare for each meeting, read the documentation in advance, and make every reasonable effort to attend each meeting.

b. *Frequency of Meetings*

- i. Committee meetings are held at least 4 times per year, normally meets once per quarter before a meeting of the Board of Directors.
- ii. The Committee determines its meeting schedule annually in advance and meet as scheduled.

c. *Quorum*

- i. The quorum for a committee meeting is 50% of the membership, plus one.
- ii. The quorum must at all times include at least one representative of the student body.
- iii. Where a loss of quorum is identified, the meeting may be adjourned until a time the Chairperson determines.
- iv. Any matters for decision considered when the meeting is inquorate must be subsequently ratified at the next Academic Board meeting before those decisions can be actioned.

3.4 Decisions

a. *Legal or Regulatory Context*

- i. Decisions are normally made by consensus, but in the absence of consensus by open ballot.
- ii. Where there is a tied vote, the Chairperson has the casting vote.

- iii. Decisions may be made at a duly called and constituted meeting, **or** by a resolution in writing to all members which is physically or electronically signed by at least a quorum of members.
- iv. 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.

3.5 Ensuring Effective Practice

a. Agenda and Minutes

- i. Agendas and associated documentation are distributed at least five working days before the meeting.
- ii. Members are notified of the location and availability of material.
- iii. Only with the Chairperson's permission are late papers or the tabling of papers be accepted.
- iv. All papers must be submitted to the secretary by the specified submission deadline.
- v. Board records shall be retained by the secretary.
- vi. Minutes are to be prepared of each meeting.
- vii. The Chairperson reviews the draft minutes and matters arising, after which the secretary circulates the documents to all committee members and include them in the agenda papers for the next meeting.

b. Annual Work Plan

- i. An annual work plan is drawn up and agreed.

c. Access to Resources

- i. External Committee members are provided with access to the Board's website and any other resources they reasonably require to fulfil their duties as a committee member.

3.6 Evaluation and Review

a. Self-assessment

- i. The Academic Board undertakes a self-assessment of its performance against these terms of reference every three years.
- ii. 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 Boards performance and its membership.

b. Review of the Terms of Reference

- i. The Chairperson reviews these terms of reference every two years, in conjunction with the Academic Board and amend as appropriate.
- ii. Any amendments are included in the annual report.