

Hibernia College Quality Framework

Terms of Reference for the Ethics Committee



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Ethics Committee guides the Academic Board and the College community on approaches to ethical teaching, research, and scholarship. The Ethics Committee grants ethical approval for research conducted by staff, faculty, and third parties seeking to conduct research in the College community.

1.2 Status of the Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee is a subcommittee of the Academic Board.

2 Composition and Membership

a. *Ex Officio Members*

- i. The Director of Research.

b. *Chairperson*

- i. The Director of Research is the ex officio Chairperson.

c. *Vice Chairperson*

- i. The Committee 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. One external member appointed by the Academic Board.
- ii. One member of research-active faculty per programme, appointed by the Director of the Research.

e. *Elected members:*

- i. Three research-active adjunct faculty representatives, elected from among adjunct faculty.
- ii. One student representative per programme, elected from by the registered students on each programme.

f. *Co-opted members:*

- i. The Chairperson may, with the support of the majority of the members of the committee meeting at an ordinary meeting of the Committee, co-opt a member of the College or an external party to the committee for a period of one year, where such a co-option assists in the discharge of the responsibilities of the Committee.
- ii. Normally a maximum of two persons may be co-opted to the Committee at any one point in time.

g. *In attendance - by invitation*

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

h. In Attendance – secretarial

- i. A member of administrative staff is invited by the Chairperson to act as Secretary to the Ethics Committee.

3 Terms of Reference

3.1 Functions and Responsibilities of the Ethics Committee

a. The Ethics Committee:

- i. Reviews, discusses and shares good practice internationally in the oversight of ethical academic practices, and translating international effective practice into recommendations and advice for all departments in Hibernia College.
- ii. Reports to the Academic Board on issues to do with alignment of the code of conduct and guidelines with policy and process in Hibernia College.
- iii. Consults with the Academic Dean and/or the Registrar in relation to specific causes for concern in relation to ethics.
- iv. Considers items referred to them by the Academic Board in relation to ethics.
- v. Considers research proposals undertaken in the College's name.

3.2 Meetings

a. Nature of meetings

- i. Board meetings may take place 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 four times per year, normally once per quarter before a meeting of the Academic Board.
- ii. The Committee determines its meeting schedule annually, in advance, and meets as scheduled.

c. Quorum

- i. The quorum for a committee meeting is 50 per cent 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 Committee meeting before those decisions can be actioned.

d. Decisions

- 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 either 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.

3.3 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 may late papers or the tabling of papers be accepted.
- iv. All papers must be submitted to the Secretary by the specified submission deadline.
- v. Committee 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. All members, both internal and external, are given access to all resources and artefacts needed to fulfil their duties as members.

3.4 Evaluation and Review

a. Review by the Academic Board

- i. The Ethics Committee is reviewed by the Academic Board on its performance against these terms of reference every three years.

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 amends as appropriate.
- ii. Any amendments are subject to ratification by the Academic Board.