

## **Institiúid Teicneolaíochta, Sligeach**

### **Institute of Technology, Sligo**

#### **ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

## **STANDING ORDERS**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The Academic Council as a statutory body responsible for academic matters within the Institute has the major task of formulating and implementing the Institute's academic policies. The academic council is responsible for the quality of all academic activities within the Institute. The terms of reference set out in the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 (section 10) gives a broad preview to the work of the Academic Council. The activities of the Academic Council will directly impinge on the Institute's future as an effective academic community. The Academic Council must, therefore:-

- have a strong, high profile within the Institute so that the staff see it as a major instrument of academic direction and policy and a desirable body of which to be a member
- be accessible to all staff through course boards, committees, elected representatives and senior staff.

The Academic Council is the body through which the Institute's academic reputation will be established. The ultimate authority for the Academic Council is the Governing Body, as conferred by the Act. The Governing Body's role with respect to the Academic Council is supportive rather than regulatory in nature. The Academic Council has devolved to it by the Governing Body responsibility for all academic matters.

The size of the Academic council will vary as the Institute develops. The membership should reflect a balance between ex officio and elected membership and that the majority of members shall be holders of academic appointments within the Institute (section 10(2)(b)).

### **2 MEETINGS OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

- 2.1 It will be the normal practice that two meetings of the Academic Council will take place in each of the first two terms and one in the final term. The dates of meetings will normally be based on a schedule agreed by the Council.
- 2.2 A Special Meeting of the Council may be convened by the Director, upon his own motion, or upon a requisition addressed to him and signed by at least ten members of the Council. Should the Director not act on such a requisition, a Special Meeting for the purpose defined in it may be convened by at least fifteen members of the Council.
- 2.3 Normally meetings shall convene at 3.00 pm and terminate at 5.00pm

### **3 MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

- 3.1 Committees of the Academic Council shall meet as often as necessary.
- 3.2 Meetings of the committees may be called by the Chairperson of each committee and/or the Registrar, on their own motion, or upon a requisition addressed to the Chairperson and signed by at least four members of the committee.
- 3.3 The normal duration of meetings shall be not more than two hours. A motion to extend, for a specified period beyond this duration must be agreed by at least two thirds of the members present and voting

#### **4 OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL**

- 4.1 The Director shall be Chairperson of the Council in accordance with the third schedule of the Act.
- 4.2 A Deputy Chairperson shall be elected from among the members of the Council at its first meeting. The Deputy Chairperson will take the Chair in the absence of the Director.
- 4.3 In the absence of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson the Council shall elect one of its members to act as Chairperson for that meeting.
- 4.4 The Secretary to the Council is the Registrar, who, under the Director, is responsible to the Council and Governing Body for the conduct of the general academic business of the Institute. The Registrar may be assisted by a Recording Secretary, who may not be a member of the Council.

#### **5 NOTICE OF MEETINGS AND AGENDA**

- 5.1 Notice of the meeting and an agenda shall be posted a minimum of five working days prior to the meeting. Special meetings of the committees shall be called with lesser notice at the discretion of the Chairperson or Registrar.
- 5.2 Where members wish to have items placed on the agenda of the Council meeting, they must submit same to the Secretary of the Council 10 working days in advance of a scheduled meeting.
- 5.3 Members of staff who are not members of the Academic Council may have an agenda item forwarded to the Academic Council with the approval of their School or Programme Board.
- 5.4 Documentation proper to the agenda items for a meeting shall be submitted to the Secretary of the committees 10 working days in advance of a scheduled meeting.
- 5.5 A copy of the minutes of each meeting shall be circulated to the Academic Council members with the agenda of the meeting.
- 5.6 In the course of consideration of the draft agenda for a meeting any member may seek to add an item to the agenda as an Emergency Item. An Emergency Item can only be one which could not have been foreseen five working days in advance of the meeting and which must be resolved before the next scheduled meeting of the Council. A vote must be held on every proposal for an Emergency Item to be inscribed, and for it to be inscribed it must receive the assenting votes of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting. Members may only vote for or against the inscription of an Emergency Item: members abstaining shall not be considered, for the purposes of the Vote, to be "present and voting".
- 5.7 The ruling of the Chairperson on the appropriateness of items listed on the agenda and all points of order shall be final unless the ruling is challenged. The challenger shall have the right to give reasons for challenging the ruling of the Chairperson who will then have the opportunity to briefly respond. The challenge shall be deemed to be successful if supported by in excess of two thirds of the members present.

#### **6 MINUTES**

- 6.1 The minutes of meetings shall record attendance and decisions made by the Council except where a member of the Council specifically requests that his/her disagreement with a decision

shall be recorded. Minutes of committee meetings shall be circulated and approved by the Council. The adoption of the minutes shall be formally proposed and seconded.

- 6.2 Minutes of Council meetings shall be circulated to all members of the Council.
- 6.3 Abbreviated Minutes of Council meetings shall be circulated to the Governing Body.
- 6.4 Copies of minutes of the Council shall be available to any member of the Institute.
- 6.5 Copies of the minutes shall be posted on the Institute Document Store.
- 6.6 Such minutes shall be taken as read when the question that they be confirmed is put from the Chair, unless any member requests that any part be read in order to determine whether it is an accurate record.
- 6.7 The minutes of Academic Council and of its committees shall be posted on the Document Store not later than seven working days following their confirmation.
- 6.8 The recommendations and actions of all committees must be approved at the next meeting of the Academic Council, save where specific authority to act without prior approval has been delegated by the Council to the committee. All recommendations and actions by the committees must be reported to the Council.

## **7 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

- 7.1 No substitution of members by non-members on either the Council or committees is possible.
- 7.2 The Council and its committees may be addressed by experts relevant to agenda items.
- 7.3 The Council may by resolution invite a non-member to be in attendance at a meeting or meetings for the duration of the discussion on any particular agenda item. Such invitees may not vote on any motion before such meeting.
- 7.4 An elected member of the Council who is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Council, unless such absence was due to illness or was approved by the Council, shall be deemed to have resigned from the Council and shall be replaced for the remainder of that person's period in office.

## **8 QUORUM**

- 8.1 The quorum for the Academic Council shall be ten members. If, ten minutes after the time fixed for a meeting, a quorum is not present, no business shall be proceeded with that day.
- 8.2 The quorum for committees shall be four persons outside of holidays times. Non-quorate meetings of the committees may be held during holiday periods on an emergency basis.
- 8.3 Meetings which commence quorate shall remain quorate until closed regardless of the numbers remaining.

## **9 PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS**

- 9.1 The chair is to be taken at a meeting of the Council within ten minutes after the time appointed for such a meeting, by the Director, or, in his absence, by the Deputy Chairman or by any member called thereto by motion.
- 9.2 A proposal to terminate a discussion shall be proposed and seconded without discussion. If such a proposal is carried by simple majority, the item originally under discussion shall be put and decided without further discussion other than a reply by the mover thereof. If the procedural proposal is lost, the discussion on the original item shall be resumed.
- 9.3 If a proposal to proceed to the next business is proposed and seconded, the proposer of the item under discussion shall have the right briefly to speak in opposition and the procedural proposal shall then be put without further discussion. If the procedural proposal is passed by a simple majority, the discussion on the item shall be abandoned.

- 9.4 A motion to terminate discussion or to proceed to next business may not be proposed or seconded by a member who has spoken to or proposed a vote on the item under discussion.
- 9.5 Interruptions shall be allowed only on a point of order or information as decided by the Chairperson.

## **10 MOTIONS**

- 10.1 A motion is a proposal which is put forward. A resolution is the acceptance of a motion by a meeting.
- 10.2 For a motion to be put to a meeting it requires a Proposer and Secunder. A motion from the Chair does not require a Secunder.
- 10.3 For an amendment to a motion to be put, it requires a Proposer and Secunder. An amendment shall be put to a vote before the original motion.
- 10.4 If an amendment is not carried the Chairperson shall put the motion in its original form to a vote. If an amendment is carried the Chairperson shall put the amended motion to the meeting.
- 10.5 Before a motion or amendment are put to a vote, the Secretary shall read out the text to be voted on.

## **11 VOTING AT MEETINGS**

- 11.1 All elections shall be held by secret ballot. All other motions shall be voted on by a show of hands, or by secret ballot if requested by at least three members.
- 11.2 The result of voting shall be counted and recorded by the secretary. The number of votes for and against a motion and the number of abstentions shall be recorded in the minutes.
- 11.3 In the event of an equal division of the vote the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.
- 11.4 Every question shall be put to the Council from the Chair, and the Chairperson shall call upon the members to answer their assent or dissent by a show of hands. The Chairperson and Secretary shall communicate the result to the Council and if it be shown that a majority of votes are cast in favour of adopting a motion, such motion shall be carried, save upon request, those members voting who have dissented may have their dissent recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

## **12 ADJURNMENT OF A COUNCIL MEETING**

- 12.1 A motion for adjournment of the Council may be made at any time by the Chairperson, or by a member, and when seconded, is determined by a majority of the members present and voting. When the motion for adjournment is adopted, the meeting will stand adjourned for the period of time mentioned in the motion, or to the named day.
- 12.2 A member moving that the Council adjourn may speak for not more than three minutes, and if the motion is seconded, it shall be seconded without a speech and be put by the Chairperson to the meeting without debate.

## **13 CONDUCTING THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL**

- 13.1 A member may, at any time and without notice, interrupt debate by raising a "point of order". The Chairperson shall decide whether the point of order is admissible, and this ruling shall be final.
- 13.2 Any member of the Council, who, in the opinion of the Chairperson, transgresses any Standing Order may be called to order by the Chairperson to resume their seat. If the member persists in disobeying the Chair, the Chairperson shall request a temporary adjournment of the meeting. If, when the meeting is reconvened, the member persists in disorder, the

Chairperson may request the members to vote on the suspension of the member concerned. Suspension will only be effective if the members present and voting resolve by a simple majority to enforce the suspension.

- 13.3 Where a dispute arises as to the interpretation of these orders, the Chairperson shall rule on the matter. The Chairperson's ruling shall stand unless it is formally challenged and the challenge is seconded. Should this happen, the Chairperson and the challenger (and they alone) shall briefly address the meeting on the matter and a vote will then be taken.
- 13.4 The Council, from time to time, may make representations to the Governing Body for changes in the Constitution in order to improve the workings of the Council.

#### **14 BY-ELECTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP**

- 14.1 Where the status of a member of the Council materially changes in respect of their membership of the Council, the Registrar shall notify the Governing Body of the College and request approval to organise a by-election or to make an appointment to fill the resulting vacancy on the Council as appropriate.
- 14.2 Where the status of an ex-officio member of the Academic Council materially changes in respect of their membership of the Council and where that person is replaced by an acting official in the same or in similar capacity, that the replacement official should automatically become a member ex-officio of the Academic Council without the need for a formal personal appointment by the Governing Body. (Subject to approval of Governing Body).

#### **15 CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION AND STANDING ORDERS**

- 15.1 The Council, from time to time, may make representations to the Governing Body for changes in the Constitution and or standing orders.

### **Academic Council Committees**

Five committees carry out the work of the Council. They normally meet five times annually and report at least once per term to a plenary meeting of the Academic Council. The functions of these committees is described below.

Membership of the Committees:

- should be limited to a maximum of 12 members
- should be broadly representative of the academic functions in the Institute
- the Director and Registrar shall be ex-officio members of each committee
- each School shall be represented on each committee by either the Head of School or a Head of Department.
- each committee shall have five academic staff members other than Heads of Schools or Heads of Department. There shall also be a minimum of one academic representative from each School on each committee.
- academic, administrative and technical staff members with special expertise shall be members of specific committees

- staff member(s) with a particular interest in an item on the agenda can be asked to attend relevant committee meetings.
- an external representative may be co-opted. This person should have expertise appropriate to the work of the Committee.
- registered students may be co-opted as members of Committees
- while members are expected to attend all meetings of committees they must attend 50% of the meetings in any academic year or another representative may be appointed in lieu.
- each committee will nominate a chair from among the membership

## **The Planning and Co-ordination Committee**

The Institute has delegated authority to confer its own awards from Level 6 to 10. It also is an approved provider, recognised by FETAC, for programmes up to level 6. The Planning and Co-ordination committee is responsible for approving all awards offered by the Institute. Likewise the committee is responsible for approving all new programmes submissions including sub-degree, degree and post graduate programmes and agreeing material modifications to existing programmes. The Planning and Co-ordination committee must approve sub-degree, degree and postgraduate programmes before such programmes are submitted to an external panel for validation. This committee is also responsible for ongoing programme auditing and periodic reviews. The committee recommends the appointment of external assessors to assist it, in carrying out these important functions

### **Agreed Terms of Reference of the Planning and Coordination Committee**

- 1 To ensure robust academic quality assurance for new programmes and modifications to HETAC and FETAC programmes
- 2 To develop policies and procedures for this purpose
- 3 To agree template and presentation standards for programme documentation
- 4 To agree guidelines for panels of assessors evaluating new academic programmes
- 5 To advise Registrar on composition of Panels of Assessors
- 6 To consider all course proposals for outline planning in accordance with procedure EAP 1
- 7 To establish procedures for the review of all new programme proposals and material modification and changes to programmes
- 8 To establish a system to ensure that recommendations of Panels of Assessors are implemented
- 9 To make proposals in relation to the approval of new programmes within a modularized framework
- 10 To set out procedures for School Peer Reviews and Institutional Reviews
- 11 To consider Reports of Peer Review Groups and ensure that their recommendations are implemented
- 12 To consider and report on matters referred to it by the Academic Council

## **The Standards and Examinations Committee**

This Committee is responsible for policies and procedures in respect of the academic standards of all programmes and examinations. It is also responsible for recommending the appointment of external examiners to the Academic Council and for agreeing Marks and Standards and for issuing regulations for the proper running of examinations.

### **Functions of the Standards and Examination Committee**

- 1 To establish policies and procedures for the development and maintenance of academic standards within the Institute
- 2 To establish policies and procedures for the assessment of learners
- 3 To determine Examination Marks and Standards for the Institute and review them periodically
- 4 To advise on matters relating to examinations, assessments, examination reviews and appeals
- 5 To consider and report annually to the Academic Council on attrition and examination performance
- 6 To review annually by exception Programme Monitoring Reports in accordance with procedure EAP 7
- 7 To determine procedures for the efficient operation of Examination Board Meetings
- 8 To consider nominations from Schools and Departments for the appointment of external examiners and recommend those duly qualified and suitable
- 9 To advise on the development of a code of conduct for members of the Institute
- 10 To consider applications for subject/module exemptions duly recommended by Heads of Department
- 11 To make proposals in relation to the academic rules associated with a modular programme structure
- 12 To consider and report on matters referred to it by Academic Council.

## **The Student Selection and Admissions Committee**

This Committee is responsible for establishing procedures and policies in relation to student admissions to the Institute including non-standard, mature and non-EU applicants. It is also responsible for maintaining documentation on admission policies and procedures.

### **Functions of the Student Selection and Admissions Committee**

- 1 To establish policies and procedures for the admission of students to full-time programmes of study by the Institute, including but not limited to: first year entry, transfers, add-on degree, and post graduate entry
- 2 To establish policies and procedures for admission to courses other than full-time, including but not limited to: Lifelong Learning, Foundation, Craft and short programmes
- 3 To revise, where necessary, any such policies and procedures already in existence
- 4 To establish policies and procedures for admission in respect of in the non-traditional applicant category, including but not limited to: mature, special needs, disadvantaged, FETAC, non-European Union and non-standard qualifications and experiential learning
- 5 To establish policies and procedures for admission to courses in the restricted entry category
- 6 To consider items referred to it by the Academic Council or any other sub-committee of the Academic Council

## **The Research Committee**

The Institute has a policy to foster and grow its research activities. This requires support for research active staff and students and policies to attract new funding and new researchers. This Committee develops policies and procedures in harmony with the Institutes Research Policies and promotes research as an important activity in the Institute.

### **Agreed Terms of Reference of the Research Committee**

- 1 To devise strategies, policies and procedures that foster the development of an active research culture within the Institute
- 2 To advise on the development of physical, human and information/knowledge infrastructure for research
- 3 To enhance teaching and learning within the Institute in relation to research
- 4 To support the development and administration of research-based postgraduate programmes of study
- 5 To monitor the Institute's research performance
- 6 To liaise with the Department of Research
- 7 To consider policies and procedures in relation to the protection of intellectual property
- 8 To consider and report on matters referred to it by Academic Council or by functions within the Institute
- 9 To devise strategies to promote funding and to foster same.

## **Further Education and Training**

A significant proportion of the teaching effort of the Institute is devoted to programmes delivered to students who are not attending the institute on a full time basis. Such programmes include craft and 'part time' and bespoke programmes and many of these students are employed while studying. Among other issues, the Institute has a duty of care to ensure that the rights of non full time students are acknowledged and enshrined in its procedures. The Institute also has a responsibility to ensure that its academic staff are appropriately trained and educated to meet the changing needs of learners and of industry.

The role of the Further Education and Training Committee of the Academic Council includes, making recommendations and advising the Academic Council on various issues relating to the structure and delivery of craft and part time programmes, the development of new such programmes, and the policies related to the further education of academic staff.

### **Committee Agreed Terms of Reference**

1. To develop policies and procedures in relation to the further training & education of staff
2. To advise on suitable resources for the effective conduct of academic staff training & education programmes
3. To ensure adequate academic quality assurance for existing and new programmes in the craft areas, part time and bespoke programmes
4. To develop policies and procedures for this purpose
5. To agree template and presentation standards for programme documentation and programme costings
6. To establish policies and procedures for the assessment of learners on craft, and on part time and bespoke programmes
7. To establish a review process such as the Programme Monitoring Reports (EAP 7) for all such programmes
8. To advise on suitable resources for the effective conduct of such programmes
9. To consider and report on matters referred to it by Academic Council
10. To develop a relevant professional qualification programme.