UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Academic Governance
Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC)
(formerly Academic Council Committee on Quality (ACCQ))

Approved by ACEC on 31 May 2017
Amendments approved by AC on 26 November 2020

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Purpose

1. The Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee is responsible, on behalf of Academic Council, for those elements of the University Quality Assurance Framework identified in the Terms of Reference below, as it relates to all types and levels of study within the University including related professional supports and services[1].

2. The Committee acts as a planning forum for the discussion and promotion of developments in HE Quality Assurance within the institution, whether internally or externally driven.

Terms of Reference

1. Governance

- The Committee will act with authority delegated by Academic Council, in order to make decisions in the area of quality assurance and standards.
- The Committee shall liaise with relevant Academic Council Committees and with specific University Officers, managers and offices in respect of issues or instances where matters of quality assurance intersect with management issues.
- In taking forward its remit, the Committee will seek consistency and common approaches where these are in the best interests of students and staff, while supporting diversity and variety where this is beneficial to stakeholders.
- The Committee will report to Academic Council; Governing Authority; and UMT as necessary, but at least once a year.

2. Strategic Planning

- The Committee will approve institutional quality assurance developments which articulate with University Strategy or policy and/or with external Quality Assurance requirements.
- The Committee will provide strategic direction to relevant University staff and committees on institutional and national quality assurance developments.

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[1] Other related QA activities undertaken across the University which fall outside ACQEC's direct remit, include:

1. Module Design and Approval	6. Curriculum Review and Programme Monitoring
2. Programme Design and Approval	7. Accreditation by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
3. Student Evaluation of Modules	8. Irish Survey of Student Engagement
4. Student Representation	9. Annual International Student Barometer
5. External Examining	10. First Destination Return

3. Quality Assurance and Standards

The Committee will oversee the delivery of the University Quality Assurance Framework within its remit, by receiving and considering relevant reports, identifying trends/issues and recommending appropriate action, as required. Reports will include:

- Periodic internal unit reviews.
- Annual reporting from relevant collaborative and transnational programme/campus teams.
- Reports on the approval of UCD Recognised Colleges (and other UCD Linked Providers) Quality assurance Procedures and the periodic quality review of these institutions.
- External reports on academic provision and professional services, such as Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body Reports; internal process reviews (e.g. curriculum review).

4. Strategic Enhancement relating to the Quality Assurance Framework

The Committee will lead strategic enhancement activities relating to the University's Quality Assurance Framework, including:

- Disseminating positive practice as identified through the work of the Committee.
- Overseeing and monitoring the effective implementation of review recommendations and the dissemination of enhancements identified in reviews.
- Identifying and promoting enhancement developments relating to academic provision and its supporting processes and of student support provision, arising from its quality assurance oversight and monitoring.
- Identifying trends and recommending actions aligned with the University's Strategic Plan, national and international Quality Assurance Frameworks (e.g. QQI; ESG).

5. Engagement and Compliance with Legislation and External Quality Assurance Frameworks

The Committee will lead the University's engagement as appropriate with external Quality Assurance Frameworks, and ensure appropriate compliance with such Frameworks, including:

- The University's engagement with periodic QQI Institutional review, including monitoring the effective implementation of review recommendations.
- University compliance with the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012; QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines; annual reporting requirements; and ongoing mapping of activity, as required by QQI.
- Ensuring, through the engagement of its members with external quality related consultation documents and other activities, that the University plays a constructive role in developing national HE Quality Assurance Frameworks.

Composition

The following shall be members of the ACQEC:

- Chair (appointed by the President)
- Deputy President, Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (or nominee)
- Director of Quality
- One College Principal elected by the College Principals
- One Vice-Principal Research and Innovation elected by the Vice-Principals Research and Innovation
- One Vice-Principal Teaching and Learning elected by the Vice-Principals Teaching and Learning
- One Head of School elected by the Heads of School

- One Programme Dean/Associate Dean elected by the Programme Deans
- One Graduate School Director elected by the Graduate School Directors
- One academic staff member from each College appointed by the Academic Council on the nomination of the College Principal
- Two Representatives elected by Academic Council from among its members
- Two representatives of the Senior Administrative Staff nominated by the President
- One representative of Technical Staff nominated by the President
- One person nominated by the Director of Human Resources
- President, UCD Students' Union
- Education Officer, UCD Students' Union
- Graduate Officer, UCD Students' Union

Committee Support

The Committee will be supported by the UCD Quality Office.

Conduct of Business

- The Committee shall meet at least three times per year.
- The Committee may also meet electronically to note formal items or to take forward discussion as appropriate.
- The meetings shall be convened by the Chair with a minimum of seven days' notice.
- The members may not nominate others to attend meetings on their behalf.
- A meeting shall be considered quorate when a third of the members are present. Where business is conducted electronically, a third of sitting members of the committee must respond positively for the motion to pass, with no dissenting views expressed/received.
- The Committee may establish working groups or sub-committees, as required, to assist with Committee work and/or related projects, with the approval of the Academic Council or its Executive Committee. Members may be recruited from all staff and student cohorts.
- The Committee may co-opt up to three additional members for a specified or unspecified period.
- In between scheduled meetings (for example, during the summer trimester), the Committee can grant authority to a sub-group of at least three members to expedite routine business.

Reporting Responsibility

The Committee shall report to the Academic Council at least once during the academic session.

Responsibilities of Committee Members

All members of the Committee:

- Are expected to be collegial and constructive in approach.
- Should attend regularly and participate fully in the work of the Committee.
- Should take collective responsibility and individual ownership for the issues under the Committee remit and for the discussion and resolution of relevant issues.
- Are expected to be committed to communicating the work of the Committee to the wider University community.

Please also refer to Appendix 1, which summarises key points of the Academic Council Standing Orders with particular emphasis on the role of committee members.

Appendix 1

Introduction

The below is intended to provide guidance to appointees to the sub-committees of Academic Council – both members and Chairs.

While the Terms of Reference for each Committee outline that Committee's role and responsibilities as delegated by the Academic Council, this document provides general guidance on the expectations and responsibilities of individual Committee members.

Academic Council & Delegated Authority

The Committees of Academic Council are established by the Academic Council and are delegated functions accordingly. The functions of the Academic Council are enshrined in the Universities Act 1997 as follows:

    a) to design and develop programmes of study,
    b) to establish structures to implement those programmes,
    c) to make recommendations on programmes for the development of research,
    d) to make recommendations relating to the selection, admission, retention and exclusion of students generally,
    e) to propose the form and contents of statutes to be made relating to the academic affairs of the university, including the conduct of examinations, the determination of examination results, the procedures for appeals by students relating to the results of such examinations and the evaluation of academic progress,
    f) to make recommendations for the awarding of fellowships, scholarships, bursaries, prizes or other awards,
    g) to make general arrangements for tutorial or other academic counselling,
    h) to perform any other functions, not in conflict with this Act, which may be delegated to it by the governing authority, and
    i) to implement any statutes and regulations made by the governing authority relating to any of the matters referred to in this subsection.

Under UCD's Statute 25, the Academic Council has the power to delegate any of its functions to the Registrar, to an officer or to a committee established in accordance with the Act. Academic Council or its relevant committees shall review the function, operation and decisions of such committees or officers on a regular basis.

Currently, the following Committees of Academic Council have delegated functions:

    ➢ Academic Council Executive Committee

- ➢ Academic Council Committee on Examinations
- ➢ Academic Council Committee on Academic Centres
- ➢ Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee
- ➢ Academic Council Committee on Student Appeals and Complaints
- ➢ Academic Council Committee on Student Conduct and Capacity
- ➢ Academic Council Committee on Honorary Degree & Major Awards
- ➢ Academic Council Committee for Academic Scholarships and Prizes
- ➢ University Programmes Board

The Academic Council meets at least twice per academic session (normally in November and April).

Committees' Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for each Committee set out the functions which have been delegated by Academic Council to that Committee. They also include information on the composition, support, conduct of business and quorum of the Committee.

Committees may not take decisions or make recommendations to the Academic Council which are outside the functions delegated to it by the Academic Council.

Academic Council Standing Orders

The Academic Council Standing Orders set out the rules by which the proceedings of the Academic Council, and its committees (where relevant) are operated. The full version is attached; however, the following sections provide a high-level summary of the provisions of the Standing Orders.

Role of the Chair

The Chair has a key role in the leadership and governance of the committee and the conduct of its business. The role of the Chair is separate and distinct from the role in which the Chair is employed by the University, or elsewhere.

The Chair reviews and approves the meeting agenda and papers in advance of their circulation to members.

The Chair's responsibilities include:
- ➢ Effectively managing the Agenda, ensuring that adequate time is available for discussion on agenda items, and particularly, strategic issues/items for Decision;
- ➢ Promote openness and debate among members and facilitate the contribution of all members;
- ➢ Ensuring that decisions are accurately captured for the purpose of minuting the meeting.

Conduct of Members

All members of the Academic Council and its committees are expected to:
- ➢ be collegial and constructive in approach.
- ➢ participate fully in the work of the Academic Council or Committee.
- ➢ take collective responsibility and individual ownership for the issues under the Committee remit

and for the discussion and resolution of relevant issues.
 ➢ be committed to communicating the work of the Committee to the wider University community.

Attendance

Members may not nominate others to attend meetings on their behalf, unless specifically permitted in that Committee's Terms of Reference.

If unable to attend a meeting, members are asked to formally notify the Committee Secretary in sufficient time so that apologies may be recorded at the meeting.

Attendance records of the meeting will be kept for reporting purposes, and failure to attend three successive meeting, or at least 50% of meetings in an academic session, may result in removal as per the Academic Council Standing Orders.

Membership Information

The full membership listing (and relevant category of membership) for each Committee is published online on the University Governance website.

This is updated at the beginning of each academic year to ensure accuracy. Members are asked to notify the Committee Secretary of any changes to academic titles so that the listing can be kept up to date.

Members are advised that membership listings may be shared with UCD HR for reporting purposes, to include University reporting on gender and on ethnicity.

Meeting Dates

All committees are required to meet at least twice per academic session. Meeting dates will be communicated to Committee members at the beginning of the academic year and will be published online on the University Governance website.

While every effort is made to adhere to the agreed schedule, meeting dates may change depending on external factors.

The published meeting dates are considered as Ordinary Meetings of the Committee. Members may be asked to participate in Special Meetings and Electronic Consultations as required and in line with the Academic Council Standing Orders.

Meeting Documentation & Meeting Conduct

Notification of an Ordinary Meeting, to include the Agenda Notification, will be issued to members two weeks ahead of the scheduled meeting.

The final agenda and documentation for a meeting will be circulated in accordance with the agreed timelines for each committee, however, the minimum period for circulation of papers is one week prior to the

meeting. Members are encouraged to review the 'Conduct of Meetings' section of the Academic Council Standing Orders which details procedures for bringing items of business to a committee.

It is worth noting the following provisions in particular:

➢ Other Business' will be used only to inform the meeting of agenda items which are proposed for the next following meeting or to convey briefly other items of information of a factual nature. Other business should not be used to introduce matters that require discussion and/or decision. Other business should be conveyed to the Secretary at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting and will only be included on the express permission of the Chair.

➢ Members can request that an item be moved from Formal Approval or Noting to Discussion/Decision. They should indicate this to the Secretary not less than three days in advance of the meeting, the Chair will decide the item's agenda position.

➢ Specific detailed feedback on any agenda item may be provided in writing to the Secretary at least three days in advance of the meeting and is encouraged from members unable to attend the meeting.

Decision Making

Decisions are determined by consensus, but where in the opinion of the Chair consensus is not possible, the issue will be decided by a majority of the votes of members present and voting on the issue.

Members who are not in agreement with a decision can request to have this recorded in the minutes. Debate and discussion are encouraged.

Conflict of interest and Confidentiality

Members are expected to treat all meeting documentation with due confidentiality and are required to comply with the University's Conflict of Interest Policy.

Useful Contacts

For any information relating to academic governance, committee membership or the Academic Council, please contact University Secretariat at univsec@ucd.ie

For specific information relating to committee papers, meetings and submission, please contact the relevant Committee Support indicated on the University Governance website.