



The UCD Social Sciences Taught Programmes Board

Terms of Reference

Changes approved by Academic Council 30 April 2025

1. Purpose and function of the Board

- 1.1. The UCD Social Sciences Taught Programmes Board is responsible to Academic Council or its relevant committee for the design, development, regulation and quality assurance and enhancement, and for overseeing the delivery of the programmes within its remit.
- 1.2. The Board is responsible for monitoring the overall performance of students registered to Social Sciences programmes, including Erasmus, Exchange and Occasional Fee Paying students, monitoring their progression and ensuring their academic welfare.
- 1.3. The Board will make recommendations on the structure and content of programmes, and advise on any regulations or policy which govern them, and will make decisions or recommendations regarding the admission, progression, continuation and graduation of the students registered to these programmes.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1. The Board, subject to review by the Academic Council or its relevant committee, shall for each programme within its remit:
 - (i) Promote excellence in education by articulating the aims and outcomes of the programme and agree a strategy and academic plan for the programme
 - (ii) Agree recommendations to Academic Council or its relevant committee regarding the structure and content of the programme and any special regulations relating to the programme
 - (iii) Ensure that contributing modules support the academic coherence of the programme
 - (iv) Establish, where appropriate and subject to the University's regulations and policies, programme-wide norms and guidelines regarding teaching and learning approaches, student workloads, student experience and assessment and grading practice
 - (v) Oversee the admission, retention and progression of students in accordance with the University's regulations and policies
 - (vi) Review and approve students' requests for recognition of prior and concurrent learning in consultation with the appropriate School(s)
 - (vii) Where a student's academic performance is deemed to be unacceptable by the Board, the Board will follow policies and procedures approved by Academic Council or its relevant committee

- (viii) Receive, consider, and act upon or respond to, recommendations from the Teaching and Learning Committee of the College of Social Sciences and Law
 - (ix) Assure and enhance the quality of the programme and student learning experience, and participate fully in the quality assurance/quality enhancement processes of the university
 - (x) Ensure implementation of University and College strategy, policies and procedures in teaching, learning, assessment and widening participation
 - (xi) Monitor progression and completion rates of students
 - (xii) Oversee the approval, scope, criteria, conditions and regulations associated with programme scholarships and prizes, including proposals to the CoSSL Executive and / or ACCASP as appropriate
 - (xiii) The Board shall support the development of strategic and operational plans for education within the College. These plans shall be prepared within the overall planning framework for the University, Colleges and Schools.
- 2.2. Where the Board proposes changes to Programmes that have significant resource implications, the College Principal must be consulted as part of the formal academic, operational planning and approval process.
- 2.3. The Board shall, within the resources made available by the University and the Colleges, ensure that appropriate supports are in place to meet the welfare, pastoral and academic administrative needs of students registered to the programmes.
- 2.4. The Board shall work with the University and the College of Social Sciences and Law to promote the programmes both internally and externally.
- 2.5. The Board shall be chaired by the Dean of Social Sciences or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences.
- 2.6. The Board shall support the Dean of Social Sciences and Associate Dean in fostering fruitful relationships with external and professional bodies, other stakeholders and alumni relevant to the programmes.
- 2.7. The Board may form such and so many sub-committees as it deems necessary to perform its functions, and may delegate any of its functions to a sub-committee. The Board Chair shall be entitled to chair, or nominate the chair to any sub-committee established by the Board.
- 2.8. The Board shall appoint a member of faculty as Programme Director, reporting to the Chair of the Board, for each taught programme it governs. The Programme Director's responsibilities are as approved by the Academic Council or its relevant committee.
- 2.9. The Board shall establish so many Programme Examination Boards, as subcommittees of the Board, as are required for the programmes it governs. The responsibilities of the Programme Examination Board shall be as per the Academic Regulations.
- 2.10. The Board shall hold a Programme Forum, at least once per year. The Programme Forum should include all academic staff involved in the delivery of the programmes. The major strategic and operational decisions facing the Board during the trimester should be presented to the Forum, and the input and advice of the Forum sought and taken into consideration by the Board.

2.11. Chairs of the Board sub-committees must be voting members of the Board.

3. Dean of Social Sciences

3.1. The Dean of Social Sciences is ex officio the Principal of the College of Social Sciences and Law and respective appointments are co-terminus.

3.2. The Dean of Social Sciences or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences shall, in respect of each of the programmes within the remit of the Board:

- (i) Chair and ensure the proper, effective and efficient and operation of the Board
- (ii) Offer academic leadership by promoting innovation and best practice in the design, development, delivery and quality enhancement of the programme
- (iii) Develop and maintain effective collaborative relationships with the Principal, College Executive, Heads of School, and School Heads of Teaching and Learning of the College of Social Sciences and Law and other schools associated with Social Sciences programmes
- (iv) Lead the quality assurance/quality enhancement processes for the programme and participate where appropriate in the quality assurance/quality enhancement processes of the university
- (v) Oversee the implementation of University strategy, policies and procedures in teaching, learning, assessment and widening participation
- (vi) Oversee the effective and efficient management and administration of the programme including the development of the Social Sciences Office, in collaboration with relevant University offices
- (vii) Build and develop the internal and external profile of the programme
- (viii) Liaise and build effective relationships with external and professional bodies, other stakeholders and alumni relevant to the programme
- (ix) Perform ceremonial and representative roles in respect of the programme
- (x) Perform such other duties as may be assigned by the President or the Registrar.

3.3. The Dean of Social Sciences may make decisions in regard to the programmes within the remit of the Board, or the students applying to or registered to those programmes, on the delegated authority of the Board.

3.4. The Associate Dean for Social Sciences shall be an ex-officio member of the College of Social Sciences and Law Executive.

3.5. In respect of the Programmes, the Dean of Social Sciences will report and be accountable, via the Registrar to the President.

4. Composition of the Board

4.1. The following shall be voting members of the Board:

- (i) Dean of Social Sciences (*ex officio*)
- (ii) Associate Dean of Social Sciences (Chair)
- (iii) The Heads (or senior academic nominee with decision-making capacity) of the following Schools:
 - Archaeology
 - Economics
 - Education
 - Geography
 - Information and Communication Studies

- Law
- Philosophy
- Politics and International Relations
- Psychology
- Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice
- Sociology
- Mathematics and Statistics

- (iv) Up to four Programme Directors as nominated by the Chair of the Board in consultation with relevant sub committees
- (v) The heads of the following units (or their nominees): School of Art History and Cultural Policy, School of Classics, School of Earth Sciences, School of English, Drama and Film, School of Irish, Celtic Studies and Folklore, School of Languages, Culture and Linguistics, School of History, School of Music, Institute for Chinese Studies, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning.
- (vi) Six student members nominated by the Students' Union, with at least one being taught graduate, and of which there should be diverse representation.

4.2. The following shall be non-voting members of the Board

- (i) The CoSSL College Office Director
- (ii) Student adviser(s) associated with programmes overseen by the Board
- (iii) Careers and Skills Consultant for the College of Social Sciences and Law, UCD Career Development Centre.

4.3. The CoSSL College Office Director or their nominee shall act as Secretary to the Board.

4.4 Up to four members (academic, administrative or student members) may be co-opted by the Board to ensure appropriate expertise is available to conduct its business effectively.

5. Conduct of Business

- 5.1. The Board should meet at least 4 times per academic year; meetings shall be aligned to the schedule of meetings of the appropriate University committees.
- 5.2. The meetings of the Board shall be convened by the Chair of the Board, with a minimum of seven days notice of a meeting.
- 5.3. Meeting papers will be circulated to the Board five working days in advance of the meeting.
- 5.4. Where the Dean is not able to attend a meeting of the Board, the Dean may nominate a member of the Board to act as chairperson for that meeting.
- 5.5. Where a nominated Board member is unable to attend a meeting, a delegate, also an academic from the School, may be identified in advance of the meeting. Recommendations from a School will not be approved unless an academic representative from the School is present at the meeting, however Board members cannot routinely delegate their responsibilities.
- 5.6. A meeting shall be considered quorate, when a third of the members entitled to vote are present or represented. The minutes will record attendance and these will form part of an Annual Report.