

Terms of Reference – Academic Board (GOV-TOR-003)

Purpose

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

Key Responsibilities

Academic Management, Governance and Quality Assurance

- Establishes the principles underpinning education programme quality in RCPI and approves the Quality Framework.
- Oversees the implementation of academic processes.
- Considers the development, management and enhancement of all academic matters and advises the Senior Management Team on their resource requirements.
- Make recommendations to Council on the academic management and governance and quality assurance arrangements in any Memorandum of Understanding established by RCPI.

Education Programmes

- Approves and periodically reviews programmes and maintains oversight of all stages of their development and provision.
- Ensures that appropriate academic standards are consistently adopted, applied and maintained in education programmes, partnerships and all educational arrangements, and, where relevant effectively incorporates professional standards and codes of practice.
- Maintains oversight of and ensures effective implementation of due diligence processes associated with partnerships and joint programmes.

Programme Board

- The overall responsibility for assessment strategy rests with the Academic Board and is ordinarily delegated to the Programme Boards.
- Approves the appointment and removal of external examiners.

Sub-Committees

- Approves the establishment of ad hoc committees and panels (and their terms of reference) to deal with specific academic issues e.g., reviews, appeals and disciplinary matters.
- Establishes and approves the terms of reference of various subcommittees including their decision-making powers.
- May delegate some decision-making authority and responsibility to its subcommittees, or other appropriate bodies within RCPI. In these instances, the Academic Board will consider periodic reports and referrals from the relevant body.
- May establish other committees to oversee areas of academic import, including the creation of various bodies to which decision-making powers may be delegated in respect of the management and governance of education programmes.

External Quality Assurance

- Monitors compliance with and approves applications and reports for accrediting bodies.
- Approves implementation plans following regulatory events and quality assurance engagement and monitors progress towards their implementation.

Reporting

- Board reports to Council
- Provides and receives regular updates to Senior Management and the Executive Board
- Requests reports from any College departments or the Board's subcommittees reports relating to
- any aspect of academic activity
- Publishes an Annual Report which includes reports of its subcommittees

Membership

Ex-Officio Membership:

- Director of Education and Academic Programmes (Chairperson)
- Programme Leads
- 1 Independent member (w/ relevant expertise)
- Lead of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Head of Professional Affairs
- Education Development Manager
- Student Support Officer
- Quality Assurance Manager (Secretary)

Elected Members:

- Learner Representatives x 2
- Teaching Faculty x 2

Other:

- Up to 2 Co-optees

Specific Procedural Rules

Nature of meetings

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

Frequency of Meetings

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

Quorum

- The quorum for a committee meeting is 50% of the membership rounded up to the nearest whole number.
- Every reasonable effort should be made to ensure the quorum includes at least one learner representative.
- Where a loss of quorum is identified, the meeting may be adjourned until a time the Chairperson determines.

Decisions

- Decisions are normally made by consensus, but in the absence of consensus by open vote.
- Where there is a tied vote, the Chairperson has the casting vote.
- Decisions may be made at a duly called and constituted meeting, or by a resolution in writing to all members which is approved in writing by at least a quorum of members.
- Where any voting member could be perceived to have a conflict of interest in relation to the matter being considered, they will be recused from the decision-making process. Conflict of Interest statement item will be included on all agendas.
- 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.
- All decisions must be formally recorded. In the absence of a formal record, any apparent decision shall be deemed null and void.

Self-assessment

- The Academic Board undertakes a self-assessment of its performance against these terms of reference in its inaugural year and thereafter every three years.
- Information arising from that review is provided to a nominated person who is external to RCPI along with any information the nominee requests to facilitate its review of the Boards performance and its membership.

Review of the Terms of Reference

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

Term of Office

The term of office of the Academic Board is two years for the teaching faculty representatives and the independent member. The term of office for learner representatives is determined by the duration of their programme, likely one year.

Members of Academic Board roles

Director of Education and Academic Programmes

The Director of Education and Academic Programmes is an experienced third level educator and leads the strategic development of education within RCPI, working closely with the Council, Executive and relevant RCPI Committees. The Director reports directly to the CEO. The Director of Education and Academic Programmes acts as Chair of the Academic Board and is supported by approved structures and procedures.

Lead of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The role of Lead of Teaching, Learning and Assessment is to support the Director of Education and Academic Programmes by providing leadership and strategic advice on matters relating to teaching, learning and assessment, and the quality of the educational experience. The Lead of Teaching, Learning and Assessment plays a central strategic role for both existing and new teaching programmes. They support and promote the development of best practice in curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment within RCPI.

Programme Leads

Programme leads are recruited and selected as part of the programme approval process and chair their respective Programme Board for the development of the curriculum. Programme leads have subject matter and academic expertise.

Independent External Member (with relevant expertise)

The Academic Board shall appoint a member who is independent of any role within RCPI and is not affiliated with RCPI in any form (i.e. not a learner, member, fellow or current/past employee). The Independent External Member is nominated by the Governance and Nominations committee to provide independent and external expertise, free from bias. The individual appointed will be selected based on any gaps in skills, demographics or specific expertise which may benefit the purpose of the Academic Board.

Head of Professional Affairs

Reporting to the CEO, the Head of Professional Affairs has a strategic leadership and management role in the quality assurance of education programmes for doctors and other health professionals. As a member of the Senior Management Team, the Head of Professional Affairs develops and maintains strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders and representatives.

Education Development Manager

Reporting to the Head of Professional Affairs, the Education Development Manager role is to achieve and maintain academic excellence by researching, developing and providing medical education to national and international best practice standards. The Education Development Manager and team works in collaboration with RCPI education stakeholders to provide a full range of educational expertise, support and services in the provision of high-quality educational interventions.

Student Support Officer

Reporting to the Head of Professional Affairs, the Student Support Officer provides an effective and customer-focused support service to learners. Responsibilities include advice and support to meet the needs of learners on a range of personal, pastoral and academic issues and provision of a seamless referral service to specialist services and delivering efficient and professional information.

Quality Assurance Manager (Secretary)

The Quality Assurance Manager has responsibility for the development and implementation of a system and culture of Quality Assurance and Improvement within RCPI. The post holder has primary responsibility for ensuring that the activities of RCPI meet the accreditation requirements of Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Reporting to the CEO as part of the Corporate Affairs Team, the Quality Manager leads on a College-wide Quality Management System, focusing on the key areas of RCPI: Postgraduate Training and Education, Professional Affairs and International Affairs.

Elected Members:

Learner Representatives x 2

Learners are represented in the academic governance structure, participate in internal and external quality reviews, and are engaged in decision making and quality management and enhancement. Learners are represented on the Academic Board. Two learners are elected from among the learner body for a one-year term. Their role is to ensure that Academic Board decision-making consistently benefits from consideration of learner voices and perspectives.

Teaching Faculty x 2

Two members are elected from amongst the teaching body to share the perspectives and expertise of Teaching Faculty on the Academic Board for a two-year term. Their role is in line with other members of the Academic Board and to ensure that elected members of Faculty are involved in Academic Board decision making.

Approved by	Date
Approved by Council	November 2020
Review	Date
Next review date	November 2023