

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

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## Purpose

The Academic Board serves as the principal academic authority within the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI), dedicated to ensuring excellence in education, continuing professional development, lifelong learning and research in medical education. Its primary purposes include the formulation and implementation of academic policies, providing strategic advice to the RCPI's Senior Leadership Team, and overseeing the development and implementation of RCPI education strategies.

The Academic Board, through oversight of education, contributes to RCPI's mission to develop and support trainees, learners, members and fellows to be leaders in healthcare delivery.

The Board ensures that academic standards are maintained and enhanced, promotes innovative teaching and learning practices, and supports the continuous improvement of academic programmes.

## Key Responsibilities

### 1. Strategic Advisory Role

- **Strategic Planning:** Provide strategic advice to RCPI leadership on academic matters including long-term strategic planning on academic and professional development initiatives in line with RCPI's overall strategy.
- **Quality Standards:** Establish the principles underpinning academic and CPD programme quality in RCPI and approve the Quality Framework.
- **Risk Management:** Assess risks related to education and CPD activities and advise on mitigation strategies.
- **Management and Governance:** Consider and approve academic governance frameworks across college activities ensuring quality processes are in line with international best practice.

### 2. Education Strategy Implementation

- **Offerings Development:** Oversee the approval and development of new academic and professional development programmes and maintains oversight of all stages of their development and provision.
- **Programme Monitoring:** Oversee continuous improvement cycles including scheduled periodic review quality audits and feedback on programmes to ensure the highest academic standards are consistently adopted, applied and maintained in all RCPI education offerings. Where relevant effectively incorporates professional standards and codes of practice.
- **Innovative Teaching and Learning:** Promote and support innovative teaching and learning practices.
- **Assessment Strategy:** Has overall responsibility over compliance for summative assessment as delegated to the Programme Exam Board in alignment with RCPI's Assessment strategy. Where the Academic Board identifies exceptional circumstances, the Board may fulfil the role of the Programme Exam Board to make summative assessment decisions.
- **Professional Competence:** Oversee the development and delivery of all Professional Competence Schemes within RCPI

### 3. Policy Development and Implementation

- **Formulation of Academic Policies:** Advise and approve policies related to academic standards, assessment, and quality assurance.
- **Policy Review and Update:** Regularly review and update existing policies to ensure they remain relevant and effective.
- **Compliance Monitoring:** Ensure compliance with internal policies and external regulatory requirements.

### 4. Academic Standards and Quality Assurance

- **Programme Board Oversight:** Approves the establishment and membership of programme Boards and ensures that academic standards are maintained and enhanced across all programs.
- **Quality Assurance Processes:** Implement and monitor quality assurance processes to uphold the integrity of education offerings.
- **Accreditation:** Oversee accreditation processes and ensure RCPI education offerings meet accreditation standards as deemed appropriate for their development and delivery including consideration and advise on requirements from the Medical Council in relation to Professional Competence Scheme.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Promote diversity and inclusion within academic programmes, ensuring that policies and practices support equitable access and participation.

### 5. Continuous Improvement

- **Feedback and Review:** Oversee existing mechanisms for collecting and action arising in response to feedback from learners, faculty, and other stakeholders.
- **CPD / PCS Reports:** Review reports on Professional Competence Schemes & CPD Event Approvals.
- **Best Practices and Professional Development:** Support the establishment of evidence-based teaching and learning best practices and continuous professional development of faculty and staff.
- **Research:** Develop and oversee the implementation of a research strategy in line with RCPI's mission and goals.

### 6. Sub-Committees

- **Establishment** Approves the establishment and Terms of Reference of ad hoc committees, sub-committees and panels to deal with specific issues e.g., reviews, appeals and disciplinary matters.
- **Delegation:** 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.

## Reporting

- The Academic Board:
  - Reports to RCPI Council and provides updates each quarter.
  - Shares information to RCPI faculties and Institutes on a regular basis throughout the year and through their Annual Reports.
  - Provides and receives regular updates to Senior Leadership 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 & Terms of Office

### Ex-Officio Membership

Ex-officio members have membership of the Academic Board by virtue of holding a specific position within RCPI. Their membership commences on the date they assume the position that confers this status and lasts for as long as the individual holds the qualifying position. Membership ceases automatically if the individual no longer occupies the position.

- Dean of Education (Chairperson)
- Director of Professional Competence
- Programme Leads of RCPI academic programmes
- Director of Training, Education & Lifelong Learning (Head of Function)
- Head of Operations
- Learning Innovation & Development Manager
- Manager, Professional Competence Department
- Quality Assurance Manager
- Student Support Officer
- Board Secretary

### Elected Members

Members may be elected to the Academic Board or sub-committees for a one-year term, with the option to be nominated for a second term. Elected members may be nominated as follows:

Role	Profile	Nominator
1 independent member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Independent member with expertise in education and/or assessment.</li> </ul>	Director of Training, Education & Lifelong Learning ((Head of Function)
3 Learner Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Learner from an RCPI administered programme</li> <li>1 Learner from a programme ran under collaborative provision</li> <li>1 participant on an RCPI CPD programme</li> </ul>	Programme Participants
Teaching Faculty	2 x Teaching Faculty from RCPI academic or CPD programmes	Programme Leads

### Co-opted Members

The Chairperson may co-opt one representative from each organisation with which RCPI has a collaborative arrangement for the provision of education.

## Specific Procedural Rules

### Nature of meetings

- Board meetings may be held face-to face, by telephone, videoconference, or other electronic means.
- Programme reports to be circulated to members a minimum of 5 days in advance of scheduled meetings and any items for discussion (including new development proposals) to be raised prior to agenda circulation.
- 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 sufficiently in advance of a Council meeting as to enable updates to be provided to Council.
- The Board determines its meeting schedule annually in advance and meet as scheduled.

### Quoracy

- 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.
- Each Ex-Officio and Elected member has one vote. Co-opted members do not have voting rights.
- 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.
- A 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.
- Decisions on specified matters may be executed by the Chairperson outside of a Board meeting, provided that the Board has granted its prior approval for such delegation.
- 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.

## Roles of Members of the Academic Board – Ex-Officio Members

### **Dean of Education (Chairperson)**

The Dean of Education 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. Providing strategic direction and oversight for education in RCPI, the Dean ensures standards are maintained in education development and assessment across all education initiatives and provides leadership, expertise and guidance in the development of appropriate education programmes. The Dean oversees the appointment of programme leads and Faculty for education programmes. The Dean is a member of the executive board and reports directly to the CEO. The Dean of Education and Academic Programmes acts as Chair of the Academic Board and is supported by approved structures and procedures.

### **Director of Professional Competence**

The Director of Professional Competence provides the leadership necessary for RCPI to ensure continued and enhanced strategic management and development of RCPI's Professional Competence Schemes. The Director works collaboratively with the Deans/Chairs of RCPI's Training Bodies, the Forum PCS Sub Committee and the Medical Council on key strategic professional competence matters. The Director also plays a significant role in providing input into other activities within the College, such as educational development, research and policy development.

### **Programme Leads of RCPI academic programmes**

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.

### **Director of Training, Education and Lifelong Learning (Head of Function)**

Reporting to the CEO, the Director of Training, Education and Lifelong Learning (Head of Function) 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 RCPI Senior Leadership Team, the Director develops and maintains strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders and representatives.

### **Head of Operations**

Reporting to the CFO, the Head of Operations provides leadership for all learner-facing operational activity, including faculty management. Leading the newly centralised Operations Team—including direct oversight of the Manager, Professional Competence Department, the Head of Operations oversees processes for application, enrolment, delivery, assessment and progression of learners on academic programmes and CPD activities delivered by RCPI.

### **Learning, Innovation & Development Manager**

Reporting to the Director of Training, Education & Lifelong Learning (Head of Function), the Learning, Innovation & Development Manager role is to achieve and maintain academic excellence by researching, developing, and providing medical education to national and international best practice



standards. Learning Innovation & 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.

### **Manager, Professional Competence Department**

The Professional Competence Manager has overall responsibility for the management, development, implementation and delivery of strategic and operational goals and objectives in line with the strategic business plan. Reporting to the Head of Operations, the Manager works closely with the Director of Professional Competence, Deans/Chairs of RCPI's Training Bodies and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that the highest possible standards are maintained in relation to the management and delivery of RCPI's 11 Professional Competence Schemes and CPD Accreditation.

### **Quality Assurance Manager**

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.

### **Student Support Officer**

Reporting to the Director of Training, Education & Lifelong Learning (Head of Function), Student Support Officer function is carried out by Wellbeing Manager and 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.

### **Board Secretary**

Reporting to the Learning Innovation & Development Manager, the Board Secretary ensures that agendas and supporting materials are delivered to members in advance of meetings and collates meeting decisions and agreements. Responsibilities include that all members are provided with attendance details/teleconference information in advance of meetings.

## **Roles of Members of the Academic Board – Elected Members**

### **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 Director of Training, Education & Lifelong Learning (Head of Function) 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.

### **Learner Representatives**

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 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**

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.

## **Roles of Members of the Academic Board – Co-opted members**

### **Collaborative Organisation Representatives**

The Chairperson may co-opt one representative from each organisation with which RCPI has a collaborative arrangement for the provision of education. These representatives offer insights from their organisation's perspective and provide valuable input to ensure that programme development, delivery, and evaluation meet both RCPI standards and the needs of our learners. While they may not have full voting rights, their participation is key to enhancing educational quality and bridging the gap between RCPI and our external partners.

## **END OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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