

Terms of Reference – Programme Board (GOV-TOR-008)

Purpose

The Programme Board is responsible for the strategic oversight, development, and continuous monitoring of an academic programme, ensuring it meets academic and professional standards. The Board ensures that learners receive high-quality education, fair assessment, and appropriate opportunities for progression.

A Programme Board operates as a subcommittee of the Academic Board and reports to it on a quarterly basis.

Key Responsibilities

Development of programme

- Ensuring appropriate stakeholder consultation including engaging with faculty, external bodies and prospective learners in the design of a programme.
- Actively engage in all aspects of the curriculum development process including agreement of minimum intended programme learning outcomes, module content, mode of delivery, assessment strategy and review.
- Through Programme Board member expertise, offer advice on current and emerging evidence in relation to the subject matter and overall programme content.
- Ensure alignment with QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), Assessment and Standards (Revised 2013) and the Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018) as relevant, RCPI policy and relevant national policy.
- Formally approve the programme curriculum and recommend to the RCPI Academic Board that it will be provided as an official RCPI education offering.

Ongoing Monitoring

- Ensure that ongoing programme monitoring is conducted, including learner recruitment, retention, progression, outcomes and feedback.
- Analyse learner performance trends and address areas of concern.
- Respond to emerging policy, practice and evidence to ensure that the programme remains current.
- Identify any areas of risk or opportunities for continuous improvement.

Governance:

- Comply with RCPI's governing instruments (Charter, By-laws and Standing Orders).
- Ensure that recommendations made by external examiner and QQI (where appropriate) are considered and implemented as appropriate.
- Ensure that programme modifications, and curriculum changes are formally approved by the Programme Board and recommended to the RCPI Academic Board for final approval in line with LID-Pol-026 (Programme Development Policy) and LID-SOP-045 (Programme Change Procedure).
- Maintain a formal record of decisions and actions.
- Report into the Academic Board on a quarterly basis highlighting ongoing programme performance and items that require Academic Board discussion or ratification.

Oversight

- Ensure programme faculty are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver a high-quality education programme.
- Ensure programme content (physical or online) is of an appropriately high quality to ensure an effective learning experience.
- Determine appropriate assessment approaches for the programme.
- Ensure that a Programme Exam board is properly constituted and includes an external examiner to oversee the assessment and examination process in line with TOR – Programme Exam Board (GOV-TOR-009).

Other Responsibilities:

- Consider opportunities for learner progression on completion of the programme.
- Identify appropriate faculty members who will positively engage in the delivery of the programme content.

Membership

When applicable, board members will receive a detailed role description at the start of their engagement.

- Programme Lead
- Module Leads
- Learning Experience Designer
- Learner representative
- Patient representative (where appropriate)

- Programme coordinator
- Board Secretary

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 as often as required during the development phase and then quarterly for the overall running of the programme.
- The Board determines its meeting schedule annually in advance and meet as scheduled.

Quorum

- The quorum for a Board 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 consensus cannot be reached, the Chairperson has the casting vote, but the matter may also be escalated to the Academic Board in cases of significant academic policy implications.
- 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.

Programmatic Review

- The Programme Board undertakes a self-assessment every three years, reviewing:
 - Board performance against Terms of Reference
 - Learner outcomes and progression
 - Effectiveness of assessment and teaching strategies
 - Alignment with accreditation and quality assurance requirements
 - Stakeholder feedback (learners, faculty, external examiner, employers)
- 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 Academic Board reviews these terms of reference every three years, in conjunction with the RCPI Quality Office.

Terms of Office

- The term of office of the Programme Board is three years, which may be extended by the Academic Board for one further term. The term of office for learner representatives is determined by the duration of their programme, to a maximum of two years.

Approved by	Date
Approved by Academic Board	November 2020
Review	Date
Reviewed	March 2025
Next review date	March 2028