



CARLOW COLLEGE
ST. PATRICK'S

Academic Council
Constitution

1. GENERAL FUNCTION OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

The Academic Council is responsible for the governing and management of the academic affairs and is the primary decision-making body for all academic matters at Carlow College, St. Patrick's. It sets in place the academic governance framework and oversees the establishment, maintenance and development of quality assurance policies and procedures for all educational programmes within the College. It reports to the Governing Body via the Academic Committee of the Governing Body (Carlow College, St. Patrick's, *Instrument of Governance*, Ref. 11.1). The Academic Council conducts its work in accordance with relevant State legislation and with policies and procedures as outlined by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

2. PARTICULAR FUNCTIONS OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

The particular functions of the Academic Council, as set out in the Terms of Reference approved by the Board, are:

1. To oversee and assure the quality and standards of academic matters in the College, particularly where programmes and activities lead to the award of degrees.
2. To plan, co-ordinate, develop and supervise the educational work of the College, maintaining high academic standards and safeguarding the educational ethos of the College; the Academic Council informs the Management Board of the resource requirements for its activities.
3. To approve preliminary programme proposals and final programme proposals, including validation documents, for new academic programmes; these decisions are communicated to the Management Board and Governing Body.
4. To approve the programme review report and programme validation document as part of the cyclical programmatic review and re-validation process; these decisions are communicated to the Management Board and Governing Body.
5. To oversee the development, maintenance and approval of academic-related Quality Assurance policies and procedures.
6. To establish and oversee the academic governance framework: constitute, reconstitute and discontinue committees; this includes the approval of sub-committees' terms of reference and reports from constituted sub-committees of the Academic Council.
7. To approve organisational reports which come under the remit of Academic Council.
8. To oversee assessment and examination procedures and ratify the appointment of external examiners.
9. To maintain an academic risk register and communicate any changes to the Management Board.
10. To promote and recognise excellence in teaching and research.
11. To make recommendations for the awards of scholarships, prizes, bursaries and other awards which recognise academic excellence.

12. To approve all academic-related Memoranda of Understanding and / or Memoranda of Agreement established by the College.
13. To exercise related functions which will facilitate the administration of the academic affairs of the College.

The Secretary will prepare and circulate the agenda and keep records of meetings adhering to the *Guidelines Regarding Keeping Records of Meetings*. Any resolutions of the Academic Council will be communicated to the Management Board and Governing Body. An agreed minute of meetings will be circulated to all staff members.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

3.1 *Ex Officio* Membership:

The Academic Council is constituted by *ex officio* members who sit on the Council by the nature of their function within the College.

President;

College Vice Presidents;

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar;

Assistant Registrar for Academic Affairs;

Programme Director, Arts and Humanities;

Programme Director, English and History;

Programme Director, Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care);

Programme Director, Social, Political & Community Studies;

Programme Director, Leadership in Therapeutic Child and Social Care (MA);

Programme Director, Irish Regional History (MA / PGD)

Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee;

Head of Student Services / Chair of the Learner Resources Committee;

Librarian / Library Representative;

Quality Assurance Officer / Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee;

IT and Student Systems Manager;

3.2 *Non-Ex Officio* Members:

- Two Academic Staff Members elected by all Academic Staff for a term of three years.
- One Academic Professional Support Staff Member elected by Academic Professional Support Staff Members for a term of three years. The following offices are represented: Admissions, Academic Administration, SRMS, Marketing, Student Recruitment, and IT.

- Two Student Representatives elected by the student body who hold the positions of Students' Union President and Students' Union Vice President for Education and Communications.

3.3 Organisational Structure Change:

As the College evolves and its organisational structure changes, membership of the Academic Council should reflect the organisational changes.

3.4 Committee Structures and Working Groups:

The Academic Council may from time to time create committees or short-term working groups, as deemed appropriate, to report to the Academic Council on specific matters.

3.5 Attendance of Non-Members:

The Academic Council may invite non-members to attend meetings for the duration of the discussion on any particular agenda item.

3.6 Gender Equality:

Carlow College, St. Patrick's is committed to gender equality. As such, the College will uphold and reflect these values in the composition of the Academic Council where possible, by striving to have at least 40% of each gender represented on the Council.

4. OFFICERS OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

The Academic Council is appointed by the President under devolved authority from the Governing Body (Ref. *Instrument of Governance*, 11.3). The President chairs meetings of the Academic Council.

If the President is not in attendance, a College Vice President or the Vice President for Academic Affairs / Registrar will act as Chair.

5. PERIOD OF OFFICE OF MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Any person who is an *ex officio* member of the Academic Council by virtue of their function within the College, shall automatically cease to be a member of the Academic Council upon ceasing to hold such office.

Non *ex officio* members will be appointed for a term of three years.

6. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

A member shall disclose to the Academic Council any potential conflict of interest or potential bias arising during their membership.

A member of the Academic Council shall take no part in any deliberation or decision relating to a matter in respect of which that member has any potential conflict of interest or potential bias.

7. MEETINGS

7.1 Schedule

A schedule of meetings shall be agreed for the full academic year and published in the College calendar.

7.2 Frequency

The Academic Council will meet monthly in semester time and at least twice a semester. The President may convene additional meetings as circumstances and need arise.

7.3 Notice

Each member of the Academic Council shall be entitled to five working days' notice of a meeting.

7.4 Agenda

An agenda shall be circulated a minimum of three working days prior to the meeting. All papers relevant to the meeting shall be available a minimum of three working days prior to the meeting. Items tabled under AOB shall be for discussion or noting only.

There are standard reports that will be submitted to the Academic Council containing items for information, discussion and / or approval. The reports to be submitted include: Programme Reports; Committee Reports; a report from the Head of Student Services; a report from the IT and Student Systems Manager (to include Academic Administration, IT and SRMS) and a report from the Office of the Registrar (to include Admissions, Marketing, Student Recruitment and International). The Students' Union is a standing item on the agenda and its elected office holders can submit a report or raise any issues that they may have.

7.5 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings shall:

- Adhere to the Guidelines Regarding Keeping Records of Meetings.
- Record decisions made by the Academic Council.
- Be formally proposed and seconded by members present at the following meeting. Once adopted the minutes shall be signed by the Chairperson.
- Be circulated in draft form to all members of the Academic Council within five working days of the meeting taking place.

7.6 Quorum

The quorum for a meeting shall be fifty percent plus one of the current membership of the Academic Council, one of whom shall be either the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson.

7.7 Voting at Meetings

All decisions of the Academic Council shall normally be carried by consensus. However, where this is not possible, a simple majority of votes shall decide, and in the case of equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.

8. Reporting

The work of the Academic Council is reported to the Academic Committee of the Governing Body.