



**CARLOW
COLLEGE**
ST. PATRICK'S

Terms of Reference

Academic Council

Section 1: Remit

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).

Section 2: Membership

The Academic Council is appointed by the President under devolved authority from the Governing Body. Elected members serve for a term of three years, with the possibility of further terms. Depending on the agenda, others may be invited to be present for part, or all, of a meeting. 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 will act as Chair. 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.

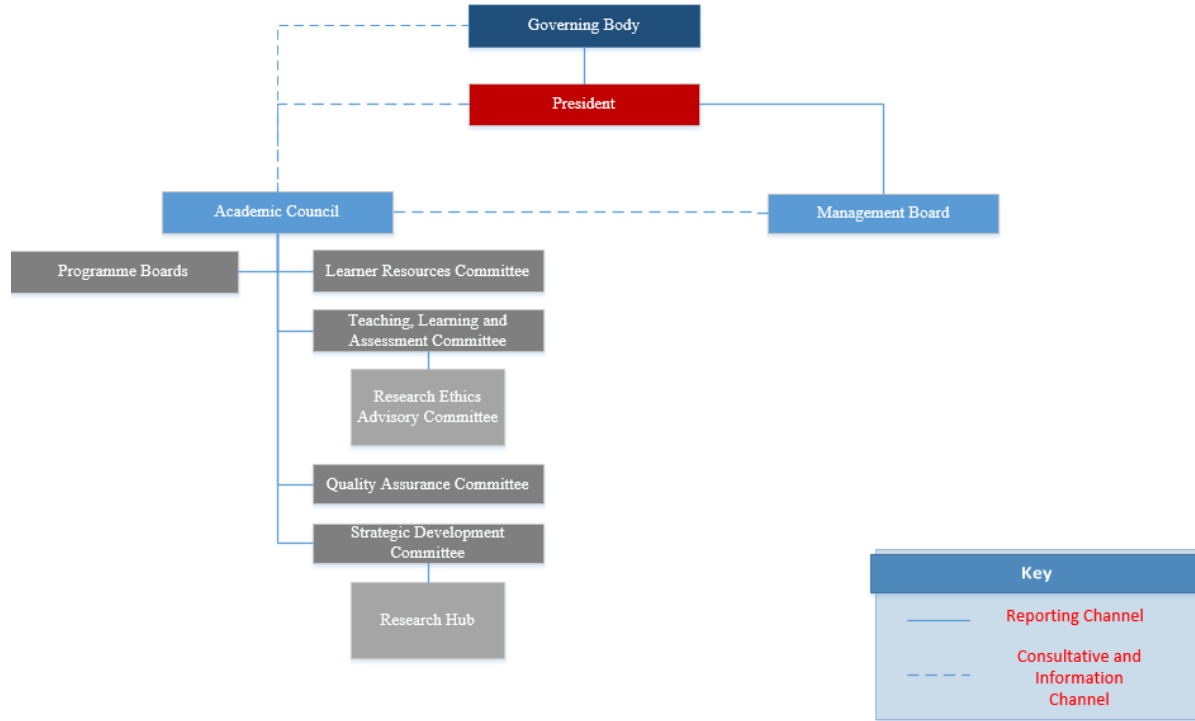
Function	Mode of Selection
President	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar	<i>Ex Officio</i>
College Vice Presidents	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Assistant Registrar for Academic Affairs	<i>Ex Officio</i>

Programme Director, Arts and Humanities	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Programme Director, English and History	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Programme Director, Applied Social Studies (Professional Social Care)	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Programme Director, Social, Political & Community Studies	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Programme Director, Leadership in Therapeutic Child and Social Care (MA)	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Programme Director, Irish Regional History (PDip / MA)	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Chair of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Head of Student Services / Chair of the Learner Resources Committee	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Librarian / Library Representative	<i>Ex Officio</i>
Quality Assurance Officer / Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee	<i>Ex Officio</i>
IT and Student Systems Manager	<i>Ex Officio</i>
2 Staff Representatives (Academic)	Elected by all Academic Staff for a term of 3 years (the terms of office are staggered)
1 Staff Representative (Academic Professional Support Staff)	Elected by Academic Professional Support Staff for a term of 3 years
2 Student Representatives (Students' Union President and Students' Union Vice President for Education and Communication)	As elected, every year, by the student body.

Section 3: Reporting Structure



Committee Structure – Academic Council



The Academic Council is the highest academic approving committee in the College and informs and consults the Management Board and the Academic Committee of the Governing Body in relation to the planning and co-ordination of the educational work of the College. The Strategic Development Committee has a consultative and information channel to the Academic Council. A number of College committees have a reporting channel directly to Academic Council: Programme Boards; Learner Resources Committee; Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee; Quality Assurance Committee and the Strategic Development Committee. Other committees report to the Academic Council through the before-mentioned Programme Boards and committees: Research Ethics Advisory Committee; Practice Placement Advisory Committee; Catechetics Placement Committee and the Research Hub.

Section 4: Terms of Reference

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.

Section 5: Frequency of Meetings

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