

Terms of Reference - Academic Council Committees

The following are the committees of the Academic Council:

- Planning and Coordination Committee
- Academic Processes Committee
- Research and Innovation Committee
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee
- Technological University Transition Committee
- Collaborative Provision Committee
- QA processes Covid-19 Committee (QAC-19 committee)
- Designated Awarding Body Committee

Recommendations of committees of Academic Council need to be as per statute, ratified by Academic Council.

Planning and Co-ordination Committee

The Planning and Coordination committee has delegated responsibility for recommending approval of all awards offered by the Institute. Further, the committee has delegated responsibility for overseeing approval of all new programme submissions including sub-degree, degree and post graduate programmes and agreeing material modifications to existing programmes.

Terms of Reference of the Planning and Coordination Committee

1. To ensure robust academic quality assurance for new programmes and modifications to QQI programmes
2. To agree template and presentation standards for programme documentation
3. To agree guidelines for panels of assessors evaluating new academic programmes
4. Review and approve proposals for new and modified programmes, including changes to the mode of delivery.
5. To establish an audit system of recommendations of Panels of Assessors for new programmes and School Planning and Programme Revalidations.
6. To set out procedures for Institutional Reviews.
7. Propose and oversee the enactment of the procedures for School and institutional reviews
8. Review proposals for programme delivery and/or award collaborations with other providers
9. To complete an annual report for the Academic Council on the workings of the committee
10. To consider and report on matters referred to it by the Academic Council

Related Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 [Consolidated (1992-2011)] Section 10, 3

(a) to design, develop and assist in implementing courses of study consistent with the functions of the college;

Related ESG Standards**1.2 Design and approval of programmes**

Standard: Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework

1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Standard: Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

Standard: Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Academic Processes Committee

The Institute has a responsibility to fairness and consistency in assessment and that the rights of full time and part-time learners are acknowledged and enshrined in its procedures and policies.

This Committee is responsible for establishing procedures and policies in relation to student admissions to the Institute including non-standard and mature students, students attending part time programmes and the recognition of prior learning. It is responsible for maintaining documentation on admission policies and procedures.

It is also responsible for policies and procedures in respect of the academic standards of all programmes and examinations. It is also responsible for recommending the appointment of external examiners to the Academic Council and for agreeing Marks and Standards and for issuing regulations for the proper running of examinations.

Terms of Reference of the Academic Processes Committee

1. To review procedures and make recommendations to the Academic Council for the proper conduct of Institute academic business
2. To consider and respond on matters referred to it by Academic Council
3. To establish policies and procedures for the admission of students to all programmes of study by the Institute, with the exception of research postgraduate programmes
4. To establish policies and procedures for the assessment of students on all programmes of study by the Institute, with the exception of research postgraduate programmes
5. To determine Marks and Standards for the Institute and review them periodically
6. To review annually by exception Programme Monitoring Reports in accordance with procedure EAP 7
7. To consider nominations from Schools for the appointment of external examiners and recommend those duly qualified and suitable
8. To complete an annual report for the Academic Council on the workings of the committee.

Related Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 [Consolidated (1992-2011)] Section 10, 3

(b) to make recommendations to the governing body for the establishment of appropriate structures to implement the courses of study referred to at paragraph (a) of this subsection;

(d) to make recommendations to the governing body for the selection, admission, retention and exclusion of students;

(e) be responsible, subject to the approval of the governing body, for making the academic regulations of the college;

(f) to propose to the governing body, subject to the requirements of the National Council for Educational Awards or any university or other authority to which section 5 (1) (b) applies, the form of

Related ESG Standards

1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Standard: Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

1.7 Information management

Standard: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

Research and Innovation Committee

The Institute has a policy to foster and grow its research activities. This requires support for research active staff and students and policies to attract new funding and new researchers. This Committee develops policies and procedures in harmony with the Institute's Research Policies and promotes research and innovation as an important activity in the Institute.

Terms of Reference of the Research and Innovation Committee

1. To devise strategies, policies and procedures that foster the development of an active research and innovation and technology transfer culture within the Institute
2. To monitor the progress against the research and innovation KPIs in the Institute's Strategic Plan
3. Review and make recommendations for target numbers of research students, postdoctoral and contract researchers, and income
4. Review and make recommendations for new student applications for admission onto the Research Register.
5. Review Research pipeline and progress report (biannually) and receive reports on progress of Strategic Research Centres (SRCs) and Recognised Research Groups (RRGs) against targets
6. Contribute to the development of the research and Innovation strategy.
7. Monitor the efficacy of the research and innovation plan
8. To advise on the development of physical, human and information/knowledge infrastructure for research and innovation
9. To develop policies to enhance and promote external engagement
10. To enhance teaching and learning within the Institute in relation to research and innovation
11. To make recommendations for optimising the relationship between Innovation centre companies and student learning
12. To consider policies and procedures in relation to the protection of intellectual property and research ethics.
13. To complete an annual report for the Academic Council on the workings of the committee
14. To consider and report on matters referred to it by Academic Council or by functions within the Institute

Related Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 [Consolidated (1992-2011)] Section 10, 3

(c) to make recommendations to the governing body on programmes for research and development work;

Related ESG Standards

For Research Postgraduate programmes

1.2 Design and approval of programmes

Standard: Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Standard: Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee

The core business of the Institute is to deliver a high-quality education, relevant to learners. Aspects of programme delivery that need constant updating include, the incorporation of computer-assisted teaching methods and the implementation of flexible delivery techniques to meet the diverse needs of both full-time and part-time learners while maintaining academic standards. To achieve this, the Institute must ensure that it has the policies, procedure and processes in place to deliver the highest standard of education. An integral component of this requirement is ensuring that the high calibre staff in the Institute are provided with and trained in the appropriate tools and techniques to meet the changing needs of learners and of employers.

The role of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee includes, making recommendations and advising the Academic Council on various issues relating to the structure and delivery of all programmes, and the policies related to the further education and training of academic staff.

Terms of Reference of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee

1. To develop and implement processes for Academic Planning for the institute.
2. To develop policies and procedures and advise on suitable resources for the effective conduct of academic staff CPD
3. To monitor the progress against the LTA KPIs in the Institute's Strategic Plan
4. To ensure robust academic quality assurance for existing and new programmes including full time, part time, bespoke and craft programmes, including student induction and retention
5. To review and evaluate proposals to improve student career development and employment potential.
6. To advise on suitable resources for the effective delivery of learning and teaching and student supports.
7. To agree a policy and guidelines on student workplace engagement.
8. Review procedures in respect of provision of education to international students
9. To complete an annual report for the Academic Council on the workings of the committee
10. To consider and report on matters referred to it by Academic Council or by functions within the Institute.

Related Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 [Consolidated (1992-2011)] Section 10, 3

- (g) to make recommendations to the governing body for the award of scholarships, prizes or other awards;
- (h) to make general arrangements for tutorial or other academic counselling;

Related ESG Standards**1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment**

Standard: Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

1.5 Teaching staff

Standard: Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

1.6 Learning resources and student support

Standard: Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

Technological University Transition Committee

The role of this committee is to advise AC on how the TU may impact on the working of AC and its committees.

Terms of Reference of the Technological University Transition Committee are as follows:-

1. To have oversight of the impact to the Institute that the transition to a TU may have on current IT Sligo Academic policies, processes and structures.
2. To interpret proposals from CUA working groups relating to academic structures, procedures, teaching and learning, and overarching policy, and advise Academic Council on the ramifications of same and/or changes required to respond accordingly.
3. To monitor and review developments in the Higher Education Sector that may impact on the TU Transition/submission process.
4. To keep abreast of other TU developments.

Collaborative Provision Committee

In order that the Institute can respond to the changing landscape of Higher Education, they must engage in a variety of partnerships/collaborations both nationally and internationally with other educational/Industry bodies. A Collaborative Provision Review Committee has been established. To oversee the types of partnerships, the numbers, the process leading to collaboration and to review the status of such collaborations on a periodic basis.

This committee will produce an annual report for consideration by the Academic Council and Executive Committee.

1. To review the types of collaborative provision set out in the Quality Manual
2. To review the current process and refine as required.
3. To develop an Institute repository for all types of collaborations
4. To review the currency of current collaborations in relation to legislation eg GDPR
5. To provide guidance to the academic community on the type of collaboration their proposed engagement with another provider requires
6. To set timelines for all parties involved in collaborative provisions to submit a status report to the committee for review.

QA processes Covid-19 Committee (QAC-19 committee)

Formation of new *specific purpose* committee of Academic Council to oversee QA processes in the context of Covid-19. (QAC-19 committee) Timespan: Academic year 2020-2021. Review necessity for extension summer 2021

1. To ensure that ITS maintains full academic governance and operate within agreed quality assurance principles whilst putting into place modifications to programme delivery to facilitate the TLA environment heralded by COVID-19 Public health restrictions.
2. To review any proposed programme modifications.
3. To monitor the implementation of modifications and record any issues arising and measures taken to address them.
4. To ensure adequate and timely consultation with key stakeholders to both inform and/ or seek agreement on proposed modifications (staff, learners, committees of AC /programme boards, professional/regulatory bodies, external examiners and any other stakeholders with an interest in our programmes).
5. To make definitive recommendations to Academic Council for approval on the efficacy of proposed modifications
6. To provide interim report to AC post semester 1.

Relevant documentation:

Reinforcing and monitoring the quality of our provision in the academic year 2020/21- Collective Statement from the THEA Council of Registrars (Academic committee papers June 2020)
QQI COVID-19 resources. <https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/COVID-19---Updates-from-QQI.aspx>

Designated Awarding Body Committee

Formation of new *specific purpose* committee of Academic Council to oversee ITS transition to Designated Awarding Body status (DAB committee). Timespan: Three years

1. To review and modify Action plan presented to Academic Council June 2020
2. To ensure adequate and timely consultation with key stakeholders to inform proposed modifications to QA processes (staff, learners, professional/regulatory bodies etc.) other stakeholders with an interest in our programmes.
3. To present proposed changes to QA processes to AC highlighting the rationale, implications and resources required.
4. To make recommendations to Academic Council on the efficacy of proposed changes to QA systems/ processes

Relevant documentation:

- Statutory Instrument no 540 of 2019
- Action plan (Academic papers 15.6.2020)

- Establishment of Institutes of Technology as Designated Awarding Bodies: THEA Guidance Note

Tracking amendments

Date	Meeting	Item amended
01/04/2020	Academic Council	New TOR's for Technological University Transition and the Collaborative Provision Committee were APPROVED. No other committee advanced new ToR.
4/9/2020	Academic Council	2 New Committees QA processes Covid-19 Committee (QAC-19 committee) and Designated Awarding Body Committee were Approved.
27/11/2020	Academic Council	No 6 P&C to remove 'including periodic auditing of existing programme delivery - Split such that we break into two TOR (1) 'To set out procedures for School Peer Reviews and Institutional Reviews' and another TOR (2) 'To periodically audit existing programme delivery'.

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Appendix 1: From RTC Act 1992: Academic Council.

- (1) Each college shall have an academic council appointed by the governing body to assist it in the planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of the educational work of the college and to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the courses and the activities of the college.
- (2) (a) Each governing body may by regulations made under this section provide for the membership and terms of office of the academic council.
(b) The majority of members shall be holders of academic appointments within the college and at least one shall be a registered student of the college.
(c) The members appointed to the academic council shall hold office for a period of three years and shall be eligible for reappointment.
- (3) Without prejudice to the generality of *subsection (1)* the academic council shall have the following particular functions—
 - (a) to design, develop and assist in implementing courses of study in accordance with the programmes and budget approved annually under [section 13](#) of this Act and consistent with the functions of the college;
 - (b) to make recommendations to the governing body for the establishment of appropriate structures to implement the courses of study referred to at *paragraph (a)* of this subsection;
 - (c) to make recommendations to the governing body on programmes for research and development work;
 - (d) to make recommendations to the governing body for the selection, admission, retention and exclusion of students;
 - (e) be responsible, subject to the approval of the governing body, for making the academic regulations of the college;
 - (f) to propose to the governing body, subject to the requirements of the National Council for Educational Awards or any university or other authority to which [section 5](#) (1) (b) applies, the form of regulations to be made by the governing body for the conduct of examinations and for the evaluation of academic progress;
 - (g) to make recommendations to the governing body for the award of scholarships, prizes or other awards;
 - (h) to make general arrangements for tutorial or other academic counselling;
 - (i) to exercise any other functions, consistent with this Act, which may be delegated to it by the governing body;
 - (j) to assist in implementing any regulations which may be made by the governing body concerning any of the matters aforesaid.
- (4) The academic council, with the approval of the governing body, may—
 - (a) establish such and so many committees, consisting either wholly or partly of persons who are not members of the college, as it thinks proper to assist the academic council in the performance of its functions under this Act, and
 - (b) determine, subject to the provisions of this Act, the functions of any committee established under *paragraph (a)* of this subsection.
- (5) The acts of a committee established under *subsection (4) (a)* shall be subject to confirmation by the governing body unless the governing body dispenses with the necessity for such confirmation.
- (6) Subject to the provisions of this Act and to the directions of the governing body, the academic council may regulate its own procedure.