Academic Quality Framework

University Programmes Board

Terms of Reference

**Approved by Academic Council
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The University Programmes Board (UPB) is a sub-committee of Academic Council. UPB's primary responsibility shall be approving, overseeing and monitoring the University's education programme portfolio.

1. Responsibilities

The University Programmes Board (UPB) has the following responsibilities:

Programme Provision

a. To advise Academic Council on the development and review of the University's Portfolio of Academic Programmes and the range of modes of delivery (e.g. part-time, full-time, blended and online) of this portfolio.

b. To maintain oversight of the University's Register of Approved Programmes and submit annually to Academic Council for review.

c. To monitor trends in relation to the student profile data and use the data to inform decisions and make recommendations regarding programme provision to Faculty Boards and Academic Council. The student profile data includes but is not limited to:
    1) Admission
    2) Transfer
    3) Progression/Retention/Completion
    4) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
    5) International participation
    6) Use of Recognition of Prior Learning
    7) First Destination Returns.

d.   To oversee the academic management of programmes through Faculty Boards and the Graduate Research School Board and to provide recommendations to Faculty Boards in relation to the development and management of academic programmes.

e.   To receive, consider and where appropriate approve proposal from Faculty Boards for the establishment of Discipline Programme Boards.

f.   To consider reports and minutes from Faculty Boards and identify common trends and issues that may require further consideration by Academic Council or its sub-committees.

g.   To maintain an oversight of the Register of Work/Clinical Placement/Internships.

h.   To note programme external examiners that have been approved by Faculty Programmes Boards and the Graduate Research School Board.

Programme Approval

i.   To receive and consider Programme Proposals Forms from Faculty Boards and the Graduate Research School Board for all Programmes of 30 ECTS credits or greater, and where satisfied approve the programmes for development and validation as per the Programme Validation Process.

j.   To receive and note Programme Proposals Forms approved at Faculty Boards and the Graduate Research School Board for all Programmes of less than 30 ECTS credits.

k.   To note the approval of validation panel members by Faculty Boards.

l.   To receive and consider Programme Validation Reports and School Responses, from Faculty Boards and the Graduate Research School Board, for all programmes, including collaborative provision programmes, of 30 ECTS credits or greater, and where satisfied, approve the new programmes for delivery as per the Programme Validation Process.

m.   To receive and note Programme Validation Reports from Faculty Boards and the Graduate Research School Board for all programmes, including collaborative provision programmes, of less than 30 ECTS credits, as per the Programme Validation Process.

n.   To ensure all University programmes align to the TU Dublin Strategic Plan.

o.   To liaise, through Academic Affairs, with the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee to:

1) Request that specific consideration be given to areas of concern on the validation of specific programmes.

2) Highlight issues or trends in relation to programme delivery and management for further consideration by review panels.

3) Request the review of specific programmes based on the Board's consideration of the University's programme portfolio, student profile or reports from Faculty Boards.

4) Make recommendations on the review or amendment of the University's Quality Framework.

5) Develop best practice guidelines for the development and delivery of academic programmes.

6) Make recommendations for inclusion of actions on the University's Quality Enhancement Plan and receive updates on progress on the implementation of actions included in the plan.

p.   To receive, consider and, where appropriate, approve Level 3 Programme Changes from Faculty Boards, as per the Making Changes to Programmes & Module Process.

q.   To receive for noting, proposals and reports from Faculty Boards for the delivery of externally validated programmes as per the Quality Enhancement of Programmes Leading to External Awards.

r.   To receive and consider proposals from Faculty Boards and the Graduate Research School Board to introduce exit awards within already validated programmes.

s. To receive and note programme discontinuation notifications from Faculty Boards and the Graduate Research School Board.

Programme Related Academic Policies

t. To monitor the implementation of the University's Access, Transfer and Progression Policy.

u. To develop and oversee a policy in relation to work based learning and best practice guidelines in respect to the organisation and delivery of work/clinical placement /internships.

v. To develop and oversee a policy in respect to provision of placement/study abroad opportunities for TU Dublin students.

w. To oversee the development and monitoring of procedures for the implementation of employability statements and to make recommendations to Faculty Boards in relation to the enhancement of employability of graduates.

x. Receive and consider requests/applications for programme derogations from University policies and regulations.

y. Maintains the University Register of Approved Programme Derogations.

Other

z. To ratify the recommendations for all non-major awards submitted by Faculty Boards and the Graduate Research School Board.

aa. To note approved minutes from Faculty Boards and the Graduate Research School Board.

ab. Carry out such other functions as are considered appropriate subject to the approval of Academic Council.

ac. Submit approved minutes to Academic Council and where required submit reports and draft regulations and policies for approval.

2. Membership

2.1 The Membership of UPB shall ensure the committee has members with the required expertise, to ensure effective and efficient decision making, from across the University to carry out the responsibilities listed above.

2.2 The membership of UPB shall comprise:

- University Registrar (Chairperson) (ex-officio)
- Head of Academic Affairs (ex-officio)
- Assistant Head of Academic Affairs (Quality Framework) (ex-officio)
- Vice Dean for Education from each Faculty (ex-officio)
- 1 academic staff member of SL2 or SL3 grade from each Faculty Board (elected)
- 1 academic staff member of any grade excluding SL2 and SL3 grades from each Faculty Board (elected)
- 3 student members nominated in accordance with the Student Union's procedures (nominated)
- 1 member from the Graduate Research School Board (nominated)
- 1 member from the Partnerships Office (nominated)
- 1 member from Student Services & Wellbeing (nominated)
- 1 member from Recruitment, Admissions & Participation (nominated)
- 1 member from ICT Services (nominated)
- 1 member from Library Services (nominated)
- 3 Academic Council members (elected)

2.3 In addition to the membership above, the Academic Quality Advisors will be invited to attend meetings to speak to any quality assurance process (e.g. Programme Validation) they have supported in the Faculties which is included under the Agenda. Their presence at the meeting will be recorded as "Inattendance".

2.4 The senior academic management members will be nominated by the Faculty Dean and approved by Faculty Board, and will represent the views of Faculty Board.

2.5 The academic staff from the Faculties will be identified through the process described in Appendix B.

2.6 The student will be nominated by the Students' Union in accordance with its own procedures.

2.7 The UPB members from Student Services & Wellbeing, Recruitment, Admissions & Participation, ICT Services and Library Services will be nominated by the Heads of those Professional Services.

2.8 All Academic Council members will have the opportunity to nominate themselves to become a member of UPB. In the event there are more nominations than required members, an election will be held as per the process described in Appendix B.

2.9 With the approval of Academic Council up to two additional members may be coopted and in addition other persons may be invited to attend by the Chairperson as considered appropriate. To propose new members, the Chairperson should write to the Chairperson of Academic Council with the names of the proposed additional members and a rationale for their membership.

2.10 The membership of UPB will be at least 40% gender balanced.

3. Term of Office

3.1 The term of office of non-ex-officio members of UPB shall not exceed 3 years and a member may not serve more than two consecutive terms of office.

4. Removal or Disqualification

4.1 An elected or nominated member of UPB who has been absent from three consecutive meetings, unless such absence has been approved by the Chairperson in advance, shall be deemed to have resigned from UPB.

4.2 Where an elected or nominated member is absent for two consecutive meetings without explanation, the secretariat will communicate this to the member outlining consequential actions if the member misses the next meeting. If no satisfactory written explanation is received and the member does not attend the next meeting, this outcome will be communicated to the next UPB meeting for removal of the member, with this vacancy filled in line with the procedures in Appendices A and B. The replacement will fill this vacancy for the unexpired term of office remaining.

5. Resignation

5.1 A member of UPB may at any time resign from membership of UPB by written communication to the Chairperson, and the resignation shall take effect from the date of receipt of such communication.

6. UPB Meetings

Chairperson

6.1 The University Registrar will be the Chairperson of UPB.

6.2 If and so long as the Chairperson is not present, meetings of UPB will be chaired by the Head of Academic Affairs. If both the University Registrar and the Head of Academic Affairs are not able to attend a meeting of UPB, the University Registrar will select a member of UPB to chair the meeting.

Secretariat

6.3 The secretariat will be provided by Academic Affairs.

Quorum

6.4 The quorum for all UPB meetings shall be 50% of the complete membership plus one. Where the complete membership constitutes an odd number the quorum shall be 50% of the membership rounded up to the next whole number.

6.5 UPB may hold or continue a meeting by the use of any means of communication by which all the members can hear and be heard at the same time (in this document referred to as an "online meeting"):

i. A member of UPB who participates in an online meeting is taken for all purposes to have been present at the meeting.

ii. A duly convened meeting of UPB at which a quorum is present shall be competent to exercise all or any of the authorities, power and discretions vested in or exercisable by UPB.

Frequency of Meetings

6.6 Each UPB shall hold at least two meetings per semester and such and so many additional meetings as may be necessary, as determined by the Chairperson, for the due fulfilment of its functions.

Notice and Convening of Meetings

6.7 The dates of UPB meetings should be determined by the Chairperson and published at the start of the Academic Year and aligned to the document submission dates of Academic Council.

6.8 Additional meetings of UPB shall be summoned by the Secretariat of UPB at the request of the Chairperson of UPB.

6.9   The Secretariat to UPB shall ensure that all members receive information and papers in a timely manner to enable full and proper consideration to be given to the issues.

6.10   Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date together with an agenda shall be forwarded to each member of UPB electronically, and any other person required to attend, not less than five working days before the date of the meeting. Supporting papers shall be sent, or made available electronically, to UPB members and to other attendees as appropriate, at the same time.

Attendance at Meetings

6.11   Only members of UPB have the right to attend UPB meetings. Other individuals from the University and external advisers may be invited to attend, by the Chairperson, for all or part of any meeting, as and when appropriate.

6.12   Attendances shall be recorded as Present, Apologies (apology furnished in advance or at the meeting) or Absent (no apology furnished).

6.13   If a member cannot attend a meeting of UPB, this should be communicated to the Secretariat in advance of the meeting, or alternatively it can be communicated to the Chairperson at the beginning of the meeting.

Agenda Items

6.14   The agenda shall contain details of the matters to be put before the meeting for discussion.

6.15   Any member of UPB may request a matter be placed on the agenda for discussion provided it is conveyed to the Secretariat in writing not less than ten working days in advance of the meeting to which it refers (not including the date of the meeting) and the matter falls within the terms of reference of UPB. Such matters shall be considered by the Chairperson as to their appropriateness for inclusion on the agenda.

6.16   Any matter which has been accepted for discussion in accordance with the provision of these Terms of Reference shall be placed before the meeting by the Chairperson in the order in which it appears on the agenda.

6.17   The inclusion of the term "Any Other Business" (AOB) on the agenda shall be used by the Chairperson only to inform the meeting of any other items which are germane to the matters already discussed and for the elucidation of any other items of a factual or relevant nature. The Chairperson may permit a member to raise a matter under AOB provided this item has already been raised with the Chairperson prior to the meeting and the Chairperson has decided it was appropriate to bring it to the attention of UPB members for the consideration under AOB.

6.18   Approved agenda items must be submitted in the correct format to the Secretariat ten working days before the date of the UPB meeting to facilitate the timely distribution of papers to members.

6.19   The Chairperson has the delegated authority of UPB to remove an item from the Agenda if it is not received in time to allow members due consideration of the matter or to a suitable standard.

Proceedings at Meetings

6.20   Members who wish to speak at any meeting shall make their address to the meeting through and at the request of the Chairperson.

6.21   The first business of each meeting shall be the reading and approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting which, if approved, shall be signed by the Chairperson as proof of the accuracy thereof. The secretariat shall minute the decisions and resolutions of all meetings of UPB, including recording the names of those present and in attendance.

6.22   The Minutes of the meeting shall be drawn up and approved at the next meeting of UPB. No discussion shall take place upon the Minutes except upon their accuracy or where the Chairperson considers discussion appropriate.

6.23   Any amendment to the Minutes shall be recorded and agreed by UPB at the next meeting. The Minutes of UPB meetings shall be circulated to all members of UPB.

6.24   Every question at a meeting of UPB shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present and voting on the question, and in the case of an equal division of votes, the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.

6.25   Any member of UPB may, at any time during a meeting and without notice, raise a point of order. The Chairperson's ruling on the acceptability on the point of order shall be subject to a vote of the meeting if called for by the member raising the point of order.

Duration of Meetings

6.26   Each meeting of UPB shall continue until such time as the business to be conducted thereat shall have been satisfactory dealt with.

6.27   In cases of extreme time pressure, the Chairperson may, at their discretion reasonably exercise the following:

    i.   Either curtail discussion of any motion or other matter before the meeting and put the motion or matter before the meeting for a vote, or

    ii. Adjourn agenda items (other than Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising therefrom) to a subsequent meeting. This may be either a scheduled meeting or at an extraordinary meeting convened specially to consider them.

6.28   The Chairperson's ruling shall be final in regard of either alternative.

Procedures for obtaining decisions between meetings

6.29   In accordance with subparagraphs 6.30, 6.31 and 6.32 below, the Chairperson of UPB, has the delegated authority of UPB to deal with matters that in their opinion, are urgent and cannot wait until the next meeting of UPB and are certified in writing. If the Chairperson is unavailable to act for any reason, the Head of Academic Affairs shall have the same powers and this procedure shall be read accordingly.

6.30   In all situations, the Chairperson shall endeavour to convene a quorate meeting, to consider urgent matters that arise between meetings and shall only utilise this procedure as a final option having made every effort to hold a quorate meeting.

6.31   In seeking Chairperson's action, the person making the request shall in all cases prepare a written report. The report shall be in accordance with the same procedures and shall require the same clearances from other parties with an interest in the issues as if the report was to be submitted to a meeting of UPB. The report must specify the reason(s) for the urgency and the reason(s) why the matter cannot wait until the next meeting of UPB

6.32   When submitted, the Chairperson shall, if practicable, also seek the views of the members of UPB.

6.33   In respect of any decision taken by the Chairperson under this procedure, the Chairperson shall record their decision in writing and shall also certify in writing that in their opinion the issue is urgent and cannot wait until the next meeting of UPB.

6.34   The Chairperson shall report every decision taken under this procedure in writing to the next meeting of UPB for noting.

7. Reporting and Communication

7.1   The University Registrar, as Chairperson, shall be responsible for reporting the decisions and views of UPB to the Academic Council and/or other Academic Council sub-committees, as appropriate.

7.2   Minutes shall be recorded and, when approved, submitted to Academic Council.

7.3   Approved minutes shall also be available on the University intranet.

8. Committees

8.1 UPB may establish other sub-committees subject to the approval of the Academic Council or at the request of Academic Council. To propose a new subcommittee, the Chairperson should write to the Chairperson of the Academic Council with the draft Terms of Reference, and a rationale for the establishment, of the new sub-committee.

8.2 UPB may establish working groups at any time to undertake specific tasks on behalf of the Board. The establishment of working groups does not require the approval of the Academic Council.

8.3 UPB may invite individuals from outside the University to become members of sub-committees subject to the approval of the Academic Council. To propose external members of sub-committees, the Chairperson should write to the Chairperson of the Academic Council with the names of the proposed external members and a rationale for their membership.

8.4 With the exception of Faculty Board, UPB sub-committees will be chaired by a member of UPB.

APPENDIX A

University Programmes Board Membership

1. Ex-Officio Members

1.1 Members of the committee because of their role in the University.

1.2 Members of the committee bringing specific expertise and knowledge and/or they have specific University responsibilities, management or otherwise, for functions or activities aligned to the responsibilities of the committee as listed in Section 1 of this document.

2. Nominated Members

2.1 Members representing the views of a function, academic unit or representative body, but may also have specific responsibilities, management or otherwise that are required by the Committee to successfully undertake its responsibilities as listed in Section 1 of this document.

2.2 These members are nominated by the Head of the relevant function, academic unit or representative body.

3. Elected Members

3.1 Members elected to by a cohort of stakeholders within a function, academic unit or a Committee/Board.

3.2 Elected members must nominate themselves through the process described in Appendix B of this document, and where more nominations are received than required number of member, an election process will be followed to identify the committee members.

3.3 Elected members may bring the views of those they are representing to UPB.

3.4 Elected members also bring their own knowledge, understanding, expertise and experience to the UPB discussions and decisions.

APPENDIX B

Election of UPB Members

1. Academic Staff Member of SL2 or SL3 grade from each Faculty Board

1.1 Each Faculty Board will elect one academic staff member of SL2 or SL3 grade to be a member of UPB.

1.2 The academic staff member of SL2 or SL3 grade will be appointed using an election process whereby each academic staff member of SL2 or SL3 grade on Faculty Board will have the opportunity to nominate themselves for election.

1.3 Eligibility to vote for the academic staff member of SL2 or SL3 grade shall be confined to members of the Faculty Board at SL2 and SL3 grades.

1.4 The Returning Officer for the election of staff to UPB will be the Assistant Head of Academic Affairs (Operations) and may authorise any person to exercise designated functions on their behalf.

1.5 A call for nominations shall be circulated at least two weeks before the election date. Nominations shall be made on the Nomination Paper available from Academic Affairs and submitted to the Returning Officer or nominee. The Returning Officer shall rule on the validity of each Nomination Paper and may rule that it is invalid if, but only if, it is not in accordance with the eligibility criteria.

1.6 Every person in respect of whom a Nomination Paper has been determined to be valid and whose candidature has not been withdrawn, shall stand validly nominated as a candidate.

1.7 In the event that there is only one validly nominated candidate from a Faculty Board, the Returning Officer shall declare the candidate elected.

1.8 A poll will be conducted if more than the one person is validly nominated. Voting shall be by secret ballot and on the basis of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote. Votes shall be counted by the Returning Officer or nominee in accordance with the arrangements made by the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer shall give due notice of these arrangements to the electorate.

1.9 In the event that there are no validly nominated candidates, the Faculty Dean, as Chairperson of Faculty Board may nominate an academic staff member of SL2 or SL3 grade from the membership of Faculty Board to be a member of UPB.

2. Academic Staff Member of any grade excluding SL2 or SL3 grade from each Faculty Board

2.1 Each Faculty Board will elect one academic staff member of any grade excluding SL2 and SL3 grades to be a member of UPB.

2.2 The academic staff member of any grade excluding SL2 and SL3 grades will be appointed using an election process whereby each academic staff member of any grade excluding SL2 and SL3 grades on Faculty Board will have the opportunity to nominate themselves for election.

2.3 Eligibility to vote for the academic staff member of any grade excluding SL2 and SL3 grades shall be confined to academic staff members of Faculty Board at any grade excluding SL2 and SL3 grades.

2.4 The Returning Officer for the election of staff to UPB will be the Assistant Head of Academic Affairs (Operations) and may authorise any person to exercise designated functions on their behalf.

2.5 A call for nominations shall be circulated at least two weeks before the election date. Nominations shall be made on the Nomination Paper available from Academic Affairs and submitted to the Returning Officer or nominee. The Returning Officer shall rule on the validity of each Nomination Paper and may rule that it is invalid if, but only if, it is not in accordance with the eligibility criteria.

2.6 Every person in respect of whom a Nomination Paper has been determined to be valid and whose candidature has not been withdrawn, shall stand validly nominated as a candidate.

2.7 In the event that there is only one validly nominated candidate from a Faculty Board, the Returning Officer shall declare the candidate elected.

2.8   A poll will be conducted if more than one person is validly nominated. Voting shall be by secret ballot and on the basis of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote. Votes shall be counted by the Returning Officer or nominee in accordance with the arrangements made by the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer shall give due notice of these arrangements to the electorate.

2.9   In the event that there are no validly nominate candidates, the Faculty Dean, as Chairperson of Faculty Board may nominate an academic staff member of any grade excluding SL2 and SL3 grades from the membership of Faculty Board to be a member of UPB.

3.   Academic Council Members

3.1   All non-ex-officio Academic Council members will have the opportunity to nominate themselves for UPB membership through an 'Expression of Interest' process.

3.2   An "Expression of Interest" call shall be circulated to all non-ex-officio Academic Council members and nominations shall be submitted to Academic Affairs.

3.3   A poll will be conducted if more nominations than required members are received. Voting shall be by secret ballot and on the basis of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote. Votes shall be counted by the Returning Officer or nominee in accordance with the arrangements made by the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer shall give due notice of these arrangements to the electorate.

3.4   The Returning Officer for the election of Academic Council members to UPB will be the Assistant Head of Academic Affairs (Operations) and may authorise any person to exercise designated functions on their behalf.