



CARLOW COLLEGE
ST. PATRICK'S

Academic Council Constitution

1. GENERAL FUNCTION OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Carlow College, St Patrick's has an Academic Council which assists in planning, co-ordination, development and supervision of the educational work of the College, in the maintenance of high academic standards, and in the safeguarding of the educational ethos of the College.

The Academic Council has overall responsibility for assuring the quality of academic programmes delivered by the College. To fulfil this mandate, it shall ensure that programmes and courses are regularly monitored and evaluated. Directors of course programmes shall provide an annual report according to guidelines prepared by the Governing Body. The Academic Council shall also oversee and consider the outcome of any academic reviews undertaken. The Governing Body shall receive from the Academic Council, reports of all meetings of the Academic Council (Carlow College, St. Patrick's Instrument of Governance Ref 11.1).

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 to assist the President:

- 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.
- 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.
- To oversee the development and maintenance of academic-related Quality Assurance policies and procedures.
- To establish and oversee the academic governance framework: constitute, reconstitute and discontinue committees.
- To oversee assessment and examination procedures and ratify the appointment of external examiners.
- To promote and recognise excellence in teaching and research.
- To make recommendations for the awards of scholarships, prizes, bursaries and other awards which recognise academic excellence.
- To exercise related functions which will facilitate the administration of the academic affairs of the College.
- The President chairs meetings of the Academic Council. If the President is not in attendance, the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Registrar will act as Chair.
- The Secretary will prepare and circulate the agenda and keep records of meetings adhering to the Guidelines Regarding Keeping Records of Meetings.
- Resolutions of the Academic Council will be communicated to the Management Board.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

***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;
Vice President / Bursar;

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar;
Assistant Registrar for Academic Affairs;
Assistant Registrar for Strategic Development;
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 (M.A.);
Course Leader, Leadership in Therapeutic Child and Social Care (M.A.);
Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee;
Head of Student Services;
Librarian / Chair of the Library Committee;
Quality Assurance Officer;
IT and Student Systems Manager;
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.

Non Ex Officio Members:

Two Academic Staff Members elected by all Academic Staff for a term of three years (terms of office are staggered, see Appendix 1 for Election Process).

Organisational Structure Change:

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

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.

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.

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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. MEETINGS

6.1 Schedule

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

6.2 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.

6.3 Notice

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

6.4 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 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.

6.7 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.

REPORTING

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

Appendix 1: Academic Staff Representatives on Academic Council

Academic Staff Representatives on Academic Council

There are two Academic Staff Representatives on Academic Council. Academic Staff members are those who teach in the college, from fulltime lecturing staff, module tutors, learner support tutors or those who are in a part-time lecturing or tutoring capacity and are actively engaged in the teaching life of the College. Staff Reps. serve for a period of 3 years, which can be extended for a further two years in consultation with Academic Staff. The Staff Reps. are *ex officio* members of the Quality Assurance committee.

Process for Electing a Staff Representative to Academic Council

1. A nominee should be proposed by two staff members (a proposer and a seconder). The nominee should be consulted prior to submission of the nomination.
2. If there is only one nomination, the nominee is deemed elected to Academic Council. If there are two or more nominations an election will take place (election by proportional representation – single transferable vote – if there are more than three nominations).
3. The current Staff Representatives along with the Secretary to Academic Council will draw up a ballot paper of candidates. The ballots will be numbered, printed in colour, and left at Reception.
4. A Ballot Box will be placed in Reception for the duration of the election.
5. A list of eligible voters (Academic Staff) will be drawn up by the Secretary to Academic Council and sent to Reception. Voters can collect a ballot paper at Reception where they can cast their votes. Voters who wishes to vote by post must ask the receptionist to post a ballot to them.
6. Ballots will be counted by the two Staff Representatives and the Secretary to the Academic Council.
7. Once the three counters are satisfied that the election is fair and the result is clear, all ballots will be destroyed (one month after the election).
8. The Staff Representatives will inform the Academic Council Chairperson and the Academic Staff of the name of the successful candidate.