



**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.);  
Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee;  
Head of Student Services;  
Librarian / Chair of the Library Committee;  
Quality Assurance Officer;  
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.

**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 Board.

### **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, 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.