



Waterford Institute of Technology
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA PHORT LÁIRGE

Academic Council: Terms of Reference, Code of Practice, Composition and Regulations

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1. Mission	3
1.2. Legislative Context	3
2. Roles and Responsibilities	3
3. Composition	4
4. Support for Members and Committees.....	5
4.1. Handbook for Members	5
4.2. Training	5
4.3. Briefing Sessions	5
5. Structures.....	5
5.1. Academic Council Committees	5
5.2. Guidelines for Committees	6
5.3. Terms of Reference	6
6. Operational Arrangements.....	12
6.1. Chair and Secretary	12
6.2. Quorum.....	12
6.3. Voting.....	12
6.4. Schedule of Meetings	12
6.5. The Agenda.....	13
6.6. Circulation of Documents	13
6.7. Confidentiality	13
6.8. Order of Business	13
6.9. Speeches	14
6.10. Personal Explanation.....	14
6.11. Motions and Amendments	14
6.12. Notice of Meetings	15
6.13. Disorderly Conduct	15
6.14. Reserved Business.....	16
6.15. Frequency of Consideration of Business.....	16
6.16. Special Meetings.....	16
6.17. Declaration of Interest	17
6.18. Suspension of Standing Orders	17
6.19. Attendance at Meetings.....	17
6.20. Duration of Meetings	17
6.21. Circulation of Minutes.....	17
6.22. Working Methods	17
6.23. Variation or Revocation of Standing Orders.....	18
6.24. Chair’s ruling.....	18
7. Appendix A: Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 (Excerpts).....	19
8. Appendix B: Committee Report Pro-Forma.....	21
9. Appendix C: Election Procedures.....	22

1. Introduction

1.1. Mission

The Academic Council exists to promote and to ensure excellence in all aspects of the academic work of Waterford Institute of Technology. Council oversees academic planning and leads, protects and supports the academic standards of the Institute. It ensures the continued recognition for the high calibre of the Institute's graduates and the quality of programmes over a wide range of disciplines.

1.2. Legislative Context

The 1992 Regional Technical College Act provided for the establishment of an Academic Council. The relevant section of this legislation is reproduced in Appendix A below. As indicated in the Act, the Academic Council is appointed by the Governing Body to assist it in the planning, co-ordination, development and overseeing of the educational work of the Institute and to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the institute.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Academic Council is appointed by the Governing Body of the Institute to assist it in the planning (including the strategic planning), co-ordination, development and overseeing of the educational and research work of the institute, and to protect, maintain and develop the academic standards of the programmes and activities of the Institute.

Without prejudice to the generality of the above, the Academic Council shall have the following particular functions:

- 2.1. approve the Institute's academic strategy and plan and its annual updates and reports and make recommendations to the Governing Body on the plan;
- 2.2. be responsible for the annual monitoring of performance in relation to strategic plan priorities (including School plans) and review at the end of the planning and implementation period;
- 2.3. encourage innovation in programme development and design, approve the design of new programmes of study, develop programmes of study in the light of regional and national need and demand, and make recommendations to the Governing Body for the establishment of appropriate structures to implement such programmes, and to monitor their implementation;
- 2.4. make recommendations to the Governing Body on programmes for research and development work;
- 2.5. make recommendations to the Governing Body on the selection, admission, retention and exclusion of students;
- 2.6. be responsible, subject to the approval of the Governing Body, for making the academic regulations of the college;

- 2.7. ensure that programmes of study are designed and operated in accordance with the Institute's regulations and ensure that when a programme is approved any conditions of approval are implemented and any recommendations arising from the evaluation process fully considered and acted upon;
- 2.8. maintain the standards of the Institute's awards and promote quality in all aspects of the Institute's business;
- 2.9. propose to the Governing Body, subject to the requirements of the Higher Education and Training Awards Council where appropriate, the form of regulations to be made by the Governing Body for the conduct of examinations and for the evaluation of academic progress;
- 2.10. ensure that external examiners' reports are received and formally considered and that appropriate action is taken in relation to comments and suggestions contained in those reports;
- 2.11. make recommendations to the Governing Body for the award of scholarships, prizes or other awards;
- 2.12. make general arrangements for tutorial or other academic counselling;
- 2.13. exercise any other functions consistent with the relevant legislation, which may be delegated to it by the Governing Body;
- 2.14. assist in implementing any new regulations which may be made by the Governing Body concerning any of the matters aforesaid.

The Registrar has overall responsibility for co-ordinating these processes and reporting to Academic Council and Institute authorities on progress and implementation.

3. Composition

The Academic Council shall consist of the following members:

- 3.1 The President who shall be the Chairperson;
- 3.2 The Registrar who shall be the Secretary;
- 3.3 The Heads of School;
- 3.4 The Head of Development;
- 3.5 The Head of Research;
- 3.6 Three Heads of Academic Departments elected by the Heads of Academic Departments;
- 3.7 Seventeen members of the Academic Staff¹ elected in accordance with regulations laid down by the Governing Body;
- 3.8 Two members of the Support Staff elected in accordance with regulations laid down by the Governing Body;
- 3.9 Two registered students nominated by the Institute's Students' Union.

¹ The term academic staff means the same as applies to the term in Section 6 (4) (c) of the Act. The definitions relating to staff elections to the Governing Body will apply to categories 3.5 and 3.6 and above.

An outline of the election procedures and a note on Academic Council membership appear in Appendix C below.

As indicated in Appendix C, appointment to the Academic Council will be for a period of three years. Each elected member may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. A panel of non-elected candidates will be formed following the election process. In the event of a vacancy arising in the elected membership, the vacancy shall be filled by the most highly placed candidate on the panel conforming to the rules of composition. In the event that there are no candidates remaining on the panel the Academic Council may co-opt a member of staff to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the period of office of the Academic Council. In the event that a vacancy arises for student representatives, the Institute Students' Union will be requested to nominate a replacement. New members will be appointed for the remainder of the three year term of office of the Council.

In the event of a review of academic structures at the Institute, the composition of Council (and the composition of subcommittees) may be subject to change to ensure Council continues to be representative of the Institute's academic community. Proposals relating to changes in the composition of Council will require Council's approval before being implemented.

4. Support for Members and Committees

To enhance the effectiveness of Academic Council and its committees, the following supports are available to members:

4.1. Handbook for Members

The Academic Council publishes a handbook for members of Council that outlines, amongst other things, the expectations of the roles members play on Council and its committees, as well as general information on WIT, the place of Council within WIT's structures, codes of conduct within Council, and other information.

4.2. Training

The Academic Council provides short training programmes for members on how to function effectively as a member, how to act as a representative, how to engage most effectively with the work of the Council, including critiquing papers and otherwise contributing to ongoing debates. This training is co-ordinated by Registry.

4.3. Briefing Sessions

The Academic Council provides briefing sessions on current and upcoming issues to be discussed by Council. These sessions are co-ordinated by Registry.

5. Structures

5.1. Academic Council Committees

The Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992, states

(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.

In accordance with this, the Academic Council has established the following committees:

- Academic Quality Committee
- Academic Planning Committee
- Teaching and Learning Committee
- Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Committee
- School Boards
- Standing Committee
- Agenda Setting Committee

5.2. Guidelines for Committees

As indicated in chapter 6 below, Academic Council will normally delegate responsibility for detailed consideration, analysis and drafting of policies, procedures and other matters to its Committees. Reports from Committees or working parties on such matters will be referred to Council for plenary consideration. Council may adopt or reject such reports or refer them back to Committee stage.

Normally, the Chairpersons of each committee meet with the Chairperson and Secretary of Council at towards the end of the academic year to discuss and agree a committee work plan for the next year. This is ensure an efficient and appropriate distribution of work across committees, to identify areas of common interest where co-operation between committees is required, and eliminate duplication of effort.

5.3. Terms of Reference

The following are the terms of reference and the membership details of the committees of Academic Council. Where there is unavoidable overlap between the work of committees, it is the responsibility of the Chairpersons to liaise with each other and to ensure positions are clear before the outcome is reported to Academic Council.

The President shall be an *ex officio* member of each committee listed below. The committee will nominate a Convenor from among the membership. As indicated above, the committee may invite other persons from the Institute or otherwise to attend as required, either as full members or in an advisory capacity.

In addition, each committee will be a standing committee and may be convened to deal with any urgent matters arising within its remit between Academic Council meetings.

5.3.1. Academic Quality Committee

The Academic Quality Committee's remit centres around the assurance and enhancement of quality in the design and delivery of modules and programmes of study at all levels in Waterford Institute of Technology and its partners in education.

The Academic Quality Committee is expected:

- (a) To develop, subject to Academic Council approval, the Institute's quality framework and the instruments for quality audit, enhancement and assurance;
- (b) To facilitate the creation of a quality culture throughout the Institute and to identify practicable actions to develop and enhance the institute's quality environment;
- (c) To advise and to make recommendations to Academic Council on matters relating to the selection, admission, retention and progress of students and in addition to establish regulations for the administration, supervision, monitoring and review of research postgraduate students and programmes;
- (d) To advise and to make recommendations to the Academic Council on matters relating to examination and assessment arrangements and regulations, including matters relating to external examiners and examination appeals;
- (e) Approve external examiners for research degrees and receive reports from such examiners, and make recommendations to Council based on these reports;
- (f) To advise and make recommendations to Academic Council on matters relating to scholarships, awards and prizes;
- (g) To acquire and generate knowledge of best practice regarding academic quality in higher education internationally and to disseminate this across the Institute;
- (h) Ensure research degrees undertaken follow national quality assurance practices;
- (i) Receive, review and make recommendations to Council on annual reports from Schools on the conduct of research degrees and be responsible for validating School plans with regard to research degrees;
- (j) Approve new research supervisors and maintain the Institute's register of supervisors;
- (k) Approve the academic registration of research postgraduates;
- (l) Ensure that all research undertaken in WIT complies with the Research Ethics code of the Institute;
- (m) To maintain awareness of the requirements of the Institute's regulatory environment;
- (n) To monitor, on behalf of Academic Council, the quality and standards of current programmes and modules and generally to monitor the implementation of the agreed regulations.

The membership of the Academic Quality Committee is as follows:

- (i) The Registrar or his/her nominee;
- (ii) One Head of School;
- (iii) One Head of Department who is a member of Council;
- (iv) Three academics who are members of Academic Council;
- (iv) One Student representative who is a member of Academic Council;
- (v) The Examinations secretary.

5.3.2. Academic Planning Committee

The Academic Planning Committee's remit involves developing academic policy and strategy and the systems that support the implementation of that policy and strategy.

The Academic Planning Committee is expected to:

- (a) Contribute to the formulation of the Institute's strategic plan specifically with regard to academic planning;
- (b) Promote consultation and discussion about academic strategy and related matters among members of the Institute and its stakeholders;
- (c) Evaluate School plans in the light of the Institute's strategy and to make recommendations to Council relating to those plans;
- (d) Advise and make recommendations to Council on new programmes, pathways and other academic developments and formulate policy with regard to the development of academic programmes, including research degrees, across the Institute;
- (e) Advise and make recommendations to Academic Council on the determination of the system and regulations governing the design, evaluation and monitoring of academic modules and programmes;
- (f) Advise and make recommendations to Academic Council on the design, development and maintenance of the Institute's module system and the use of credits, including the approval of negotiated and exit awards.

The membership of the Academic Planning Committee is as follows:

- (i) The Registrar or his/her nominee;
- (ii) One Head of School;
- (iii) One Head of Department who is a member of Council;
- (iv) Three academics who are elected members of Council;
- (v) One member of Administrative or Support staff who is a member of Council;
- (vi) The Institute's Quality Promotion Manager
- (vii) Two students, one of whom will be an undergraduate and one a postgraduate, nominated by the Institute's Students' Union.

5.3.3. Learning and Teaching Committee

The Learning and Teaching Committee is concerned with all aspects of teaching and learning activity in the Institute.

The Support Committee for Learning and Teaching is expected:

- (a) To advise and make recommendations to Academic Council on all matters relating to teaching and learning within the Institute;
- (b) To advise and make recommendations to Academic Council on matters relating to research-related teaching and learning within the Institute;
- (c) To advise and make recommendations to Academic Council on matters relating to staff and student support services and to monitor the effectiveness of these services in enhancing the teaching and learning environment;

- (d) To support the career advancement of students and programme placement of students in industry;
- (e) To be responsible for training in relation to research degrees for both students and supervisors;
- (f) To acquire and generate knowledge of best practice regarding teaching and learning in higher education throughout the world and to disseminate this knowledge throughout the Institute;
- (g) To encourage and support scholarship on teaching and learning throughout the Institute;
- (h) To develop standards of programme placement for students in industry and to support the career advancement of students;
- (i) To advise and make recommendations to Academic Council regarding the provision of learning opportunities by the Institute's Library;
- (j) To advise and make recommendations to Academic Council on the co-ordination of the Industrial liaison function.

The following is the membership of this committee:

- (i) The Registrar or his/her nominee;
- (ii) One Head of School as nominated by Council;
- (iii) Four academics who are elected members of Academic Council;
- (iv) One member of support/administrative staff who is a member of Academic Council;
- (v) At least three Student representatives, one of whom shall be a member of Academic Council;
- (vi) The Institute Librarian;
- (vii) The Computer Services manager.

5.3.4. Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Committee

The remit of the Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Committee involves developing the Institute's research strategy, supporting research and innovative and entrepreneurial activity across the Institute, and fostering an environment in which research, innovation and entrepreneurship can flourish.

The Committee is expected to:

- (a) Advise and make recommendations to Academic Council on matters relating to research, innovation and entrepreneurship;
- (b) Review the Institute's research strategy and intellectual property policies and to monitor their implementation;
- (c) Create and maintain within the Institute an environment conducive to research, scholarship, creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and consultancy activities;
- (d) Support the Institute in addressing regional development needs;
- (e) Support and enhance a vibrant research community in the Institute wherein researchers communicate regarding their work and maximise potential for collaborations.

The following is the membership of this committee:

- (i) The Registrar or his/her nominee;
- (ii) One Head of School;
- (iii) One Head of Department who may be a member of Council;
- (iv) Three academics who are elected members of Academic Council;
- (v) Head of Development;
- (vi) Head of Research;
- (vii) One contract or post-doctoral researcher;
- (viii) Two Post-graduate students of the Institute who shall be co-opted.

5.3.5. School Boards

School Boards are responsible for the development of the academic strategy of individual academic Schools within WIT as well as monitoring at School level the implementation of the Institute's quality assurance procedures. The School Board will have authority over certain aspects of the programme development processes, module approval processes, student admission processes and other matters as agreed with Academic Council.

The terms of reference for School Boards are the following. School Boards are expected to:

- (a) Be responsible for the development of the academic strategy of the School;
- (b) Guarantee the effective use of modules and of the Institute's modular system in the design and delivery of programmes;
- (c) Promote excellence in the development and operation of all programmes, taught and research, within the School;
- (d) Make recommendations to the Academic Council regarding the structure and content of existing and new programmes and any special regulations or policies relating to such programmes within the School;
- (e) Maintain appropriate oversight, on behalf of the Academic Council, of the work of the Programme Boards within the School and, where necessary, audit the procedures and decisions of these programme boards, and in so doing, within the parameters set by Council,
 - guide the Programme Boards in the overall design, development and delivery of programmes;
 - adjudicate on student applications for leave of absence from and transfer between programmes;
 - approve the progression and/or transfer of students;
 - approve and assure the quality of the supervisory arrangements for graduate research students within the School;
 - review and approve students' requests for accreditation of prior learning as guided and advised by Council.
- (f) Make recommendations to the Academic Council regarding exclusion of students from programmes;
- (g) Monitor student retention, progression and completion rates within the School and generate the necessary corrective actions;

- (h) Develop and maintain appropriate links between undergraduate and graduate programmes;
- (i) Approve the appointment of internal examiners, in the case of research projects, and recommend the appointment of external examiners to the Academic Council.

The membership of School Boards shall be decided by individual Schools but shall normally include the Head of School, the Heads of Department within the School, a representative number of School faculty, a representative number of support staff within the School, and a number of student representatives.

5.3.6. Standing Committee

The Standing Committee is expected:

- (i) To assist in the arrangement and management of Council's agenda;
- (ii) To provide, on the instruction of Council, a continuing forum for the execution of Council business between Council meetings or in the absence of such meetings;
- (iii) To progress or complete work items assigned to the committee by a full meeting of Council.

Membership of Standing Committee:

- (i) The President;
- (ii) The Registrar;
- (iii) One Head of School;
- (v) One Head of Department, who is a member of Academic Council;
- (vi) Three Academics who are elected members of Academic Council;
- (vii) One student representative who is a member of Academic Council.

Any member who expects to be unavailable to carry out Standing Committee duties for longer than three months should seek leave of absence or resign from the committee and be replaced by a co-opted or elected member at the discretion of the President.

A report from the Standing Committee, with a full account of all decisions reached and actions taken, is required for the first meeting of the full Academic Council subsequent to the meeting of the Standing Committee.

5.3.7. Agenda Setting Committee

The Agenda Setting Committee recommends to the Council the priority of agenda items, establishes the approximate time limit for each agenda item, adjudicates on items to be considered under "any other business" and correspondence, and decides on questions of order, informed by the arrangements described in 6.5 below relating to the agenda. The Committee meets normally at least a week in advance of Council. It is chaired by the Registrar. Membership also includes a minimum of four members of Council, including at least one student representative.

6. Operational Arrangements²

It is important that all meetings of Committees³ be conducted effectively, efficiently and fairly; that they foster the sharing of knowledge and ideas; enable informed, free and open discussion for all members of committees, and assist in the dissemination of the work of the committees to the membership of the Institute. It is not intended that the standing orders relating to the conduct of meetings should be unduly prescriptive or constrain the discretion of the Chair of any Committee to conduct a meeting in the most appropriate way. They should serve as guidelines in most circumstances, being invoked formally only in exceptional situations.

6.1. Chair and Secretary

The President of the Institute shall chair meetings of Council. The chair of other committees shall normally be appointed by the body that set up the committee or the President. If the appointed Chair is not present at a meeting of a committee, the committee shall elect a temporary Chair for that meeting. The Chair, with the agreement of the body that set up the committee, may appoint a Deputy Chair who shall act for the Chair in that person's absence or in cases of potential conflict of interest.

The Registrar shall be the Secretary of Council. Other committees may appoint a Secretary from the membership.

6.2. Quorum

The quorum for a meeting shall be half of the membership plus one. If a quorum is not present, no business shall be carried out. A meeting that has not achieved a quorum 15 minutes later than the published starting time shall be abandoned.

6.3. Voting

Committees will normally decide matters by consensus but any voting member may request that a decision be put to a vote. Unless otherwise stated in these standing orders, votes shall be determined by a majority of the members of the committee present and voting. Voting shall be by show of hands unless any member requests a secret ballot. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have in addition to an original vote a second or casting vote. This casting vote may be used whether or not the Chair has used his or her original vote.

The name of any member voting for or against the motion or amendment or abstaining from voting shall, on the request of that member, be recorded in the minutes.

There shall be no vote, and no decision reached, on any substantial item, unless such item has appeared on the circulated agenda or has been accepted by the Chair as urgent business.

6.4. Schedule of Meetings

The Academic Council will hold at least three meetings in each semester and a Schedule of the Meetings will be published no later than the second working day of the first semester of the academic year. Other Committees will publish their schedules of meetings in the first week of

² WIT acknowledges the University of Hull (www.hull.ac.uk/committee/downloads/StandingOrders.doc) as the source of much of the material in this document.

³ For the purpose of these standing orders only, "Committees" shall be defined as including the Academic Council, its designated committees and any bodies appointed by any of them.

the first semester of the academic year. Along with these schedules, a workplan for Council and its Committees will also be agreed and published.

6.5. The Agenda

Standard items for the agenda of all Committees shall be:

- Apologies;
- Minutes;
- Matters arising;
- Green papers (discussion documents) (if any)
- White papers (documents for which a vote is required) (if any)
- Minutes and reports from Committees and working parties (if any).

Any member of a committee may propose items for the agenda by sending them in writing to the secretary of the committee. Notice of matters originating from other bodies or persons must be received by the secretary of the committee concerned, in writing, no fewer than ten working days before the meeting at which they are to be discussed, so that they may be included on the agenda paper.

Papers for discussion at committee meetings shall be confined to those circulated by the Chair or Secretary. Papers will be presented in the agreed format (see template in Appendix B of this document).

In the case of Council, the Agenda Setting Committee shall determine the business of each ordinary meeting. Normally, at least forty-eight hours' notice shall be given, to the Chair or Secretary of the committee, of any urgent matter which a member wishes to raise under 'any other business'. The Chair shall have the right to rule whether any such items submitted shall be excluded from the agenda or dealt with under 'any other business'.

6.6. Circulation of Documents

The agendas and all documentation relating to a meeting shall be circulated to members in time to reach them no fewer than five working days before the meeting.

6.7. Confidentiality

All agenda, reports and other documents, and all proceedings of and discussion at committees shall be treated as confidential unless and until disclosed in the legitimate programme of business.

6.8. Order of Business

The order in which the business of a meeting shall be conducted shall be that of the agenda circulated with the notice convening the meeting except on the ruling of the Chair as a matter of urgency or with the committee's consent. Adjourned business shall take precedence over other business except, at an ordinary meeting, for the confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting. Adjourned business shall include business deferred from or not dealt with at a previous meeting or not transacted because no quorum was present.

6.9. Speeches

All speeches shall be directed to the Chair. A member shall direct his or her speech to the matter under discussion. Any member may formally move or second any motion or amendment and reserve his or her speech until a later period in the debate. Those present at any committee by invitation may be allowed to speak in accordance with this Standing Order but shall not be entitled to move or second any motion or amendment or vote on any matter before the meeting.

6.10. Personal Explanation

Members wishing to raise a point of personal explanation shall first obtain the permission of the Chair, and shall do so at the earliest possible occasion. A point of personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of a former speech by the member at the committee meeting which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate or to some statement or act wrongly attributed to him or her but in making such explanation he or she must confine his or her remarks strictly to that point and must not refer to matters not strictly necessary for the purpose nor endeavour to elaborate a former speech by new arguments or reply to other members.

6.11. Motions and Amendments

The first proposition on any particular subject shall be known as the original motion, and all succeeding propositions on that subject shall be called amendments. Every motion or amendment shall be moved and seconded by members actually present at the meeting before they can be discussed, and, wherever possible, should be set forth in writing. It is permissible for a member to make his or her speech first and conclude with a motion.

When an amendment to an original motion is moved and seconded no further amendment shall be discussed until the first amendment is disposed of. If an amendment be carried, it displaces the original motion and itself becomes the substantive motion, whereupon any further amendment relating to any portion of the substantive motion may be moved, provided that it is consistent with the business and has not been covered by an amendment or motion which has been previously rejected.

After the vote on each succeeding amendment has been taken, the surviving proposition shall be put to the vote as the substantive motion, and if carried shall then become a resolution of the meeting.

The mover of an original motion shall, if no amendment be moved, have the right of reply to close the debate upon such motion. When an amendment is moved the mover shall be entitled to speak thereon, and at the close of the debate on such amendment may reply to the discussion, but shall introduce no new matter. The question shall then be put to the vote immediately, and under no circumstances shall any further discussion be allowed once the question has been put by the Chair. The mover of an amendment shall be entitled to a right of reply, immediately before the mover of the original motion.

No motion or amendment that has been accepted by the Chair shall be withdrawn without the consent of the meeting. Neither shall any addendum or rider be added to a motion that has once been accepted by the Chair without such consent.

The motions ‘that the meeting proceed to next business’, or ‘that the question be now put’, may be moved and seconded at any time during the debate. No speeches shall be allowed on such motions. In the event of the second of these motions being carried, the mover of the original motion, and, if the motion is an amendment, the mover of the amendment, shall have the right of reply in accordance with Standing Orders, before the vote on that motion or amendment is taken. Should either of the motions mentioned in this Standing Order be defeated, fifteen minutes shall elapse before it can be accepted again by the Chair, unless he or she rules that the circumstances have materially altered in the meantime.

No resolution may be rescinded or amended at the meeting at which it is passed. No resolution which on the ruling of the Chair involves issues of major policy shall be rescinded at any meeting unless every member eligible to attend has been notified in writing of the motion to effect such rescission.

Any member who has not already spoken during the debate or the Chair may move or second the adjournment of the matter under discussion, or of the meeting, but must confine his or her remarks to that matter and must not discuss any other matter. The mover of the motion upon which the adjournment has been moved, and, if the question be an amendment, the mover of that amendment, shall be allowed the right of reply on the question of the adjournment, but such reply shall not prejudice the mover’s right of reply on his or her own motion. In the event of the motion for the adjournment not being carried, fifteen minutes shall elapse before it can be accepted again by the Chair, unless he or she rules that the circumstances have materially altered in the meantime.

6.12. Notice of Meetings

No meeting shall be summoned unless a notice specifying the time and place of the meeting has been circulated to all members. Normally, a minimum of five working days is required as notice for ordinary meetings of Council, though it is recognised that where urgent business requires the convening of an extraordinary meeting that such notice may not be practicable. The want of service of a notice to any member shall not affect the validity of a meeting. Where it has not been possible to give notice of an adjourned meeting to all members no new business shall be transacted at the adjourned meeting.

Notice of meetings shall be given by the Secretary of the committee.

6.13. Disorderly Conduct

If at a meeting any member, on the ruling of the Chair notified to the meeting, misconducts him or herself by persistently disregarding the ruling of the Chair or by wilfully obstructing the business of the committee, the Chair or any other member may move ‘That the member named be not further heard’ and the motion if seconded shall be put and determined without discussion.

If the member named continue this misconduct after a motion under the foregoing paragraph has been carried the Chair shall: either move ‘That the member named do leave the meeting’ in which case the motion shall be put and determined without being seconded or discussed; or adjourn the meeting for such period as he shall in his discretion consider expedient. A member named to leave the meeting shall thereupon be expelled from the room and shall not be allowed to enter again until an apology satisfactory to the Chair be given.

In the event of general disturbance which on the ruling of the Chair renders the due and orderly dispatch of business impracticable, the Chair in addition to any other power vested in him or her may, without the question being put, adjourn the meeting for such period as he or she shall in his or her discretion consider expedient.

6.14. Reserved Business

The Chair of any committee shall have the right to decide that any matter shall be one of reserved business whether or not such matter is covered by the Definition of Reserved Business as set out below.

In any committee at which students are present, ‘reserved business’ shall include the following:

- Matters relating to individual members of the Institute, whether staff or students (except in the case of the Disciplinary Tribunal);
- The conditions of service and promotion of members of staff;
- The appointment of members of staff other than those directly concerned with student welfare and relevant senior appointments (at the discretion of the Chair of the selection panel);
- Examination results and Institute awards specific to named individuals;
- Negotiations with organisations and persons outside the Institute, except with the prior agreement of the bodies concerned.

6.15. Frequency of Consideration of Business

Any matter which in a Session shall have been decided twice by a committee (whether or not under delegated authority) in the same way shall not in the same Session be again submitted for consideration, and this Standing Order shall not be evaded by the substitution of a motion differently worded but in principle the same, provided that nothing in this Standing Order shall be taken to prevent any such matter being further raised or dealt with by the Council or the Senate if the body concerned considered it to be a matter of importance.⁴

6.16. Special Meetings

All meetings other than those listed in the schedule of meetings shall be called Special Meetings and may be convened by the Chair at any time and shall be convened on the request of not less than one-fifth of the members of the committee concerned or three, whichever is the greater.

⁴ In this Standing Order ‘Session’ means the period of time from 1 September in one year to 31 August in the year following.

Notice of Special Meetings shall be given to all members not less than seven working days after receipt of the request by the Secretary of the committee and such meetings shall be held within ten working days after the issue of such notice.

6.17. Declaration of Interest

If any member of a committee has any personal pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in any contract, proposed contract, or other matter, that member shall disclose the existence of that interest to the committee and shall withdraw from the meeting while the contract, proposed contract, or other matter is under consideration unless the contract, proposed contract or other matter is under consideration by the committee as part of the report of another committee and is not itself the subject of debate.

6.18. Suspension of Standing Orders

Any member of a committee may, for any item or items of business, move the suspension of any Standing Order or Standing Orders, except Standing Orders 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3, and the motion, on being seconded, shall be put forthwith without amendment or discussion. Such a motion shall be successful only if passed by at least two-thirds of the members of the committee present and voting.

6.19. Attendance at Meetings

Attendance at meetings shall be recorded and an elected member's failure to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable excuse shall result in that member's disqualification. The member shall be informed accordingly in writing and will be replaced in accordance with election procedures. Other staff may not attend committee meetings in place of the member appointed to the Committee unless specifically agreed. Persons may be invited by the Chairperson or Secretary to attend on a temporary basis to assist the Council: such persons will not have voting rights.

6.20. Duration of Meetings

The normal duration of a Committee meeting shall not exceed two hours.

6.21. Circulation of Minutes

Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded and shall record resolutions and decisions and will indicate, in the form of action sheets, the appropriate action, the person(s) responsible, and the timescale for the completion of the action. Draft minutes shall be circulated to members of Committees within seven working days of the relevant meeting and when adopted, shall be posted on the Institute's intranet site, where they shall be available to all members of the Institute.

6.22. Working Methods

Council will normally delegate responsibility for detailed consideration, analysis and drafting of policies, procedures and other matters to its Committees or other working parties that it may establish. Reports from Committees or working parties on such matters will be referred to Council for plenary consideration. Council may adopt or reject such reports or refer them back to Committee stage. A decision to adopt or reject any such proposal will normally be taken within two meetings of Council.

6.23. Variation or Revocation of Standing Orders

These Standing Orders shall not be amended, added to or rescinded unless notice shall first have been given to the Council as a substantive item on the agenda paper for its meeting and such notice shall state the terms of any proposed variation or revocation of these Standing Orders, and Council may take such action as it deems appropriate.

6.24. Chair's ruling

The ruling of the Chair as to the construction or application of any of these Standing Orders or on points of personal explanation or of order shall be final, unless it has been challenged by the motion of any member supported by at least one other member. Such a motion shall be successful only if passed by at least two-thirds of the members of the committee present and voting.

7. Appendix A: Regional Technical Colleges Act, 1992 (Excerpts)

6. —(1) There shall be a governing body of a college and the governing body, save as otherwise provided by this Act, shall perform the functions conferred on the college by this Act.

(4) Upon the expiration of the term of office of the first members, the ordinary members of a governing body shall be appointed by the Minister, on the recommendation of the vocational education committee, in accordance with the following provisions:

(c) two persons, being members of the academic staff of the college, shall be elected by that staff in accordance with regulations made by the governing body.

10. —(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.

8. Appendix B: Committee Report Pro-Forma



Waterford Institute of Technology

The Academic Council
Of
Waterford Institute Of Technology

Report from _____ Committee

Report to Academic Council meeting on __ (date) __

1. Committee Membership

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2. Number and dates of meetings since last meeting of Council

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3. Progress Report on last Report, if necessary

- (ii) Item -- Action
- (iii) Item -- Action
- (iv) Item -- Action

4. Recommendations to Council and Actions Expected

Standard recommendations – external examiner appointments; approval of post-graduate registrations; approval of new programmes and modules, and so on

5. Green Paper items for Council's information and discussion

Brings forward preliminary discussion documents following previous discussion at Council and Council assigning the task to the committee

6. White Paper items for Presentation to Council for Discussion/Adoption and Action Expected

Final report from Committee to Council on a matter that has been referred to it by Council and discussed previously by Council.

7. Other Noteworthy Items

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9. Appendix C: Election Procedures

Election Procedures of Academic Members to the Academic Council

1. The number of members to be elected shall be seventeen.
2. There shall be a minimum of 40% or 7 candidates from each gender. (We call this the 'gender constraint'.)
3. There shall be a minimum of two persons from each of the six schools elected subject to there being sufficient candidates. (We call this the 'school constraint')
4. In considering the counting of votes, the rules as set down in Rules for Academic Council Election (Academic Members) will be used. An abridged form is seen below.

Rules for Academic Council Election (Academic Members) (Abridged Form)

1. All valid papers are grouped by first preference votes and candidates are ordered in descending order of first preferences. Each vote is given a weight of 1000.
2. The quota is calculated as follows: $quota = (number\ of\ valid\ votes * 1000) / (number\ of\ vacancies + 1) + 1$
3. If, at the end of any count, a candidate has a total weight of votes greater than the quota, check should that candidate be elected (c.f. RuFEE). If this is not allowed, then exclude the candidate according to rule 7. If it is allowed to elect the candidate, deem the candidate to be elected and distribute the candidate's surplus in the following manner
4. If the candidate's votes come from first preferences only, then transfer **all** votes according to rule 6.
5. If the candidate's votes come from a mixture of first preferences and transfers, then **transfer the last bundle to be transferred** according to rule 6.
6. Calculate the total weight of transferable votes. If the total weight of transferable votes is greater than surplus, transfer each vote in the bundle (to the continuing candidate indicated as the next available preference) with a decreased weight, $new\ weight = old\ weight * (surplus / total\ weight\ of\ transferable\ papers)$. If the total weight of transferable votes is less than or equal to the surplus, transfer all votes in bundle with same weight as before.
7. If, at the end of any count, no candidate has reached the quota and there are more continuing candidates than vacancies, a candidate must be excluded. Working backwards from the candidates with the lowest vote weight, check can the candidate be excluded (c.f. Rule RuFEE). If this candidate's exclusion is allowed by RuFEE, then distribute the transferable votes, leaving the weights unchanged. If the candidate cannot be excluded (c.f. RuFEE), check the next lowest candidate and so on. For candidates that cannot be excluded, do not exclude, do not elect. These candidates will eventually be elected, without reaching the quota.
8. **STOP** when either the number of elected candidates = 13 or (more likely) the number of elected candidates + number of continuing candidates = 13. At this point all continuing candidates may be deemed to be elected.

Rule For Election or Exclusion (RuFEE)

1. For this rule, a candidate is seen as belonging to a subset of candidates, either elected, continuing or excluded.

(Election)

2. When a candidate reaches or exceeds the surplus, before deeming that candidate to be elected, it must be checked that the following condition holds:
3. If the candidate is elected and this brings the number elected to n , there is a subset of the continuing candidates, of size $12 - n$ which, if elected will ensure that the set of 12 elected candidates will obey the gender, school and department constraints.
4. If this is the case, then the candidate is deemed to be elected.
5. If this is not the case, the candidate will not be elected as his/her election will disallow the possibility of the 13 candidates including him/her ever obeying the gender and school constraints. Furthermore, the candidate is excluded and his/her votes will be transferred as per rule 7 (abridged rules).

(Exclusion)

6. If a candidate needs to be excluded in order to proceed (there being no surplus available), starting at the lowest candidate, check that the following condition holds:
7. If the candidate is removed from the set of continuing candidates and placed in the set of excluded candidates, there is a subset of continuing candidates, of size $13 - n$ ($n =$ the number of elected candidates) that, if elected, will ensure that the set of 13 elected will obey the gender, school and department constraints.
8. If this condition holds, then exclude the candidate and proceed to transfer the candidate's votes as per rule 7 (abridged rules).
9. If this condition does not hold this means that it will be necessary to elect this candidate (eventually) to ensure that the final set of elected candidates obey the gender and school constraints. Do not exclude the candidate. Do not elect the candidate. The candidate will be elected without reaching the quota after the last count.
10. If because of this rule, the lowest candidate cannot be excluded, proceed to find the next lowest candidate and apply the rule to check if this candidate can be excluded. If not go to the next lowest candidate and so on.

Note on Academic Council Membership

Appointment to the Academic Council will be for a period of three years and each elected member shall be eligible for reappointment in accordance with 10 (2) (c) of the Act. A member under categories 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 who ceases to be a member of that category, automatically ceases to be a member of the Academic Council.

A panel of non-elected candidates will be formed following the election process. In the event of a vacancy arising in the elected membership, the vacancy shall be filled by the most highly placed candidate on the panel conforming to the rules of composition.

In the event that there are no candidates remaining on the panel the Academic Council may co-opt a member of staff to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the period of office of the Academic Council. In the event that a vacancy arises under category 3.7 the Institute Students' Union will be requested to nominate a replacement.

New members will be appointed for the remainder of the three year term of office of the Council.