


Academic Programme Boards - Policy and Procedures		
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Academic Programme Boards - Policy and Procedures

Revision History

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02	25 May 2006	Revisions based on recommendations of Academic Council	Diarmuid O'Callaghan
03	5 September 2007	Inclusion of reference to QA forms in terms of reference and appendix	Registrar
04	18 September 2013	Review following Institute review by subcommittee of Academic Council; incorporation of spirit of 3CD06 into this policy	Academic Council subcommittee
05	6 January 2015	Duties of Course Board updated to explicitly include actions relating to external examiner reports	QA Officer

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• Purpose

The purpose of this document is to record Institute policy and procedure as it applies to the operation of academic **programme** and **course boards** and **support structures** in all academic departments.

Programmes are defined as a suite of courses which share a common set or sub-set of academic modules. Courses are defined as a suite of modules which a learner may study in the pursuit of a formal academic award.

Programme boards operate within the quality assurance procedures and regulations of the Institute.

• Scope

This document applies to all academic staff, and in particular to programme co-ordinators, course co-ordinators and year tutors. It also applies to student representatives on course boards, administrative and management staff all of whom play pivotal roles in realising the objectives of our quality assurance procedures. This document also recognises the different operational practices that exist in the management of programme boards.

• The Role of Academic Programme Boards

To enable the proper function of programmes and courses - Academic Programme Boards will be established. Academic programme boards have responsibility for the ongoing development, administration and review of programmes and courses within the Institute leading to a formal academic award, which will normally fall into one of the following categories by NFQ level:

- Level 9 – Postgraduate Diploma or Master’s Degree
- Level 8 – Honours Bachelor Degree, Minor or Special Purpose Award, Higher Diploma
- Level 7 – Ordinary Bachelor Degree, Minor or Special Purpose Award
- Level 6 – Higher Certificate, Minor or Special Purpose Award

To ensure the efficient functioning of these boards the Head of Department will appoint individuals to the role of programme coordinators, course coordinators and year tutors. In some instances the coordination of a programme will be supported by different combinations of these roles e.g. (i) a programme coordinator plus year tutors or (ii) a programme coordinator plus course coordinators (iii) a programme coordinator who is also a course coordinator.

• Terms of Reference of the Programme Board

○ Duties

The Programme board will oversee the totality of the learner experience on all of the courses which constitute an academic

programme of study. The Programme Board is tasked with the strategic design and development; monitoring and management of its constituent courses to ensure:

- Appropriate engagement with community and industry stakeholders;
 - Programme learning outcomes are specified in accordance with a rigorous research and key stakeholder consultation methodology;
 - Programme learning outcomes are aligned to individual module learning outcomes
 - Programme learning outcomes are being achieved;
 - Suggest how emerging teaching and learning methodologies might be integrated into constituent courses to enable learners engage with subject matter more effectively.
 - To ensure programme objectives are being met by the constituent courses;
 - To ensure the availability of programme related information for Programmatic and Institutional reviews;
 - To advise the relevant Head of Department (or equivalent) on the resources required to ensure that recommendations emanating from Programmatic and Institutional reviews and Course Boards are implemented.
- Structure
 - The Programme Board is comprised of the Course Coordinators of Constituent Courses and all members of respective course boards and the Programme Coordinator.
 - Reporting
 - The Programme Board shall report to Academic Council in the autumn of each year.
 - The formal Programme Board should meet at least twice a Semester – the first meeting would be designated a Planning Meeting (September/February) with a Review meeting at the end of the semester (January/June).

• Role of Programme Co-ordinator

- Convene meetings twice a Semester of the formal Programme Board associated with the programme.
- Identification and consultation with key programme stakeholders.
- Reporting on consultation with key programme stakeholders.
- Monitoring of the programme in relation to ITB strategy.
- Submit an annual report to the Registrar in the Autumn of each year for circulation to Academic Council
- The Programme Co-ordinator may also fulfil the role of Course Co-ordinator usually but not exclusively of the final year of a programme.

• The Role of the Course Board

Courses are defined as a suite of modules which a learner may study in the pursuit of a formal academic award. The course board will assist in three main areas (i) monitoring and review (ii) quality assurance and (iii) operational issues.

• Terms of Reference of Course Board

Monitor and Review

- To monitor the implementation of academic policy, maintenance of standards and administration of the course, including student selection, teaching, academic counselling and industrial or professional placement of students, student health and safety, and publication of course publicity material in the public domain.
- To ensure the implementation of recommendations regarding course content, student support and engagement as approved by Academic Council or its sub-committees. (e.g. the First Year Experience).
- To consider monitoring arrangements for undergraduate research activities, with particular reference to ethical issues if relevant.
- To consider the progress of students with reference to appropriate Institute procedures as required e.g. Disciplinary Procedure 3SS04, Plagiarism Policy 3AS08

- To prepare relevant materials for school and academic programme reviews and participate in such reviews (reference 2MP31).
- To consider and make recommendations upon, as appropriate, the resource and staff development requirements of the course.

Operational Issues

- To appoint such sub-committees as are deemed necessary for assisting in the administration of the course and plan course developments.
- To consider the operation of the course including attendance, examination performance, student support, retention and make recommendations to the admissions subcommittee of Academic Council for exemptions, advanced entry and transfer applications.
- To consider practical issues relating to the infrastructure and learning environment required in the delivery of the academic programme and refer relevant issues to Institute management for action
- To consider from time to time the need to revise, develop or otherwise substantially alter the course in the light of prevailing circumstances, and prepare appropriate proposals.
- To consider ethical issues that may arise in the relation to the successful delivery of a course e.g. arrangements for Garda vetting of students, where relevant.
- To determine schedule for distribution of QA forms to cover modules in semesterised courses (3CD11)

Quality Assurance

- To ensure that there is a clear linkage between each assessment element within a module, both continuous assessment and exam-based, and the learning outcomes defined for that module.
- To consider mechanisms and academic attainments necessary for progression to subsequent add-on courses.
- To review annually the operation of the course and consider proposals for its improvement and submit annually a comprehensive report on the course to the Programme Coordinator for presentation to the Academic Council. (ref: Section 5.5] Specifically, the course board should refer to 3CD06 Course monitoring policy and procedure and 4RCD01 Course Board Annual Report template

- To respond to communications relating to academic quality from quality assurance subcommittee of Academic Council (see Appendix A)
- To consider summary reports of QA2 and QA3 forms

• Duties of the Course Board

- Ensure adherence to:
 - The approved course schedule (4RCD02);
 - Approved module syllabi as published on Coursebuilder (<http://courses.itb.ie>);
 - The provisions of Institute Marks and Standards (3AS06);
- To produce a course handbook which will assist in informing students of the requirements of the approved course schedule
- Consider attendance requirements and how unacceptable attendance will be communicated to individual students.
- Consider arrangements for undergraduate research activities, with particular reference to ethical issues, with escalation of matter to the Institute ethics committee, where necessary.
- Review examination and continuous assessment results, and repeat examination arrangements.
- Compile student information on number, type, weighting and approximate timing of continuous assessments and projects.
- Advise and counsel students with poor academic performance in consultation with the Course Co-ordinator and relevant Year Tutor.
- Advise Heads of School and Head of Department on student discipline issues.
- Consider arrangements for Garda vetting of students, where relevant (e.g. where students participate in environments with children and vulnerable adults as part of the course).
- Review linkage between each assessment element within a module, both continuous and exam-based, and the learning outcomes defined for that module.
- Review and make recommendations on intake points, numbers and retention rates.

- Make recommendations on resources to Head of School and Head of Department.
- Continuously review existing courses, make recommendations for adjustments to, discontinuation of and the development of new courses.
- To carry out a course- level review with the objective of reviewing the following areas for the prior academic year:
 - Course details;
 - Applications;
 - Registrations;
 - Examination performance;
 - Retention statistics
 - Recommendations from previous course monitoring report and actions taken;
 - Course Board activity;
 - Course feedback (students, industry, graduates).
- Review external examiner feedback in particular the section "Aspects requiring attention" within the external examiner reports submitted annually. Table identified issues as agenda items for discussion at the next course board meeting, discuss and where appropriate action these items.
- Advise on the required physical arrangements to ensure all assignments are securely received from students with reference to the ITB Assignment Retention Policy (including virtual learning environments e.g. MOODLE).
- Review draft examination results prior to formal examination board meeting.
- Review quality of examination papers submitted to students.
- Consider mark allocation for repeat assessments and how this will be communicated to students and administrative staff.
- Consider issues regarding modules that cannot be effectively re-assessed in a repeat sitting in the autumn examinations and how this will be communicated to students and administrative staff.

• Role of Course Co-ordinator

- Day to day administration of the course including overall co-ordination of the course team.
- Communication with students on course related matters including assignments,
- Examinations and issues concerning students' progress and discipline; this includes meetings with class representatives in association with the programme coordinator and/or other staff as appropriate, and the provision of feedback to the course team.
- Generation of appropriate reports, minutes, papers. A suggested standard format is referenced in Appendix 2.
- To engage with the Programme Board to enable the strategic design and development of programmes.
- Submit annual course review to Programme Coordinator in time for Autumn Academic Council meeting.

• Role of Year Tutor

- To ensure the students engaged in a particular stage of a course receive the mentoring and support. They will be particularly aware of policy documents or research such as the "First Year Experience" and implement the associated recommendations.
- As the first point of contact for students a key task will involve communicating issues with the course coordinator and liaising with the class representatives.

• Procedures

- The Head of School or Heads of Department of each school shall appoint **Programme** and **Course Boards** to consider all matters affecting the operation and development of each course within the school. Appointments will include academic staff involved in the delivery of the programme.
- The Head of School or Head of Department shall nominate the Course Co-ordinators and Programme Coordinators to the Registrar before 30th September annually

- The Registrar will present a full list of course co-ordinators and programme coordinators to Academic Council for approval annually (October meeting)
- The Registrar will present completed programme/course board annual reports to Academic Council for consideration annually (ref 4RCD01).

• **Course Board Composition**

- The composition of the board shall be reviewed annually. The composition of the board shall be:
 - Head of School (Ex officio);
 - Head of Department (Ex officio);
 - Course co-ordinator (Ex officio);
 - All lecturers teaching the course;
 - All tutors tutoring on the course;
 - One student (per year of course).
- Where student assessment or progress is being discussed, student representatives will be asked to withdraw from the meeting.
- Technical support staff and industrial representation will be invited to attend as necessary.

• **Course Board Meetings**

- The course boards shall meet at least two times per semester.
- Non-members may be invited to attend individual meetings but will not have voting rights.
- The course board shall keep records of its meetings and these records shall be available to other staff members involved in teaching the course(s).

• **Course Boards - Preparation of the Agenda**

- The agenda for meetings shall be prepared by the course co-ordinator

- The agenda should relate to the terms of reference for the course board (ref this document); a suggested standard agenda is referenced in appendix 1.
- Any member of the board who wishes to have a matter placed on the agenda shall present to the course co-ordinator, in writing, information pertaining to the item at least seven days before the meeting at which the matter will be raised.
- All members of the board shall receive notice of a scheduled meeting, together with the agenda and background information at least five days before the meeting.

• Course Boards - Reporting

- Appropriate reports, minutes, papers shall be forwarded to the Head of Department and the School Administrator once adopted.

• ITB Policy References

2MP31	Institute review policy
3CD06	Course monitoring policy and procedure
4RCD01	Course Board annual report template
3AS06	Academic programme assessment policy and procedure
4RCD02	Approved course schedule
courses.itb.ie	Approved module syllabi
3CD11	Quality assurance guidelines and QA forms
QA2	Institutes of Technology Summary of Survey of Students by Lecturer
QA3	Institutes of Technology Department Survey of Students
KPI 2	Examination progression rates

Appendix 1: Standard Agenda Template for Course board meeting

1. Adoption of minutes of previous meeting
2. Arising from minutes
3. Course implementation
 - Modules
 - Compliance with approved course schedule
 - Compliance with approved module syllabi
 - Timetables
 - Attendance
 - Undergraduate research activities (including ethical implications)
 - Report from students
 - Issues relevant to part-time students
 - Health and safety
4. Published course material
 - Coursebuilder
 - Website
5. Student support
 - Physical resources
 - Specific academic supports
 - Student retention
6. Examinations
 - Continuous assessments
 - Examination paper production
7. Confidential issues (student representatives should withdraw and selective minutes should be kept)
 - Individual student issues
 - Confidential examination issues
8. Specific issues relevant to time of year (see Table 1)
9. Specific issues brought forward by course board members

10.Garda vetting issues

11.Ethical issues regarding project work

12.AOB

13.Date and time of next meeting

Issues to be considered at specific meetings at a particular time of year

<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	Single agenda item meeting prior to each examination board meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course information published in Coursebuilder • Course handbook publication • Examination mark distribution (First and repeat papers) • Modules that cannot be re-assessed in autumn sitting • Timetable for distribution of QA1 forms • Consideration of output of previous year QA2 and QA3 summary reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course monitoring • Course board annual report consideration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sections of Institute publications relevant to course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy of marks/grades to be proposed to examination board • Borderline cases <p><i>(student representatives should not attend this meeting)</i></p>

Table 1

Appendix 2: Suggested format of course board minutes

Course code Course name
Minutes of course board meeting date (including year)

Date:

Time:

Location:

Present (staff):	Person 1 (chair) Person 2 (minutes) Person 3 etc
Present (student representatives):	Student 1 Student 2
Absent with apologies furnished:	Person 6 (staff)
Absent:	Student 3

1. Adoption of minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

2. Matters arising from minutes of last meeting.

No matters arising.

3. Course implementation

3.1. Modules

3.2. Timetables

Module X timetabled in room without required facilities.

ACTION	PERSON	STATUS
Module leader to forward list of rooms with required facilities to course-coordinator	Person 2	Completion date
Course-coordinator to work with HoD to re-timetable to appropriate room	Person 3	Completion date

3.3. Attendance

Issue of very poor attendance at lecture Fridays 4pm – 6pm

ACTION	PERSON	STATUS
Course team to forward ideas to course-coordinator by 18 / 2 / 2006	All staff	Completion date
Course-coordinator to take action to address situation & report on action at next course board	Person 2	Completion date

3.4. Report from students

3.5. Issues relevant to part-time students

3.6. Health and safety

4. Coursebuilder

4.1. Module contributor assignment

4.1.1. Module information outstanding: Module aim, learning outcomes, linking of assessment events to learning outcomes, bibliography etc.

4.2. Programme contributor assignment

4.2.1. Programme information outstanding: Descriptor, learning outcomes, mapping of module learning outcomes to the outcomes of the programme etc.

4.3. Programmes and modules pending approval – communication to Head of Department

5. Student support

5.1. Physical resources

5.2. Specific academic supports

5.3. Student retention

6. Examinations

6.1. Continuous assessments

6.2. Examination paper production

7. Confidential issues (student representatives should withdraw and selective minutes should be kept as separate page)

7.1. Individual student issues

7.2. Confidential examination issues

8. Specific issues relevant to time of year

9. Specific issues brought forward by course board members

10. Garda vetting issues

11. Ethical issues regarding project work

12. AOB

13. Date and time of next meeting

Appendix 3: Agenda for Programme Board Meeting

1. Review of Programme Details (Approved Course Schedule)
2. Review of Applications
3. Review of Final Registrations
4. Examination Performance (prior year)
5. Course Board recommendations (prior year)
6. Course Board Activities (prior year)
7. Course Feedback (students, industry, graduates, external examiners)
8. Final comments

//end