Document Name and Version	**2.7 Terms of Reference of Academic Council**
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Policies that Interact with Policy 2.7	All policies
Approval Body	Board of Directors
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1. **Preamble.**

   1.1. The principle academic decision-making body of IICP College is the Academic Council. In order to ensure its academic autonomy, the Board of Directors has delegated the management of academic governance and quality assurance with respect to IICP College to the Council. The Academic Council provides information to the SMT, Board, and the President.

   1.2. The Academic Council delegates authority to subsidiary boards and panels. It receives reports on an ongoing basis from these boards and panels, including:
   - Programme Boards;
   - Academic (Conduct in Assessment) Disciplinary Committee;
   - Academic (Conduct in Assessment) Disciplinary Appeals Committee;
   - Academic (Results in Assessment) Appeals Panel;
   - Research Ethics committee;
   - Disciplinary Committee;
   - Disciplinary Appeals Committee;
   - Complaints Appeal Panel;
   - Continuing with Clinical Placement Panel, following implementation of the Continuing with Clinical Placement Policy;
   - Clinical Placement Appeals Panel.

2. **Purpose.**

   2.1. This policy sets out the Terms of Reference of the Academic Council of IICP College.

3. **Scope.**

   3.1. This policy relates to the academic and professional governance framework of IICP College.

4. **Policy.**

   4.1. The Academic Council has authority for the making of academic regulations and the protection of academic standards, as well as for all quality assurance and

enhancement activities in the academic and professional realms relating to education and training. In carrying out its functions, the Academic Council is cognisant of the IICP College mission and strategic direction. In accordance with the College's mission statement it fosters integrity and high standards in academic and professional activities.

4.2. The Academic Council has the power to make new policies with respect to matters for which it is responsible which are consistent with existing policies of IICP College.

4.3. The Academic Council may set up standing or temporary committees as it may from time to time think fit. These committees may consist wholly or partly of persons who are not members of the Council. Each committee should have a Terms of Reference document (ToR) that, at a minimum, describes the purpose, scope and authority of the committee. All subcommittees must be constituted in accordance with QAM Policy 2.10 (Terms of Reference of Academic Council Boards, Subcommittees and Panels) and QAM Policy 2.11 (Procedures for Hearings and Appeals).

5. **Procedures.**

5.1. *Composition:*

5.1.1. The Academic Council is composed primarily of ex-officio members, learners and external members. This composition ensures that the Academic Council is a community of scholars who are representative of the professional and academic community of Integrative and Pluralistic Counselling and Psychotherapy. This provides IICP College with a diverse knowledge community that supports, critiques and reflects upon IICP College education and training. Learners, as scholars in formation, are particularly central to board composition, providing a learner's voice in academic decision-making. This allows the Academic Council access to multiple positions in its decision-making.

5.2. *Membership:* The Academic Council comprises external members, including a chair, and internal members, including faculty and learner representatives, and ex officio members. The Academic Council is comprised of:

5.2.1. External Members

    5.2.1.1.   The Chair is an independent external person with higher education expertise.

    5.2.1.2.   The Chair is appointed by the Board of Directors.

    5.2.1.3.   Other external members may be appointed, to include:

        5.2.1.3.1.   External academics in the field;

        5.2.1.3.2.   Representatives of the profession;

        5.2.1.3.3.   Representatives of employers from the statutory, voluntary or private sector (HSE / voluntary sector).

5.2.2. Internal members, which shall comprise:

- College President

- Director of Registry & Operations;

- Head of Academic Studies;

- The Programme Leader from each programme board committee;

- A representative of faculty;

- A representative of clinical practice function;

- The Quality Assurance Manager, who reports to the Council;

- At least one learner representative, who is usually elected by the learner body. In order to ensure continuity of learner representation, where elected members are not available then the Academic Council may nominate a representative. Learner members do not attend confidential parts of Academic Council meetings.

5.3. *Duration of appointments:*

5.3.1. Appointments (i.e. other than ex officio members and learner representatives) are for a period of three years. This can be extended with the agreement of the committee.

5.3.2. Extension of the period of appointment of the Chair requires the agreement of the Board of Directors.

5.3.3. Learner representatives are appointed for one year. Section 5.2 applies to the duration of appointments of learner representatives.

5.4. *Conflict of Interest:*

5.4.1. All nominees are required to declare any conflict of interest.

5.5. *Governance Relationships:*

5.5.1. The Academic Council works collaboratively with the Senior Management Team, the Board of Directors and the President.

5.5.2. In order to ensure its academic autonomy, the Board of Directors has delegated the management of academic governance and quality assurance of IICP College to the Academic Council, provided that the Board of Directors remains responsible for the matters set out in section 3.1 of the TOR of the BOD.

5.5.3. Any matter in relation to risk which comes before the Council or any sub-committee of the Council should be dealt with by the Council in accordance with Policy 2.4 Business Continuity, Resilience and Risk Management Policy.

5.5.4. The Academic Council provides an annual report on its activities to the Senior Management Team, the President and the Board of Directors.

5.6. *Delegation:*

5.6.1. The principal academic decision-making body of IICP College is the Academic Council. In order to carry out its functions effectively and efficiently the AC delegates authority to lower boards and roles as per QAM Policy 2.10 (Terms of Reference of Academic Council Boards, Subcommittees and Panels) and QAM Policy 2.11 (Procedures for Hearings and Appeals).

5.6.2. Delegation of authority occurs with responsibility for reporting on how that authority is used. In so far as possible, reporting processes and templates are provided for reporting processes and these are designed to fit with external reporting requirements (such as to QQI) However, it is a basic principle that all significant matters are routinely reported to the AC. The AC and its members hold accountability for any decisions, regulations, and actions carried out by or

on behalf of the AC including any other body authorised and dealing with such matters as the AC consider appropriate.

5.7. *Decision making:*

    5.7.1. Due to its collegial nature, the Academic Council aims for decision making by consensus: that is that no decision is made against the will of an individual or a minority. This principle aspires to foster an environment where opposing or multiple perspectives are welcome. However, the Academic Council is required to make decisions related to academic and quality matters. In order to ensure effective governance and the clear autonomy of academic decision-making, where, in the opinion of the chair, a decision is not forthcoming within a reasonable timeframe, then the Council will proceed by the vote of a simple majority. In order for a proposal to be carried, a majority of the votes cast must be in favour of the proposal. In the case of an equal division of votes, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote. However, dissenting opinions should be recorded in the minutes, and brought to the attention of the Board of Directors.

5.8. *Meetings:*

    5.8.1. The frequency of meetings is at least 3 times per year.

    5.8.2. The quorum is 50% plus 1.

5.9. *The Responsibilities of the* Academic Council *are as follows:*

    5.9.1. To monitor all matters relating to the standards of taught programmes, their quality, and the academic environment in which they operate.

    5.9.2. To ensure that IICP College's policies and practices are consonant with the College mission and strategic plan.

    5.9.3. To advise and make recommendations to the Board of Directors on strategic priorities related to education and training.

    5.9.4. To advise and make recommendations to the Senior Management Team on all aspects of programme quality, including programme data, and suitable resources for the effective delivery of learning and teaching and learner supports.

5.9.5. To advise the Programme Boards and the Senior Management Team on programme modifications and changes that are designed to assure and enhance the quality of programmes and provision.

5.9.6. To constitute and discontinue committees as per QAM Policy 2.10 (Terms of Reference of Academic Council Boards, Subcommittees and Panels) and QAM Policy 2.11 (Procedures for Hearings and Appeals).

5.9.7. To oversee the academic governance framework and advise the Board appropriately.

5.9.8. To monitor the design, development and implementation of new programmes.

5.9.9. To assure the quality and standards of academic and professional education and training provided by IICP College.

5.9.10. To assure the quality of awards.

5.9.11. To design and implement the academic and professional regulations of IICP College, in consultation with the Senior Management Team and the Board as appropriate.

5.9.12. To monitor and review education and training matters including:

- The selection, admission and retention of learners;
- Education provision;
- Academic and professional policy and regulation;
- Learner conduct;
- Learner welfare.

5.9.13. To consider, monitor and review programme data, and where possible benchmark against other providers operating in the same area, nationally or internationally.

5.9.14. To consider and approve each programme's Annual Quality Report.

6. Supporting Documentation:

6.1. Academic Council Agenda Template

The operation of the AC is designed to allow a meeting to receive input from learners and also consider matters relating to learner conduct and results. This is formalised in the Agenda template.

- Minutes.

- Matters arising.

- Reports from subcommittees.

- Programme issues.

- Programme Statistics, including enrolments, retention, completion and progression.

- Learner support.

- Physical resources.

- Assessments.

- Award Outcomes.

- Specific issues brought forward by programme boards.

- Specific issues brought forward by Senior Management Team.

- Any Other Business.

Learner representatives withdraw.

Members of Panels and Subcommittees withdraw for discussions relating to their area of operation, other than when reporting to the Academic Council.

- Reports from Review and Appeals committees.

- Confidential issues.

- Individual learner issues.

- Confidential assessment issues.

- Confidential issues brought forward by programme boards.

- AOB (confidential).